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*No Breckinridge*

THE  
**PREACHER**

The Second PART.

A  
**DISCOURSE**

Shewing,

- I. What Particular Doctrines ought to be Preached by the Dispensers of the Gospel.
- II. That these Doctrines are generally neglected, or (which is most usual) preached against.
- III. What are the Causes of this Neglect and Opposition.
- IV. What are the Dreadful Consequences hereof.

With continued

Advice to Students in Divinity,

AND TO

**YOUNG PREACHERS.**

To which is Annexed,

**The HEARER:**

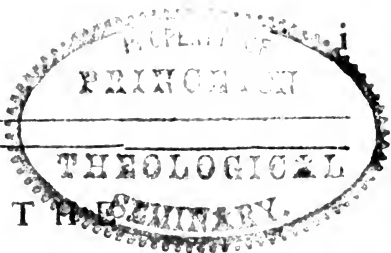
Or a Brief Discourse, Shewing what are the Qualifications that are Required in those Persons who would Receive Benefit and Advantage by Hearing the Word Preached.

By **JOHN EDWARDS, D. D.**

L O N D O N:

Printed for *J. Robinson, J. Lawrence, and J. Wyatt, 1706.*





# P R E F A C E.

**W**Hen any Book comes forth, it is to be supposed that something of Course is generally to be said against it, and the Author is exposed to every Mans Reflections and Raillery. But no Wise Man is concerned in the least for this, for he knows that there is not the greatest and most established Truth in Religion, but a Man of Wit and Sophistry is able to argue against it; yea, without any Wit or Sense he may easily rally upon it. Thus it happen'd upon my publishing the Discourse Entituled *The Preacher*: for tho' it was universally entertained and approved of by my Learned and Pious Brethren of the Clergy and all others that were of Well-disposed Minds, and Friends to the Orthodox Faith of the Church of *England*, and lovers of Primitive and Evangelical Truth, of Christian Moderation, of the Edification of the

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Souls

Souls of Men, and of Universal Piety and Holiness; yet some who were of another Frame and Spirit shew'd it too plainly in disliking, opposing and condemning what I had writ.

But it was no more than what I expected, for it is the doom of all those that attempt to Correct the Age, and to offer at Reforming, to be misrepresented and reviled. From the very first Moment that I had it in my Thoughts to handle this Argument, I foresaw that my Innocent Undertaking would be misconstrued, and that I should be evilly treated for my free Thoughts and Expressions. But at the same time I knew that it is the Nature of some Men to Grin because they are baffled, and because they have nothing to reply but what they know will be hiss'd at. I therefore took up a resolution, by the Divine Aid, to defy all sorts of Censurers, and to support my self with that of the Great Apostle, *If I pleased Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.*

As to the *Particular Cavils* that have been raised against my Performance, I have found them to be such as these; First; it is objected that I have insulted my Brethren, that what I have said reflects dishonourably on the Clergy, and in plain  
Terms



Terms that I reproach them. To which I answer, To animadvert on the Failings of some Persons of that Order, is far from reflecting on the *Clergy*, because the Mifcarriages of some ought not to be imputed to all the rest. Again, Freely to charge some of them with what they are really guilty of (as the corrupting of some Doctrines of Christianity, &c.) is not to *reproach* them, for then Reproaching and Speaking Truth would be the same. Those who are conscious to their own faultiness, should rather thank me for my impartial dealing with them: but if they will not do this, I'm sure they have no reason to be Incensed against me.

However, There are great Examples to relieve me. *St. Jerom* and *St. Chrysostom* had the ill Word and Will of a great part of the *Clergy*. And *Father Paul*, who obliged all Mankind, was defamed by the Church-men most of all. This is the certain Reward of Free and Plain dealing: tho' it is a very hard Case that a Man should be censured and disliked because he will not Lie and Dissemble. This is my very case, I am arraigned by some for traducing my Brethren, and for blasting their Names, merely because I have refused to Flatter some of them, and be-

cause I have withstood their Beloved Notions and Doctrines and laid them open to the World.

But especially some Mens Censures pass upon me, because I appear against *Great Men*, the Flower of the Clergy, the Topping Men of our Profession. But if this be any Argument against me, then no Man of Eminency must be written against, and he is guilty of Disrespect and Irreverence who encounters a Divine of the first rate. Where then was the Reverence paid to the greatest Men of our Church, when our Divines of the Lower House of *Convocation* insulted their Superiours a while ago, and pull'd those Grave Fathers by their Beards, and when some of them appeared in Print against the Right Reverend and Learned Bishop of *Sarum* and others? With what Face then can any of my Brethren charge me with Rudeness and Contempt in contradicting some of my Equals, and others my Inferiours? This and what I shall add anon will stifle the Civil that is raised against my free dealing with the Clergy, and that in the view of the World, as if I did not consult their Name and Credit, but were forward to expose them to Contempt: for here we see that these Gentlemen do not endeavour  
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to conceal the Faults ( which they imagine to be so at least ) of their Fathers and Brethren, but openly proclaim them, with a Design to make their Persons Odi-ous and Detestable. But for my part, I am assured that they are not Imaginary, but Real Faults that I reprove : and these Delinquencies being Publick, the Rebuke should be so too. Nor do I any thing of this nature to render them Unacceptable to the People, but to direct them to that which will conciliate them Respect and Acceptance among all Good Men. To publish their Faults is the only Expedient to promote their Amendment. 'Tis best to lay them open, that the Authors may be ashamed of them. And as for their Credit and Reputation, those are best consulted and provided for by retracting their Errors, and by Reforming.

But the great Exception, I perceive, is against my attacking the late Archbishop : as if he were an Exempt Person, and none should call him to account. But, I pray, what was he that he should not be touch'd ? Could his Grace give himself a License to write and preach against others, and not to be opposed himself ? Or, how comes it to pass that my Brethren shew themselves so much concerned for that Archbi-  
shop ?

shop? It is well known that when he was advanced to *Lambeth*, their general cry was against him, as unfit for the Miter: and King *William's* Judgment was very much questioned for exalting him to that Station. They looked upon him as a great *Latitudinarian*, and a *Well-willer* to the *Dissenting Party*. And perhaps they were not mistaken: the common *Vogue* was that he carried in his Pocket a *Model* for a *Comprehension* or *Accommodation*: and a *Commission* was prepared for the executing it, but the *Convocation* which at that time sat, defeated it. It was the general Language of the Clergy that *Lambeth-House* was the *Rendezvous* of all Religions, that the *Archbishops Palace* was an *Amsterdam*. In short, he had plenty of *Libels* sent him, and a great many of them by *Clergymen*, who envied his accession to that High Dignity which his Prince advanced him to.

Why then are these Men displeas'd at my censuring some passages in this Great Man's Writings? Will they let no body find fault with him but themselves? This is very perversely done. But would you know the true reason of it? It is no other than this, they hated him when he was alive, because he was *Archbishop*, but not thought

thought by them to be *Churchman enough*: but they have a Reverence and Kindness for him now being dead, because of his Writings that remain, which they see do universally relish of *Arminianism*. They respect both him and them on that account. This is it which reconciles him to the Men of the Church of *England*. He comes into Favour, because he is a *stiff Remonstrant*. The being of this persuasion hath a great Charm, it seems. It is a Reconciler. May it not be guessed then that this will reconcile us to some of another Communion? For the sake of This, this Prelate's other strange and unsafe Notions, which he published with great Assurance, were and are so far from being disliked, that he gained Profelytes to them, and many of the Reverend Clergy themselves lick'd them up with Greediness.

But I could never suffer my self to be of that Number, I saw there was reason to remonstrate against the wild Propositions which he was advancing in many places in his Sermons. Especially I could not but take notice how meanly and contemptibly he speaks of the *Revealed Dispensation* of the Gospel: by which I fear he hath done much Harm among those who are

Admirers of his Writings. Among whom I can tell you no Learned *Foreigners* are and therefore the Hurt will not reach to other Countries. Certainly it was an unhappy Hour wherein he vented the Doctrine of the Mitigation of *Hell-Torments*, yea, when he instilled into Mens Minds the *utter disbelief of the Eternity* of them. The Plausibleness of the Doctrine gains it credit, and makes it find acceptance. This and other Notions in his Writings have rendred his Discourses acceptable to Men of loose Principles: even the late *Socinians* can say, with respect to *Hell-Torments*, \**We approve the Doctrine delivered by Archbishop Tillotson.*

This is the true Account of my having been so free with his Writings. Which is no derogation from his Worth on other Considerations; for I abhor to detract from any Man's real Merits, and I respect and honour him as he was a Man of Learning, and as he filled the highest Seat in our Church. But I stand in awe of no Names, be they never so Great, when I am convinced that I have a Good Cause.

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\* An Agreement of the Unitarians, &c. p. 11.

Truth, like the Divine Author of it, is no Respecter of Persons. I am not so bashful and sheepish as to relinquish a received Doctrine of the Gospel, merely in Compliment to a person of some fame, or one in some Eminent Post in the Church. St. *Paul* hath taught us our Behaviour in this Case, in which himself was concerned, *Who is Paul, saith he, or who is Apollos?* As much as to say, you must not attribute too much to your Guides. It is a Carnal Respect and Honour that is given to them when you make them the Authors of a Party and set them up above all others: you must not thus be devoted to Names.

And the Apostle's Practice was according to this Direction, for St. *Peter* was no more with him than another Man, when he saw there was real occasion to reprove him: *I withstood him to the Face, saith he, because he was to be blamed.* I question not but this is recorded in the Sacred Writings for our imitation, and therefore let this be an Answer to those who charge me with censuring some of the Great Ones of the Church, some of the Princes of their Tribes, the very supposed Oracles of the Pulpit. For tho' I have nothing to say against the *Church of England*, yea, I declare openly my high Esteem and Veneration

tion of it, I verily believe that as to the Main (without the Additions, Impositions and Innovations which are practised by some Hyper-canonical Men, and are falsely reckon'd by them to be part of her Constitution) it excells all other Churches; yet I have much to say against some Men, and those of the first Figure, who profess themselves to be of it: and the Reader is already acquainted with my Exceptions against them, and may be further in the following Discourse.

The next thing that I hear is objected against me is my forsaking the *Common Road*. I strike at those Doctrines which are generally received by the *Majority* of our Divines. *Arminianism* is the Catholic Doctrine of our Preachers: and every Pulpit proclaims it to the World. Why therefore should I be Singular, and dissent from the rest of my Brethren, and so bring the whole *Posse* of the Clergy upon me? Yea, why do I attempt a thing that is so vain and fruitless? for there can be no hopes of altering Mens Minds, as to the foresaid Doctrines, after they have taken such deep root.



I Answer, *First*, This is a very weak way of Arguing, or rather it is no Arguing at all, for the Multitude are the worst Judges, yea, tho' they be Churchmen. And therefore never tell me that the greatest Numbers are of the other side. This is bringing Religion to the Poll, and trying our Faith by the Plurality of Votes. I grant that the Opinions of the *Remonstrants* have *most* followers among us: and who would expect it should be otherwise? for as Goodness so Truth is approved of but by a few. He that resolves to espouse it, must not be born down with the Number of the Persons that hold the Contrary: for Error is Error, let it be supported by never so great a Multitude of Voices. I'm heartily glad that what I have written, is displeasing to some Men, yea, to a Great part of Men, for there cannot be a greater Evidence of a Mans speaking Truth, and designing the good of the Christian World than this.

*Secondly*, I have the *Church of England Her self* on my side, and That I always reckon to be the *Major Part*, and the *Best*. I have shew'd in my former Discourse, but more in the ensuing one, that the *Anti-Arminian*

*Arminian* Doctrines are those which our Church asserts in her *Articles* and *Homilies*, and which our Universities and the Fathers and Prelates of our Church, and the Whole Clergy once unanimously profess'd and maintain'd. So that the Objectors are mistaken, for this was the *Common Road*, and the other is to be accounted as a *By-Path* only.

*Thirdly*, I am not left alone, I do not, like *Athanasius*, encounter the whole World, no nor the whole Clergy. There are several of my Learned Brethren that concur with me, and more since I have publickly vindicated those Truths. I rejoyce to hear that what I have offered, hath had some considerable Influence on Wise and Sober Persons. Yea, there are those that seem to disrelish my Propositions, and yet they really approve of them. Many, who do not openly applaud my Undertaking, are convinced that there are great Truths contained in it, and a great many of them. And let me be permitted to say this, which I believe will be thought to be very strange and surprizing, that the favourable Reception which my *Preacher* hath met with the *Sober Dissenters*, is in a manner to be interpreted as if it were received

ceived by the *Men of the Church of England*, for These latter were heretofore the very same, as to their Judgments in the Points treated of, that the former are now. If they are since changed, let them think of it among themselves : but I will look upon them to be the same that they were before, because I'm sure they ought to be so.

*Fourthly*, Whereas my Undertaking may be thought to be *in Vain*, because I can hardly conceive any Hopes of an *Alteration*, I tell those Persons who suggest this, that I do not see any ground to despair even as to this Matter. For some of the same Men who preached and wrote in defence of the *Remonstrant* Doctrines, did likewise preach and write for *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance*, in the very height and utmost extent of them, and upon pain of Damnation : but many of them dropt these Doctrines at the Revolution, and have ever since disown'd these Points, or are wholly silent about them : and consequently we may expect that they will behave themselves so with relation to the other Doctrines. So some of our Brethren told us from the Pulpit and Prefs that Corporal Punishments of the severest Nature

Nature are to be inflicted on all those that separate from the Communion of the Church of *England*, and accordingly they were not a little busy in persecuting their Neighbours : but we see they are come off ( at least in outward appearance ) from such Notions and Practises, and neither their Tongues nor Pens appear in that Cause. May we not then entertain some Hopes that the Pulpits will ring Changes, that the *Arminian Divinity* may in time be rejected by these Persons, who have not signalized themselves by over-great Confrancy ? May we not expect that, tho' it hath taken root, yet it may be extirpated ? Tho' a great part of our Churchmen be not enclined at present to what I have Asserted, yet perhaps they may be of another Mind afterwards. For I have observed that when the ill Impressions of Mens Younger Years have been worn out, and their warmer Passions have abated, and Prejudice hath been extirpated by Time, they come to have a kindness for those Doctrines which before they were averse to. However, I'm fully satisfied in my Conscience that I have discharged my Duty : and I shall not decline the Pursuit which I have entred upon, tho' there were no

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probability of turning the Tide, but tho' I must stand in the Gap alone.

But the *Objectors* come up closer to me, and charge me with the unpardonable Fault of commending to Young Students in Divinity such Books as *Calvins Institutions, Ames, Twiss, Tuckney, Owen, the Assemblies Annotations*; which can be no less than a Design and Plot to breed up a Generation of *Calvinists* among us, and to promote the Interest of the *Meetings* rather than of the *Church*. Especially they cannot brook my mentioning the *Catechism* made by the *Assembly*, for that Meeting of Divines at *Westminster* is every whit as detestable to them as the *High Court of Justice* that sat sometimes there. But this doth not move me at all, for I am not a stranger to such Mens Temper and Genius: and I will acquaint the Reader with this True Observation, namely that he may certainly know what Authors are Good and Commendable by these Mens disapproving them: like as One of the Antients said of the first Persecutor of Christians, \* *There must needs be some great*

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\* Tertul. in Apologet.

*Good in that Doctrine* (meaning the Christian) *which he condemned.* But see the Ignorance of these Objectors! they Cavil at those very Writings which that known Prelate of our Church, Bishop *Wilkins*, and two or three other *Bishops* have put into the List of Authors annexed to the *Gift of Preaching.* If I had inserted into my Catalogue *Zuinglius*, *Pareus*, *Zanchy*, *Piscator*, *Triglandius*, *Rolloc*, *Thomas Cartwright*, *Ainsworth*, *Bain*, *Bisfield*, *Dike*, *Tho. Goodwin*, *Jeremy Burroughs*, it were no more than what the foresaid Bishop and the Supervisors of his Book have done in theirs, and the Bishop adds that *they are eminent for their Orthodox sound Judgment.* Yea, the late Editors of this Catalogue, who are of the Highest Order in our Church, have inserted into it *Dr. Manton*, *Jenkyn Greenhil*, *Cotton*, *Dickson*, who all favour of *Geneva*: but we see these *Fathers of our Church* apprehend them to be useful to our Preachers, or else they would not have commended them to them.

What reason then have my Silly Objectors to lay to my charge, as an unpardonable Crime, the putting of *Calvins Institutions*, &c. into the Hands of the Divines? But had I commended to my  
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Young Divines such Authors as *Episcopius* and *Limborch*, had I stuff'd my Catalogue with *Bramhal*, *Heylin*, *Parker*, *Tilenus*, *Sir Roger L' Estrate*, *Lestly*, &c. yea and *the Tale of a Tub*, which was designed by the Author ( who is said to be a Clergyman ) to expose the Renowned Pastor of *Geneva*, and the Doctrine of *Predestination*, and to ridicule all that is Serious and Religious, then I had pleased these Gentlemen, for I never heard that any of these Writers had a design to breed up a Generation of *Calvinists*, which some accuse me of. But these Men should consider that *our Church* was founded by such as were Friends to *Mr. Calvin's* Doctrines, for of that sort were the First Reformers. And afterwards all our Archbishops and Bishops, the Professors of Divinity in our Universities, and all our Preachers and Divines were generally *Calvinists* as to Doctrine: as I shall in due time demonstrate to the World. Those Men therefore who cry up the *Arminian* Tenents, differ from their own Church, and renounce their first Original.

It might be observed here occasionally by the way, that some Parties of Men have differ'd from their first Founders, or from those from whom they took their Denomi-

nation. Thus the *Nicolaitans* were lewd and wanton, mistaking the Doctrine of *Nicolas* the Deacon of *Antioch*, from whom they had their Name. *Socrates* the Founder of the *Academies* was a brave Person, Sober and Wise, and an Asserter of One God : but the Men that followed him of that Sect ran all into Disputes and Janglings, and held nothing certain. The *Epicureans* were voluptuous and dissolute, tho' their Master (as some have thought) was a Temperate and Sober Man, and placed Happiness in the Pleasure of Virtue chiefly. It can't be denied that the *Lutherans* at this day vary from their Founder (which is no more than what he himself foretold, *viz.* \* that they should pervert his meaning, and pretend that such and such Doctrines were his, which he never asserted) and yet they make use of his Venerable Name. The *Remonstrants* differ from *Arminius* (as might easily be made good in several particulars) and yet they hold from him. Yea, and the Doctrines of *Calvin* are mistaken by some who pretend to adhere to him: they fa-

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\* Colloq. Mensal.



sten that on him which he never said or meant.

But this kind of practise is not any where more visible than among some of *Our Churchmen*: they differ from those who laid the Foundation of our Church: they do not teach and profess the same Doctrines that our *First Reformers* did. They call themselves the Sons of the Church of *England*, but do not speak the Language of their Mother. They usurp her Name, but degenerate from her Principles, which are originally *Calvinian*. It is no wonder therefore that my late Writings are unacceptable to these Men. But at the same time they shew how ignorant they are of their own *Foundation*. And when they impeach me of bringing the *Meetings* into the *Church*, they consider not that the Doctrines there preach'd by their *Orthodox* Pastors, are here already.

The last Cavil against what I have lately presented to the World is, that I disturb the *Peace of the Church*, that I raise Dissensions and Divisions by censuring and condemning some Passages in the Writings of my Brethren, and by asserting some Doctrines which they deny. Tho' there

is no Foundation for this Charge, yet it is requisite I return an Answer to it, for the sake of those Persons who are hearty lovers of Peace and Concord in the Church, and may be offended that there is any thing in my Writings which tends to the violating of these. They must know then that upon the most diligent search that I have made into the matter, I cannot find that what I have said entitles me to be an Advancer of Division, and a disturber of the Tranquillity of the Church. I am verily averse from quarreling with the Present Age, especially with my Brethren of the Ministry ; for I consider that we are all Brethren in Christ, and Servants of one Lord and Master. I would not therefore be found *Smiting my Fellow-Servants* : I am sensible how Ill and how Dangerous an Employment that is. . But I hope none will say it is such to abandon Flattery and Dissimulation, and to speak freely to my Brethren concerning those Matters which I verily apprehend are blamable in them, and ought to be reprov'd : and this is all that I do.

Nor do I think that I can be justly charged with violating the Peace of the Church, unless my Brethren at the same time will arraign themselves for the same Fault.

Fault. Have not I observed before that some of our Reverend *Convocation* have lately writ against one another? Have not these Representatives of our Clergy let the World see that they are as free in their Mutual Censures as others? Hath it not been taken notice of by me before that they can find fault with their Reverend Fathers? Now I ask whether this be *breaking the Peace of the Church*, or not: if it be, they have no reason to upbraid me for the same Crime that they are guilty of themselves: if it be not, then neither is my censuring of some of my Brethren any thing of that nature. The Archbishop of *Dublin* and his *Dean* and *Chapter* squabble with one another, and make the Press proclaim their Feuds: and have we not other frequent Examples of such Contests as these among Divines? and yet they would take it ill to be reputed as Authors of Division and Faction. Let them make this *my* Case, and then they will soon drop their Censures: they will see that they have no reason to look upon me as any other than a true Friend to the Ecclesiastical Establishment, and the Interest of the Church.

And truly this is that which was designed by me, and not the setting of one Party against another. My aim was not to inflame and exasperate Men, but to cool and pacify them. I apprehend, and do still, that the Proving, Explaining and Recommending those *Anti-Arminian* Doctrines, may be serviceable to bring Persons to a Good Agreement about them. For I'm assured of this that it is the not understanding them that hath divided the Church. If persons would impartially study them, and attain to the true meaning of them, they would then cordially imbrace them, and thereby there would be an end of the unhappy Controversies of this kind that have vexed and embarras'd the Church. For it was truly said by one of the Antient Fathers, \* *There is nothing in the World is more serviceable to unite and reconcile the Minds of those that are truly and sincerely Religious, than an Entire Agreement about Divine Matters, and Religious Doctrines.* On which account I am fully convinced that my Un-

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\* Οὐδὲν ἕτως ἰσχυρὸν εἰς ὁμόνοιαν τοῖς γνησίοις πα-  
 τρός θεοῦ, ὡς ἡ περὶ θεῶν συμφωνία. Greg. Naz. Orat. 12.

dertaking is Serviceable to the promoting of *Peace* and *Unity* in the Church; which I shall always endeavour to advance. For I'm sensible that the Politick Gentleman at *Rome*, and the other at *Versailles* will be the only Gainers by our intestine Quarrels and Divisions.

Thus I have cleared the *Objections* which some have been pleased to start against some Passages in my late Discourse. And now I presume to venture abroad again, and to present the Reader with a Second Volume. I will not forestal it by giving an Account of the Particulars it treats of; only in general I must acquaint him that it defends and vindicates those Articles of the Christian Religion which are now *every where spoken against*, vilified and even ridiculed, and that by some of those very Persons whose Office it is to assert and maintain them. *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*, saith the Great Apostle, but these Men cannot say so, they plainly tell the World that they are ashamed to own it, and to adhere to its Principles.

The ground of which strange Revolt is only this, that these Principles are not so Plausible and Popular, and so adjusted to

the Dictates of Common and Vulgar Reason as those of *Socinus* and *Arminius*. For I join both these together, because of their near Relation and Affinity. The *Remonstrants* are beholding to the *Racovians* for their greatest Arguments: yea, they subsist by them, and are sustained by their Writings: as the *Trochilus* picks the *Crocodile's* Teeth, and thence hath his livelihood. For an *Arminian* is but an Underpuller to the Great Men of *Socinus's* Party: and both of them by their Pretences to that which they call Reason, and by their Misapplying of Scripture (which are the two constant Methods they make use of) uphold all their Erroneous and False Propositions.

This we see at this day among our selves: some of us abandon the Old Doctrines of the *Eternal Decrees*, of *Justification by Faith alone*, of the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*, and the like Evangelical Truths, because they are not *Rational* enough for us. And to be effectually rid of them, we pervert and misapply those *Texts* of the Bible which expressly assert and establish them. This course we are forced to take to accomplish our Design, which is to extirpate from among us the *Anti-Arminian* Doctrines, which some of our Preachers  
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and Divines look upon with as ill an Eye as the *Roman Catholicks* do on that which they stile the *Northern Heresy*. We are told that *Jansenism* is to be speedily rooted out of *France* by the Popes Bull ; and the *French King* is resolved to give his powerful Assistance towards it. Let me tell you, This is the very same Work that some of us are about in *England* : and it may be guessed how Good and Laudable an Enterprize it is, from these Examples that are before us. We fiercely encounter the *Calvinian* and *Jansenian* Doctrines, and in our Written Discourses and Sermons beat them down with great Fury : and at the same time we vigorously set up and patronize the *Arminian* Tenents, which the *Church of Rome* doth so warmly defend, and which our *own Church* so expressly condemns, and which all our Bishops and other Clergymen at, and a long time after the *Reformation* unanimously declared against.

For tho' 'tis true they approved not of the *Ecclesiastical Discipline* and *Government* propounded by *Mr. Calvin*, yet they embraced, believed and professed the *Doctrines* which that Holy Man of God asserted, as being the same that are delivered to us in the *Evangelical* and *Apostolical* Writings,  
and

and the same that are inserted into the *Articles* of our Church. All our Prelates, and with them all Men of Sense and Thought admired this Learned and Pious Reformer: and at this Day we may say of him as *Erasmus* did of *Luther*, \* *The better any Man is, it is observable that the less he is offended at this Person's Writings, yea, the more doth he value and esteem them.*

If others will form to themselves different Apprehensions from these, it is not in my Power to prevent it: and if some will cry up the *Pelagian* and *Arminian* Doctrines, and proclaim their high esteem of them, I can only say this, that it is no uncommon thing to see the Vilest things valued at a great rate. We read that *an Asses Head was sold for fourscore pieces of Silver.*

If any one shall think this, and what is afterwards said in the ensuing Discourse, with relation to this subject, to be too Severe, I desire him only to consider that we must use such Language as our Adversaries *Merit*, not such as they *expect*. This

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\* Illud video ut quisq; vir est Optimus, ita illius scriptis minimè offendi. Epist. ad Albert. Episc. Mogunt.



justifies all the Freedom I use, yea if it were Greater. There are some that betray the Cause by being Over-wary and Cautious: to be thought to be Fair and Candid, they are False and Perfidious. I have taken up a Resolution not to be faulty on this side. I purpose to deliver my Thoughts freely and plainly, and to express Things as they deserve, yet so as not to offend against the Rules of *Decency* and *Civility*, much less against the Laws of *Christian Charity*. The Reader may assure himself of this.

I have only one thing to Obviate, which I expect will be alledged against the following Discourse, and that is this, that sometimes I take the part of the *Dissenters*, and speak in their Commendation, yea and propound them as a Pattern to be imitated by us: which may seem to be inconsistent with the Principles of one who professes himself to be a Member of the *Church of England*. In answer to this, I shall (as the Apostle did) *use great plainness or boldness of Speech*, and I shall in few Words tell the World what my Thoughts are with relation to this Matter. I adhere to the Doctrine, I joyn with the Worship, I embrace the Communion, and I acquiesce in the Government of our Church, and I have always shew'd my self conformable to  
these :

these: but I could never prevail with myself to condemn all those who separate from us. For tho' I can with a good Conscience give an account to my self of my own practise, yet I have no Authority to censure and judge the Perswasions and Consciences of other Persons in this affair. I find there hath been a continual backwardness, for about a Century and a half, to comply with some things in our Church: and I cannot perswade my self that this proceeds wholly from *Ignorance* or *Perverseness* (as some tell us with great Confidence) but I rather charitably think that it hath its rise in some Persons from the real suggestion of their Consciences and Deliberate Judgments. I speak of those that are Sober and Grave, and who endeavour to Inform themselves aright, and whose Integrity is known to the World. Now, I pray why may we not have a good Opinion of these Persons, and speak in their behalf, seeing they sincerely protest that they are not able to submit to those Rites and Ceremonies and other Observances which our Church exacts of them, and seeing we our selves acknowledge these Observances to be things *Indifferent* and *Changeable*? He that seriously weighs this, will find no reason to blame me for my favourable

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rable thoughts concerning the *Dissenters*. Whatever their mistakes are otherwise, I behold very laudable things in some of them: their *Converse* favours of a Sense of Religion and Goodness: their Pastors pray with Fervency, and preach with Affection and to edification, and they live answerably: and I verily believe that they (as well as our Pious Churchmen) are a Blessing to this Nation. I can't possibly give my self any other turn of thoughts.

Let me add this further, there are but two ways of dealing with those that Dissent from us, *Tolerating them*, or *using violent means to extirpate them*. The former is Charitable and Mild, the latter is Severe and Inhumane: the one is agreeable to the Rules of the Gospel, the other is contrary to the Evangelical and Christian Spirit. This is an unquestionable Truth that our Power in Matters that are Indifferent, is not to be used to the Scandal of those that are Weak, or else the Ninth Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians* is no Scripture. And the same Inspired Writer tells us, that *to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean*, Rom. 14. 14. As much as to say, It is the Conscience that makes the Crime. Nothing must be done against that: for that makes the

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the thing Lawful or Unlawful to the Person that doth it. Now, it is certain, we have no Sovereignty over other Mens Consciences, and therefore it is a very Charitable and Christian Act in our Superiours and Rulers to condescend to the Weakness of the Scrupulous, and thereby to shew themselves Compassionate and Tender to such. And truly this may be expected of them, for the strong ones can comply with the weak, tho' the weak cannot with the strong.

As for the other Method, namely, of Severity, we have made Trial of it. The *Rubrick* hath been taught to be read in Bloody Letters. Our Altars have Reaked with Sanguinary Offerings. Some of our Priests have deserved that Title on the account of their Slaughter and Sacrificing. We have knock'd People on the Head for God's sake, and for Religion's sake. Whilst we have decried the Persecution which the *Papists* are guilty of, we have Imitated it. And yet we have found by Experience that these Fierce Expedients have not been Effectual on the Persons on whom they were exercised. They have dissented, and do dissent, and no Force and Violence will induce them to do otherwise. 'Tis time therefore to leave off this Discipline,

both

both as it is Ineffectual, and as it is Unchristian. Let the *Roman Church* brag of its Gift of Persecution: let them boast of this as their proper Talent, and as one certain Badge and Mark of their Church. But let us abandon this piece of Popery, and betake our selves to the Methods of Christianity.

But it will be said, This Indulgence which I allow of will be highly prejudicial to the *Church of England*, and its Excellent Constitution, and consequently whilst I speak in favour of the former, I forget the preservation and welfare of the latter. In answer to this, I declare it as my real Sentiment, that this way of dealing with the Dissenters will be injurious neither to the *Church nor State of England*: But on the contrary, it will be very serviceable to both, by removing that which hath been the great Occasion of Contention and Division, by sweetning and pacifying Mens Minds, by cutting off for the Future all Attempts of depriving one another of their Christian Liberty, and of prescribing Laws to Mens Consciences in Indifferent and Doubtful things in Religion, by thus subtracting the Fewel of all Religious Animosities, by giving a check to Bigotry, by inspiring Men with the same Common De-

sign

sign of advancing the Peace and Prosperity of the Community, by a mutual Concurring to resist and baffle the Assaults of our Common Adversary, and lastly by our United Prayers and Devotions, (tho' not in the same exact Mould) whereby a Blessing from Heaven will be derived upon us all.

Shall I speak my Judgment freely? It is this, that our Church cannot be safe without the Sober and Moderate Dissenters, no more than they can be without Us. We mutually help and support each other, and if either of us fail, we both fail. Therefore no Churchman or Dissenter of sober Thoughts can wish for or endeavour the ruine of either. I most sincerely propound this, out of that Respect and Affection I bear to our Church, the Church of *England*, and as I tender her Safety and Welfare. I am my self convinced, and I doubt not but I am able to convince others, that she cannot subsist long, if she stands by her self, for there is a necessity of a *Balance* in the Church as well as in the State, and in Kingdoms and Nations. If both Parties among us did not *Poise* one another, they would soon be Wanton and Skittish, and the High-Mettled Bigots on either side would shew themselves Disorderly,

derly, Mutinous and Unruly. If one of them should Rule alone, they would be apt to transgress the Laws of Moderation, they would be prone to run into Excess and Transports. But when they appear *together*, they put a Convenient Restraint and Bridle on each other, and so reciprocally befriend one another, and conduce to their mutual Preservation and Continuance. I have deliberately thought of this matter, I may say without Vanity and Ostentation I have thoroughly studied the Point, and as the Result of it, I think it may be pronounced that no Man's Inconformity can induce him to desire the downfall of the Church of *England*, and on the other side no Churchman who understands his own Interest, and that of the Church, can desire the extirpation of the sober Non-Conformists. Yea, It is my persuasion that the Church of *England* will be more Firm and Secure in this way that I have mentioned, than she could in the other, because none will be so irrational and senseless as to injure that Body of Men which supports them. And the Church will stand upon sure ground, because she will now have a considerable Friend, that was hitherto as Considerable an Adversary. And moreover, this may be truly

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said,

said, that our Church will be more *Entire*, because we shall then know who they are that embrace her Communion out of Real Perswasion and Affection, who they are that Conform out of Choice: which could never be discerned if there were no Indulgence to Dissenters.

Thus I have briefly suggested how, upon Secular as well as Religious Accounts, we ought to acquiese in a Mutual Forbearance, and friendly to agree among ourselves. Let us banish our former Heats and Animosities, and make it our Business to Unite in asserting the undoubted Articles of our Religion, in preserving the Christian Faith from being Corrupted, and in believing and teaching what Christ and his Apostles believed and taught: which is the same that the Church of *England* believes and teaches; than which nothing more Honourable and Great can be said in commendation of our Church.

And I might further add, that we have no reason to hate our Dissenting Brethren, and to look upon them as Aliens, and to brand them with the Name of *Schismaticks*, because none deserve this Treatment but such as offend out of *Wilfulness* and *Obstina-*  
*ncy*



nacy and a Spirit of *Contradiction* and *Pride*. A Learned Man of our Church, Mr. *Hales* of *Eton*, was wont to say, *Schism* and *Heresy* are *Theological Scare-Crows*, that is, they are too frequently made use of to terrify People without any Cause. That Man is a *Heretick*, saith one, because he doth not subscribe to that particular Set of Doctrines which I maintain. Such a one is a *Schismatick*, saith another, because he doth not submit to such Terms of Communion as I approve of. But Wise and Good Men will not be so frightened and scared, for they know that Perverseness of Will and Obduracy of Mind, and divers other Black Ingredients are requisite to constitute *Heresy* and *Schism*: and therefore every obliquity of Doctrine makes not a *Heretick*, and every Separation makes not a *Schismatick*.

And besides, with particular relation to the latter of these, I do not see how we can fairly stile those *Schismaticks*, whose Separation is allowed by the Laws. You will say, the Laws have only suspended the Penalty, but do not approve the Fact. I know this is commonly and vulgarly said, but can we think otherwise than that our Intelligent and Prudent Lawgivers re-

*laxcd the Punishment* because they were convinced that the Persons on whom it used to be inflicted, did *not deserve it*? Can we imagine that so Wise a Body of Men would do the former, without the consideration of the latter? So that this Suspension is a Vertual Allowance and Approbation, tho' not a Formal one. Therefore whatever Opinion and thoughts we have concerning the Dissenters, how mistaken soever we may think them to be, and how blamable otherwise, yet I can't pronounce them *Schismatics*. It is a mere Jest to say those are *Schismatics* who by the Reverend Fathers of our Church, as well as by the Temporal Lords, and by the Representatives of the whole Nation, Clergy as well as Laity, have been permitted to separate from our Church with Impunity. We have all done it, and we can't in Honour or Conscience go back. Yea, since it is our own voluntary Act and Deed, it is Folly and Weakness to retract it especially when I have succinctly shew'd that it conduces to the establishment of our Church.

These are my Thoughts, and this is my Perswasion, and I believe a great Number of our Learned and Pious Clergy concur with me. But the highest thing that can be

be said here is, that it is the Sense of our Excellent and Wise QUEEN. We have it on her Royal Word, that *She will always affectionately Support and Countenance the Church of England as by Law established, and that She will inviolably maintain the Toleration.* And this Noble Resolution of her Majesty was consented to and applauded by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Honourable Commons of this Realm. There is no Man but would be proud of such Substantial Abettors and Patrons as these that I have produced.

But abstracting from Authority, and the Suffrages of others, I have with great plainness, as I promised the Reader, given him my own Apprehensions in the present Matter: for it is our Felicity to live in a Free Age, and under a Prince and Prelates who act with all Freedom themselves, and permit others to do so. Wherefore I have taken this Liberty, and I must tell the Reader that I thought my self obliged in Conscience to publish these my Conceptions on this Subject, because I saw that both Parties continually burn in Hatred and ill Will against one another: and tho' they are *Fellow Christians*, yet they behave themselves towards one another as if they were Pagans and Infidels. Wherefore I was willing to

offer something to prevent this shameful Disorder for the future. It is deplorable to observe that some Dissenting Persons are enclined to condemn all that are of the Communion of our Church, and suspect the Goodness, Holiness and Integrity of every one that conforms to our Ecclesiastical Rites and Usages, and so they perpetually bear an Ill Will to them as they are of that Communion. On the other Hand, there are some Conforming Persons who are enclined to believe that all of the other Perswasion and Practise are either very Silly and Ignorant, or else they are Heady and Perverse, and act not out of Conscience but Humour and Refractoriness, and sometimes they give them over for Hypocrites. And thus we most scandalously reproach one another, and even Religion it self.

But I have propounded a Consideration, to heal this Vile Distemper, and cure us of our uncharitable Censures, Suspicions, and Heart-burnings. Let us be perswaded that we may *Both* of us, thro' the Mercy of God in Christ Jesus, meet together in Heaven, and therefore let us agree upon Earth, I mean as to the Necessary Doctrines of the Holy Religion, as to Practical Godliness, and as to Brotherly  
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Affection and Love, tho' as to some other things we are not Unanimous. And let us be convinced (which is the Consideration I have tendred) that it is *Best* for us that we should not be so: for if we were, we should carry it *too High* on that Side whereon we are perfectly agreed, and we should (such is our Nature and the nature of the thing) be hurried into an *Extream* that would prove more Troublesome to us than our present Disagreement. Wherefore my Advice is, Let us not be so Imprudent as to attempt to Cashier one another, or to gain the Conquest over each other, for such a Victory will be fatal to us both. But let us be satisfied with our Present State, for it is certainly the *Safest* and the *Best*, and by use and time it will be *Easiest*.

This is all I have to say at present to the Reader on this Head, and so I commend him to the Divine Benediction.



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# The Preacher.

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## The Second Part.

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**I**T is a Melancholly Consideration that we bear the Name of Christians, and yet have little of True Christianity : and that which makes it more dismal is, that it is our own fault that we have so little. We wilfully indulge our selves in Evil Principles, we nourish False Propositions and Maxims: we content our selves with Formalities, and the Outward and Ceremonial part of Religion : and we take little care to regulate our Lives and Manners according to the strict Rules and Laws which are prescribed us in the Gospel. So that at this day there are very few that have any thing Real and Substantial to shew for their Christianity. Give me leave to say, that if the Holy Apostles were now alive, they would not know by our Practise and Behaviour, no, nor by our Principles and Doctrines, that we are Christians.

It is of these latter that I shall speak at present, and it is in pursuance of my late Undertaking, wherein I attempted to offer to the publick view the Character and Office of a *Preacher*. I shew'd that it is the *first* part of his Work to set Men right as to their *Notions* and *Principles*, because these are the Ground-work of all Holy and Religious Practise. Accordingly, I presented the Reader with a brief Enumeration of the *Grand Points* and *Doctrines* of the *Christian Religion*; and more especially of *those* that I observed to be of little esteem with some of our Preachers of late. I had not time to insist upon this Head, because I had engaged my self to go through all the particular Branches of that Sacred Office and Employment, which could not but take up a Just Volume.

Now therefore, in this present Discourse I will resume that Subject, which is so necessary to be treated of in this Age, in which a great part of the Christian Doctrine is transformed from what it was at first. Many strokes of our Divinity are faulty, our Christian Theology is corrupted and debauched, and it is the perfect Reverse of what it was in the Days of the Apostles, yea, and what it was at, and after the *Reformation*. To Adulterate the Coin is High Treason: and surely then to corrupt our Religion is a higher Offence. And yet this, as Heinous and Black a Crime as it is, is in our Times frequently practised: and 'tis no unusual thing to Preach away some of the most substantial Points in Divinity. This being the Case of some Teachers, it must necessarily follow



low that their Hearers, will be perverted, and so both the one and the other will be estranged from the Truth, and shew their defiance of those Doctrines which are the greatest Props and Pillars of the Christian Religion. And thus is fulfilled that remarkable Prediction in 2 Tim. 4. 3. *The time will come when they will not endure sound Doctrine*: which Words being so pertinent to my present Purpose, I will make the Basis of my following Discourse.

In prosecution of them, 1. I will shew what were some of the main Principles of Christianity which the Apostle St. Paul urged upon those he Preached and Writ to (for without doubt these were the *Sound Doctrine* which he here speaks of) and consequently I shall make it appear what particular Doctrines ought to be preach'd by the Dispensers of the Gospel. 2. I will satisfy the Reader that this Prophecy of the Apostle hath been and is accomplished, and that *the Time is come* when sound Doctrine is not endured: Or, (which is the same thing) that some of the Apostolical Doctrines are generally neglected, yea, and Preached against. 3. I will enquire into the Causes of this Corruption and Miscarriage. 4. I will set before the Reader the Great Mischief and Danger of it. And, 5ly, and *Lastly*, I will crave leave to tender such Advice to my Brethren of the Clergy as is proper to this Subject.

*First*, I am obliged to let you see what were the main Principles of Christianity which this Blessed Apostle pressed upon those he Preach'd

and Wrote to. And if we once know what these are, we are sure that they are the very same which the Apostle here calls *sound* or *wholesome Doctrine*, and in other places, *sound* or *wholesome Words* ( which by the way we may observe is a manner of expressing himself, which he is much delighted in, and makes use of five or six times ) in opposition to False and Erroneous Doctrines, which are *unsound* and *unwholesome*, that is, destructive to the Health of Mens Souls, because they are repugnant to the Truth of the Gospel, wherewith the Souls of Christian Men are edified. Now, among those many sound Principles of Christianity which were delivered by the Apostle, and ought at this day to be preached by the Ministers of the Gospel, and to be entirely embraced by all the Professors of the Christian Religion, I shall mention but these Five at present, namely, the Doctrine of *Eternal Election*: that of *Original Sin*: the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*: *Justification by Faith alone*: and the *Necessity of Special and Supernatural Grace*, in order to the doing of any Spiritual Good.

I. The first and leading Branch of that *Sound Doctrine* which St. Paul preached, and which all the Dispensers of the Word are obliged to preach, and which we are all concerned to believe, is *Eternal Election*, which is the Decree of God from Eternity; whereby, out of his mere Good Will and Pleasure, he chose out some Persons, from the rest of Mankind, to bestow Grace and Salvation upon them. The following Texts in the Apostle's Writings expressly

pressly assert this. *Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate*, Rom. 8. 29. *He hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World*, Eph. 1. 4. *Having predestinated us unto the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ*, v. 5. *Being predestinated according to the Purpose of him who worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will*, v. 11. We read of those that were ordain'd (that is, decreed) to Eternal Life, Acts 13. 48. We read of some whose Names were written in Heaven, Luke 10. 20. and whose Names are in the Book of Life, Phil. 4. 3.

This is called *the Eternal Purpose which God hath purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Eph. 3. 11. As much as to say, this Eternal Purpose and Election were solely on the Consideration of the Merits of Christ Jesus, who was *the Lamb slain from the beginning of the World*, and not from any foresight of Faith and Good Works. You will find this unspeakable Blessing wholly resolved into Gods Free Grace and Mercy, into his Good Will and Pleasure, Luke 12 32. Eph. 1. 5, 9, 11. 2 Tim. 1. 19. which places I desire the Reader to consult at his Leisure. Our Apostle with respect to himself and the converted *Ephesians*, thankfully owns that *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ had chosen them in him before the Foundation of the World, that they should be Holy and without blame before him in love*, Eph. 1. 4. Observe it, they were from Eternity chosen by God, not because he foresaw that they would be Holy and Blameless, but *that they should be so*. It is to be entertained then as an incontestable Truth

that Election is not *Conditional*, that is, depending on Mens Qualifications, for these are the *Effects*, not the *Causes* of Election.

And the *Redemption* and *Satisfaction* wrought by Christ, answer exactly to this Eternal Decree of Election: so that those only have the Benefit of the former who are intrusted in the latter. *The Good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep*, and them only *John 10. 11. Christ is the Saviour of the Body*, Eph. 5. 23. that is, of the *Church*, as is evident from the Words immediately foregoing: whence I infer that Christ saves none but his Church; all others are excluded. And the Apostle confirms this in *v. 25. Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it*, and no other. For tho' Christ's Blood, if we respect the Infinite Vertue and Value of it, is sufficient to make Expiation for the Sins of every individual Person in the whole World, yet he Intentionally died for a certain number of Men only, and those are the Elect.

As to those places of Scripture which seem to assert the Universality of Christs Redemption, as when it is said, *He tasted Death for all, He willeth all Men to be saved*, they are to be taken in a restrained Sense, as might be most easily proved from the Style and Language of the Holy Writings. It is frequent with the Holy Spirit to make use of General and Universal Terms in a limited Sense. Whoever is acquainted with the Bible, cannot be ignorant of this. And no Man of Ingenuity and Modesty can deny that this is usual in other Authors and Writers: by *all* they frequently mean a *great many*,  
not

not every individual Person. Therefore we are not to wonder at it in the Scripture.

And the thing it self which we are speaking of, may be learnt from the Nature of God's Decree of Salvation, which is represented in the Sacred Writings not as General and Indefinite, but as Particular, Definite, and limited to certain Persons, excluding all others, as we have heard before. And truly if we consider the Matter aright, we shall perceive that there is a Necessity for this, for otherwise the Salvation of Men would be uncertain, and the design of Christ in the Redemption of the Elect, might be wholly frustrated and deserted; in so much that not one of those whom he hath redeemed, shall be saved: therefore we must assert that the number of the Elect, the Redeemed, and Saved is limited and determined.

And the Decree of *Preterition* or *Reprobation* necessarily follows upon that of *Election*: for where some are Chosen, it is implied that others are not Chosen, but Rejected. This is so Clear and Bright a Notion that no Man of Sense and Thoughts, and void of Prejudice can gainsay it. If he grants that some were from Eternity chosen to Life and Happiness, he must grant also that the lot of the rest is of a contrary Nature. If he doth not submit to this he cashieres the very Notion of *Election*, for Election is a choosing of some only. and that is no Election which is of All. Therefore we may rationally conclude that if some were ordained to Grace and Glory, the rest were destined to another State. This is plain from the Inspired Writings of the Old and New Testament, but

especially of the latter, which lets us know that there are these two Ranks or Divisions of Men, the Righteous and the Unrighteous, the one loved, the other hated of God, the one designed for Heaven and Happiness, the other for Hell and everlasting Misery. This double Decree is asserted by *St. Paul* in the Ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, whatever fond Glosses some have invented on the place. There we read of the Eternal Electing of *Jacob*, and the Eternal Rejecting of *Esau*, which are expressed by Gods *loving* the one, and *hating* the other, when they were *not yet born, and not having done any Good or Evil*, v. 11, 13. Accordingly the Apostle adds. *He bath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy : and whom he will, he hardneth*, v. 18. That is, God chooseth out whom he pleases to be Sharers in his Favour and Mercy : and he is as Arbitrary in his Refusal of others, for he denies his Special Grace to whom he thinks fit, and leaves them in their Sins and Guilt, into which they brought themselves, and he condemns and punishes them for those Sins. This is the Matter of that Decree which I am now speaking of, and which is often referred to in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly in the fourth Verse of *St. Jude's* Epistle, where we are told that *certain Men were before of Old* (that is, from Eternity, as is evident from *Prov. 8. 22.. Mich. 5. 2.*) *ordained to condemnation*.

And (whatever some prejudiced Men may think of this) it is not to be doubted that this Damnatory Decree is exactly agreeable to the Laws of *Justice*, as well as to the Notions of  
Sove-

*Sovereignty and Supremacy.* For this must always be remembered that God in his Eternal Decree looked upon all Men as fallen, and in a state of Sin and Guilt, and consequently he might without any Breach of his *Justice*, yea, and of his *Goodness* too, deal with them according to their Demerits, and leave them for ever in their Sins and Misery. But behold the *Goodness* and *Justice* of God together! He was pleased to make choice of some Persons, to shew the Infiniteness of his Grace and Mercy in determining to deliver them out of their sinful and miserable State, and in predestinating them to Life and Happiness: and he was likewise pleased to decree to with-hold his Grace and Mercy from others, and to manifest his just Severity towards them. And in *both* it was his Pleasure to advance his *Glory*, which was his ultimate end in creating Mankind.

And we may lay this down for a certain Maxim, that it was not possible that Gods *Glory* could be *completely* and *entirely* advanced, unless these *Two* sorts of Dispensations had taken place. For his *Justice* is as dear to him as his *Clemency*, and in its proper and peculiar way conduceth as much to the exaltation of his *Glory* and Honour, as that. This demonstrates the Accountableness of the Divine Decrees in passing by some, and choosing others, when they were all equally obnoxious to God's Wrath, and deserved to feel the Effects of it. We see that the Heavenly Conduct is not to be blamed and censured by us, for it is fully adjusted to the Nature of the *Divine Attributes*.

Let no Man mistake the Doctrine of the Eternal Decrees: God created no Man to Damn him, and to make him eternally Miserable: but Men by their own Sin and Default make themselves liable to Damnation. And it can be no Reflection on God to say that he from Eternity decreeing all things, decreed this in particular, that a great part of those Persons who were liable to his displeasure for their Sins, and merited no less than Eternal Punishment, should be left to continue in their Sins, and to harden themselves in them, and should therefore receive the just Recompence of their wilful Obduration.

And lastly, We are to know that the Decrees force and compel no Man to Sin: but every one acts freely and voluntarily: for God hath decreed even this, that Man, who is a Rational Creature shall act with Freedom and Choice. The Regenerate and Holy act by a Free and Ingenuous Spirit: and as for the Unregenerated and Wicked, there is no Violence offered by God to their Wills, for they offend out of Choice, and on that Account they are Guilty and Criminal. And this shall be their Frank Confession at the last day, when *the Lord will make manifest the Counsels of the Hearts*, as the Apostle speaks in 1 Cor. 4. 5. Thus I have presented to you a Brief Idea of the Doctrine of the *Divine Decrees*, and upon the whole Matter, I apprehend that we may with some Confidence conclude that this is a *Sound Doctrine*, and that it is one of those which is meant here by our Apostle, and which ought



ought to be preached by all the Pastors of the Church at this day.

II. The next is that of *Original Sin*, or the Natural Depravity of Mankind, derived to them from their first Progenitors. This Doctrine is plainly delivered by our Apostle in Rom. 5. 12. *By one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin : and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned.* And this, with some little variation in the Terms, is repeated again and again in the following Verses, to confirm the Truth of it, and to corroborate our Belief of it, and to let us know likewise that it is a Doctrine of very great Importance : otherwise it would not be reiterated, and with so much vehemence inculcated. The plain meaning of *St. Paul* is, that by *Adam's* Sin we all become Sinners, and consequently are obnoxious to Death and Misery. His personal Disobedience is transferred to us, and reputed ours. His Original Transgression, together with his Condemnation, passes to all his Posterity. This is the Sense of the Apostle in 1 Cor. 15. 21. *By Man (that is, by the First Man) came Death.* Which he expresses again in Words of the same import in the following Verse, *In Adam all die.* It was by this *One Man* that all other Men are subject not only to Temporal Death, but to that which is Eternal.

The Reason of which is this, *Adam* was the Head of Mankind, and accordingly the Covenant which was made with him, was made with all Mankind, and therefore his single De-  
fault

fault may be said to be the Personal Act of all Men, because their Wills were included in that of *Adam*.

What he did, they are interpreted to have done, because he was a Publick Person, and the Representative of all Mankind. Which is the meaning of what our Apostle said in the forecited place, *for that all have sinned*, that is, in *Adam* their Head they are justly reputed to have sinned. And this is clearly implied in *Adam's* being called *the first Man*, in contradistinction to *Christ the second Man*, 1 Cor. 15. 47. for *Adam* was the First Publick Person, and Head of the Old Covenant, as *Christ* was the Second Publick Person, and Head of the New Covenant. Wherefore seeing the First Man was the Root and Head of all the rest, and represented every one of his Posterity, it follows that the Offence which he committed was transferred to them all; and as in him they all sinn'd, so in him they all die.

Nor is Original Sin a mere *Imputation*, but it is accompanied with a Privation of Original Righteousness and Holiness, and a real Depravity and Defilement, which make us liable to the Divine Wrath and Displeasure. This without Controversy is the meaning of the Apostle when he saith, *We were by Nature the Children of Wrath, even as others*, Eph. 2. 3. *We Jews*, as well as you *Gentiles* (which Terms comprehended all Mankind at that time) are even Naturally enclined to what is Sinful and Vicious, and for that reason we deserve the Wrath of the most High. For seeing there is nothing that exposes us to this but *Sin*, it necessarily fol-

follows that when the Apostle here declares that all Men are by Nature *Children of Wrath*, he doth in effect say, that all Men have an inbred and natural Propension to Sin, and that we are Polluted and Defiled with it even from our Birth. No sooner had we the Nature of Men, but we became Sinful. This Contagion was derived to us by our Natural Conception and Generation.

This is that which the Royal Psalmist was sensible of, when in his Penitential Confession he own'd that *he was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did his Mother conceive him*, Psal. 51. 5. And this he acknowledges to be the Root and Source of all his Actual Sins. For it is as much as if he had said, The Sins of Adultery and Murder which I now confess before Thee, O Lord, are the Product of my Vile and Corrupt Nature. I have in me, and have had from the very Womb, an inexhaustible Fountain of Sin, which is flowing and will ever flow in this Life. All the Miscarriages of my Life are hence. Thou, O God, must justly abhor me for this, and for this I abhor my self. Thus this Good Man, this Godly Penitent lays the Axe to the Root of the Tree: he assigns here the Spring and Origin of all the more Visible Enormities which appear in Mens Conversations: they flow from this Fountain of all Evil, they shoot forth from this Root of bitterness with a strange Elastico Force.

This is that which our Apostle calls *the Sin that dwelleth in us*, Rom. 7. 17. *the Law in the Members*, v. 23. *the Body of Death*, v. 24. whence we are said to be *dead in Sins and Trespases*,

*passes*, Eph. 2. 1. Col. 2. 13. Of our selves we are no more able to Believe, and Repent, and live Godly Lives, than a Dead Man is to exert the Acts of Life.

And that Original Righteousness was lost by the Fall, is evident from this, that this Righteousness is said to be *Renewed* when Persons are Converted and brought into a State of Grace, Eph. 2. 4. Col. 3. 10. and this New State is called the *New Man*, Col. 4. 24. and the *New Creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17.

And further, the Coming of Christ from Heaven, and assuming our Nature, and graciously undertaking for us are an irrefragable Proof of this Loss of Primitive Righteousness and Original Holiness, and of the general Corruption of our Nature, for if we had not been thus Defective, and thus polluted, there had been no need of a Saviour and Redeemer. When we are told that Christ *is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. we may thence rationally and solidly infer; that we have no Wisdom, no Righteousness, no Sanctification of our own, and that we are not in a Capacity to Redeem our selves from the Slavery of Sin. Thus it appears from St. Paul's Writings, that the Doctrine of Original Sin was affected and mentioned by him. He proclaim'd it an unquestionable Truth that every Man is born with an Innate Vitiosity and Evil Concupiscence, derived to him from the First Transgressors, and that this Hereditary Disease and Distemper is the Cause of all the Spiritual Maladies and Disorders in a Mans Life.

III. Another Branch of that *Sound Doctrine* which was Preached by *St. Paul*, and is to be proclaimed by all Preachers of the Gospel, is the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*. To make way for the Entertainment of this Truth, the Apostle acquaints us, that our Sins are imputed to Christ. *He hath*, saith he, *made him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. and then he adds, *That we might be made the Righteousness of God in him*. How was Christ *made Sin* for us? By Imputation, that is, our Sins were accounted his, and therefore he suffered for them. How are we *made Righteousness* in him? By Imputation likewise, that is, Christ's Righteousness is accounted ours, and thereby we are free from all Guilt and Suffering. Christ himself *knew no Sin*, and therefore it would be highly Impious and Blasphemous to think or say that he was really a Sinner or Transgressor. Besides, that it was impossible he should be so, for he that takes away other Mens Sins, must have none of his own. But Christ was a Sinner by Imputation, that is, he was reckon'd so by God, and on that account was treated by him as such. This was long before prophesied of by *Isaiah*, Chap. 53. v. 6. *The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all*, he charged our Sins and Guilt upon him, and consequently, he required of him that he should undergo the Punishment due to us for our Sins.

Hence accrues to us that Ineffable Blessing which I'm discoursing of, *viz.* the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness and Merits to us, for  
by

by these I understand both what he did and what he suffered. As our Saviour made our Sins his own, so he made his Righteousness ours. Which is very plain and express in the Text, which I have before cited out of the Apostle, tho' I know there is generally given another Interpretation of it, and that by Men of great Learning and Piety. It hath been their Unhappiness to mistake the place, notwithstanding the *Plainness* and *Easiness* of it, for it is said in direct Terms, that as Christ is *made Sin*, that is, a Sinner by Imputation, so all Believers are *made Righteousness*, that is, Righteous in the same manner. Wherefore it is my firm perswasion, that as long as this Text remains in the Bible, we cannot, with any shew of Reason, deny that Christ's Righteousness is accounted by God as the Righteousness of Believers and Holy Men.

But there are other Passages in Scripture which establish this great Truth. We are told that the *Blessed Man*, whom *David* describes, is *the Man unto whom God imputeth Righteousness*, Rom. 4 6. that is, unto whom God imputeth Christ's Righteousness, for *David* and all the other Inspired Men, and Great Saints among the Jews trusted to be justified and saved by the Messias's Righteousness. And for this reason I look upon these Words of the Apostle, and those that he quotes out of the Psalmist, as a Proof of what hath been said, namely, that Christ's Righteousness is imputed to Believers

This is confirmed by what the Apostle delivers in another place, *Rom. 5. 19. By the Obedience of one shall many be made Righteous*, that is, not only (as some would understand it) Christ's Obedience and Merits are devolved upon the Faithful in regard of the Effect and Consequence of them, namely, Forgiveness of Sins, but Christ's Righteousness and Obedience are made over to them, and become theirs, and they are accounted Righteous before God by reason of Christ's Righteousness and Obedience imputed to them. I do not say that in the most strict and proper Sense this is *their* Righteousness, for it is *theirs* only by God's Gracious Allowance and Reckoning: but we may truly say it is *theirs*, because God himself esteems it to be theirs, and as done by them; and it is as Effectual to them, as if they had in their own Persons actually performed it.

This Imputed Righteousness is frequently called the *Righteousness of God*, and also the *Righteousness of God by Faith*, because it is imputed by God to those that believe in Christ, and to none else. I shall not at this time mention any other places out of *St. Paul's Writings*, or any others of the Inspired Authors, to evince the Truth of the Matter that is before us, because I intend to discourse hereafter more fully and amply on this, as well as the other Heads.

It shall suffice at present to add only this as a Rational account of the Doctrine that hath been delivered; we are to know that what our Saviour did, was not only *for our sake*, but *in our stead*: Christ was substituted by God

in our room, and accordingly what he did and suffered, was to be reputed as done and suffered by us. Therefore it can't be thought strange that God looks upon Christ's Righteousness and Sufferings as ours. The very nature of his Undertaking for us requires this. We were obliged to keep the Law; but Christ was pleas'd to do it for us. We were under an obligation of Punishment for the neglect of our Duty: but Christ took the Punishment on himself, and suffered what we should have suffered. Thus Christ represented us in his doing and suffering.

And the *Death* of Christ doth substantially prove this, for we are ascertain'd that *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. 23. and consequently seeing Christ died, his Death was the Wages either of his own, or other Mens Sins. Not of his own, for he was Sinless; therefore of others imputed to him, and reckoned as his. And now I appeal to any intelligent and considerate Person, whether the Imputation of Christ's perfect Righteousness be not firmly grounded on this sure Foundation.

IV. The next Head of Christian Divinity which is plainly and frequently asserted by our Apostle is *Justification by Faith alone*. We conclude, saith he, *that a Man is justified by Faith, without the deeds of the Law*, Rom. 3. 28. As much as to say, there is nothing on our part requisite to Justification but the exerting of this Grace of Faith. All Vertuous Actions and Performances, tho' necessary in themselves in order to Salvation and Happiness, are excluded from



from Justification. With Reference to the Instance which the Apostle had mentioned of *Abraham's* Faith and Justification, he tells us that *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness*, Rom. 4. 5. And in several Verses afterward in that Chapter he establisheth this Doctrine. Again, in *Gal. 2. 16.* he is peremptory, *Knowing, saith he, that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law: for by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified.* In which Words the Works of the *Moral Law* are meant, as is plain from the third Chapter to the *Romans*, where the Apostle had been speaking of the Offences against the *Moral Law*, and then concludes, *Therefore by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight*, v. 20. And to clear this Matter further, he adds, *For by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*, which manifestly shews that the *Moral Law* is here meant, for this is the Law that discovers to us our Sins and Failings: *I had not known Sin but by the Law*, Rom. 7. 7. Wherefore it is not to be denied that the Apostle excludes even the Works of the *Moral Law* from Justification.

Yea, even *Evangelical* and truly *Christian Works*, such as proceed from true Faith, have nothing to do in this Affair. We may observe that when *St. Paul* saith, *I know nothing by my self, yet am I not hereby justified*, 1 Cor. 4. 4. he refers not to any *Ceremonial* and *Ritual*

Works of his, nor to those that are barely Moral, but to such as are Evangelical, namely, his *faithful discharg of his Ministerial Office* in the several Parts of it, wherein he had the help of the Spirit, and the particular Assistance of Divine Grace: and yet here he found no Ground for Justification. And besides, that Reason which the Apostle so often assigns why we can't be justified by Works, namely, that all *boasting and glorying* may be shut out, Rom. 4. 2. Eph. 2. 9. holds good here: and therefore these *Evangelical Performances*, as well as others, have no part in Justification, lest they should administer matter of Ostentation and Glory.

And we shall be reconciled to this Doctrine if we consider that this way of being justified is exactly agreeable to the Dispensation of the Gospel, under which our Salvation is purchased for us by *another's Righteousness*, and not by our *Own*. He that fixes this on his Thoughts will soon be convinced that this is very Reasonable that no other Endowment or Grace should concur to this great Work, but *Faith*, whereby we apprehend and apply that Righteousness of *another*, even Jesus Christ the Righteous.

But before I quit this Particular, let me adjoyn this one Caution. Take heed you do not misrepresent this Doctrine, and imagin that it supercedes Good Works, and excuses you from Gospel Obedience, and a Holy and Exemplary Life. You are to remember that tho' it is another's Righteousness, even that of Christ Jesus our Lord, for which we are accepted of God,

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and pronounced Righteous, yet your own Inherent and Personal Righteousness is requisite to Life and Salvation, and without this no Man shall see the Lord. Tho' you can rely upon none but the Perfect Righteousness of Christ, yet you shall not be acquitted at the last and general Judgment, unless your Lives and Actions have been Righteous and Holy. In short, tho' you are justified by Faith, without Works, yet you are to be as Zealous in discharging your Duties, and exercising all your Graces, as if you were to be justified by them.

V. The fifth and last Grand Principle of the Christian Religion which we find delivered in the Writings of the New Testament, and especially in those of St. Paul, is *the Necessity of Special and Supernatural Grace*. And in this, as well as the others before mentioned, the People at this day are to be instructed by their respective Guides and Teachers. In order to this, we are to know that in lapsed Man, before his Regeneration, there is no natural Power or Liberty of Will, whereby he can choose that which is Good, or perform any Action that is Spiritual and Divine. For so we are expressly taught in 2 Cor. 3. 5. *We are not able of our selves to think any thing* (that is, any thing that is Good) *as of our selves*: and in Rom. 8. 7. *The Carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*. And the same infallible Author tells us that Unregenerate Persons are *without Strength*, Rom. 5. 6. *they receive not, they know not the things of the Spirit of God*, 2 Cor.

2. 14. *they are dead in Sins*, Eph. 4. 18. Col. 2. 13. If these and sundry other Texts be true (as we must needs acknowledge them to be because they are the Word of God) then it is evident that there is no Natural Ability in Man to do Good: and consequently when he doth it, he must be assisted by a Supernatural Power.

And this is attested by such plain and positive Testimonies as these, *Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*, John 3 3. he cannot partake of the Kingdom of Grace here, nor of that of Glory hereafter. The first and natural Generation will not suffice: there is an absolute necessity of a Second and Supernatural one. *No Man can come unto me*, saith Christ, *except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him*, John 6. 44. That is, no Man can come to Christ by Faith and True Repentance, unless he be powerfully moved and excited, and effectually drawn by the Fathers Almighty Arm. Yea, Christ himself could not by all his Preaching, as he was a mere Man and a Prophet, draw any Persons to a saving Belief, and obedience to the Truth. There was absolutely requisite, in order to this, the Divine and Extraordinary Power which he speaks of in these Words. Which is thus expressed by our Saviour in another place, *No Man can come unto me, except it be given to him of my Father*, John 6. 65. Which shews that Conversion (which is *coming* unto Christ) is not in our own Power, but is the Gift of God the Father, the peculiar Blessing which descends from Above.

Which

Which is further confirmed by those Words of our Lord in *Mat. 11. 25. Thou hast hid these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes.* Whence it is manifest that there are some Persons to whom God doth not vouchsafe his Special Illumination and Grace: but there are others on whom he is pleased to bestow it: for *so it seemeth good in his Sight*, as it immediately follows, that is, this Difference is wholly from God's Good Will and Pleasure, as he is Absolute and Sovereign Lord of all Persons.

This Peculiar and Discriminating Grace is thus set forth by our Apostle, *1 Cor. 4. 7. Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? To you it is given (as a special Favour and Priviledge) to believe on him, Phil. 1. 29. It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good Pleasure, Chap. 2. v, 13. He worketh in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, Heb. 13. 21.* All which Texts, and many more, that might be produced, assure us of this Truth, that Conversion and Sanctification must be effected by a Divine and Supernatural Power, that we cannot will or perform any Spiritual Good, without a Special and Extraordinary help from above.

It is true, Men have a Natural Power as to the External Part of Religion, and as to abstaining from some Acts of Vice, but they have neither Will nor Power by Nature to exert those Acts of Religion which are truly Spiritual and Internal, and will be available to everlasting Salvation. These require an Almighty

ty Assistance and Power. And therefore we are compelled by the Christian Verity to acknowledge that the only reason why some are Converted and renewed, and others are not, is because God's Spirit effectually works upon the one, and not upon the other. It is the Efficacious Influence of the Holy Ghost that makes the Difference, and not the Self determining Power of the Will, as some are pleased to call it.

The Truth of this we may see in those very Men who are the most forward in asserting the Power of *Free Will*. What singular Effects doth it produce in them? are they thereby enable to Live better than others? Nay, on the contrary, it is observable that those who most of all applaud and cry up the Power of Nature and Free Will, shew little of this Power in their Actions. Tho' they speak great things about the Vertue and Strength of their Wills, yet they confute them by their Practice. And truly we have all of us that in our Hearts and Lives which will be a perpetual Confutation of the *Natural Ability* of Man to please God, and do his Duty aright. We have enough to convince us that we are by Nature weak and impotent, and that Man's Conversion and Regeneration, and his Ability to do Good are not to be resolved in to his Free Will, and his making a better Use of it than others do. Nor truly is it fit that they should be resolved into this, for then a Man might thank himself, and not God, for all the Good that is in him.

Nor doth this Doctrine give any Encouragement to *Sloth* and *Idleness*, as if, because we have the Divine Assistance, therefore we must do nothing our selves. The Holy Scriptures do every where call upon us to be Diligent and Industrious, to be Careful and Vigilant. We are enjoyn'd to search the Scriptures, to inform our selves from God's Word, to implore his Aid, to consider our ways, to examine our Hearts and Lives, to keep a continual Guard over our selves, to lay hold on the Opportunities, and make use of the Means of Spiritual Good. These are God's Appointment, and therefore we are sure that we ought to be mindful of them. And this we know, that the Conversion of Sinners is for the most part effected in this way. We see that God is wont to confer Grace and his Good Spirit in the use of these Proper Means: therefore here our Industry and Endeavours are to be exerted.

But the Effectual changing of our Hearts, and the Actual Renewing of our Minds is the sole Work of God himself, and we have no hand at all in it: Nor indeed can we, because it is the Work of Omnipotency. *Seneca* and *Burrus* cannot make *Nero* good, all the Art imaginable cannot reform the Manners of some Persons. And so it is even in the Preaching of the Gospel, the best and exactest Instructions are insignificant without the inward Teaching. This was that which opened the Eyes of the Apostles themselves, and this was effectual to the opening the Eyes, and turning the Hearts of those to whom they were sent. This was the Sovereign Eye-Salve which was so successful in their  
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own and others Conversion. This is the true *Un-  
guentum Apostolorum*, this is the *Anointing which  
teacheth them all things*, 1 John 2 27. There is  
no such thing to be had in Natures Shop, be it  
never so well furnished : this and every perfect  
Gift cometh down from the Father of Lights,  
from the Holy Spirit the Author of all Saving  
Illumination. There is that peculiar Agency  
belonging to these, which is not communica-  
ble to any others, and to this alone we owe  
our Conversion, namely, to an Omnipotent  
Power.

For this is undeniably certain that our Con-  
version is wrought by the very same Power  
by which the World was created, and by which  
Christ was raised from the Dead. And thence  
it is that the living Grace of God operates so  
powerfully on the Hearts of Men, that they  
are not able to make *Resistance* against it, for  
what is *Omnipotent* is *Irresistible*. And where-  
as some tell us that if Grace be irresistible in its  
Operation on Mens Minds, then the Freedom  
of Man's Will will be destroyed, and so Man  
will be unmanned ; and if all Rational Choice  
be taken away, then Force and Compulsion must  
succeed in its place, and then Farewel to all  
Vertue, and Vice too : whereas ( I say ) some  
talk after this manner, we are to know that  
they are great Triflers, and alledg nothing that  
hath any weight in it. For this is certain, that  
there is no infringing of the Rational Consent  
and Choice of the Will, when God shall be  
pleas'd to make a Change in the Will, and of  
Evil to make it Good, and of Unwilling to  
make it Willing : which is the Case at present.  
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The Will of Man in Conversion is not destroy'd as to the Nature of it, the Consent and Choice yet remain: but by the Grace of God there is an *Alteration* in the Will, it is Renewed and Reformed, the former Bent and Inclination of it are removed, and a New one is put into it, whereby it freely and willingly becomes Obedient to the Heavenly Call. Thus the Man is not unmann'd, and the Freedom of his acting remains, and this we see is consistent with the *Irresistibility* of Grace. Wherefore, notwithstanding what hath been Objected, it is clear that God's Grace cannot be resisted.

And besides, we cannot imagin that when God intends and designs the Conversion of a Sinner, he will suffer himself to be Baffled, and the Operation of his Holy Spirit to be frustrated, (which yet all the Patrons of *Arminianism* hold) and therefore we must needs acknowledge that the *Special* Grace of God is always attended with an *Invincible* Power and Efficacy.

And hence it follows that those who are truly Regenerate, and in the State of Grace, *cannot fall from it*: for that Almighty and Irresistible Power whereby they were born again, will preserve and uphold them in that blessed State. St. Peter speaking to those Persons whom the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant Mercy, had begotten again unto a lively hope, adds that they are kept by the Power of God (the Almighty Power of God) thro' Faith unto Salvation, Epist. 1. Chap. 3. v. 5. and therefore it is impossible that they should finally Apostatize from Grace. When the Di-  
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vine Goodness is pleased to bestow that Powerful and Special Grace upon any Persons, whereby they are distinguished from all others, it is not to be thought that he will take it from them, and make null that Distinction which was between them and Reprobates : which yet the forementioned Persons are not ashamed to assert.

It ought to be remembered that it is part of the *Everlasting Covenant* made by God with the Elect, that *he will put his Fear into their Hearts, that they shall not depart from him,* Ezek. 32. 40. And our Saviour saith of his Sheep, *That they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his Fathers Hand,* John 10. 28. And our Apostle assures us that *the gifts and calling of God are without Repentance,* Rom. 11. 29. And no Man can deny this, if he considers but this one thing, that the Sanctification and Perseverance of the Saints depend upon the *Eternal Election*, which is fixed and unalterable, and therefore those must be so too.

Thus you see what is the *Sound Doctrine* that *St. Paul* preached, that is, what are some of the Main and Principal Heads of it, and which the People ought to be instructed in in these times by their faithful Pastors. Much more might have been said to explain, to illustrate, and to establish the several Points, but this which I have offered at present is only a Detachment from a more Complete and Ample Treatise which I intend on these Subjects. However, from what hath been delivered, you cannot but take notice of the *Consistency* of these  
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Doctrines among themselves: you cannot but observe that they are Link'd together, and depend upon one another. The Knowledge of one leads us directly to the Knowledge of the rest, because they are all of a Piece. And from this perfect Agreement, Connection and Harmony, we must needs infer the Truth and Reality of these Doctrines: and we cannot but be pleased to see that hereby we are able to solve all the Great *Phænomena* belonging to the Christian Religion.

I PROCEED to the Second general part of my Undertaking, which is to shew that this Prediction of St. Paul, *The time will come when they will not endure sound Doctrine*, hath been, and is at this day fulfilled. The Apostolical Doctrines above recited have heretofore been opposed, and in our own times the Opposition is very frequent. Even in the Apostle's time this began, and he himself lived to see his Prediction made good in part. For he intimates that *his Gospel was hid*, 2 Cor. 4. 3. and that *another Gospel than that which he had preached*, began to be started, Gal. 1. 8. which it is probable doth more particularly refer to the Doctrine of *Justification*, which was opposed at that time. But in the times following, and especially when the Church was corrupted with Popery, the Apostle's Prophetick Words were more fully accomplished. It is likely that St. Paul here  
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foretels the *Popish* Apostacy (as he doth also 2 *Thess.* 2.) and together with that, the prevailing of those *Unsound Doctrines* which are contrary to those that I have mentioned. For it is no wonder that the Apostle means *both* these, seeing there is so great an Affinity between them. Infomuch as the Learned \* Divines in Queen *Elizabeth's* days and afterwards reckoned those Doctrines among the *Popish* ones, as being one part and division of them. I shall confine my self to the former; namely, the *Unsound Principles* which I refuted under the foregoing Head, and I shall briefly shew that they have been entertained and professed in the Degenerate Times of the Church, and that then and now the *Sound Doctrine*, opposite to these, hath *not been endured*.

I begin with the Decree of *Eternal Election*. And it is manifest that this, as it is described to us by *St. Paul*, and as I have represented it to you from his Writings, could not be endured: for we are informed by *St. Augustin, Hilary, Jerom, and Prosper*, that a *Conditional Election* and the *Undetermined Number of the Elect* were the *Pelagian* Tenents. And the same Fathers tell us that *Eternal Election* without the foresight of Faith and good Works, as the Motive of that Election, was denied and disown'd by *Pelagius* and his Followers. And these were succeeded by the *Roman Clergy* in the times of *Papacy*, who asserted none to be chosen from

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\* *Bp. Jewel, Dr. Sutcliff, Dr. Willet.*

Eternity but upon certain Conditions, and fore-  
seen Qualifications. And this is the General  
Opinion of those of the Communion of the  
Church of *Rome* at this day.

Nor is it disliked by several of those that  
take to themselves the Name of *Protestants*,  
as the *Socinians* and *Remonstrants*. And even  
among our selves, there are great Multitudes  
that are sower'd with the same Leaven. One  
of our Chief Divines, in his *Paraphrase* and *Hammond*  
*Annotations* on the *New Testament* evades all  
the places that speak of Eternal Election, and  
with art and subtilty endeavours to baffle the  
true meaning of our Saviour and his Apostles  
on that Head. And this Writer being general-  
ly admired and followed by our Churchmen,  
it is no wonder that the Doctrine of *Election*  
hath been so exploded by them. And lately  
there hath risen another, of no mean Figure, *Whitby*  
who hath trod in the Steps of the forementio-  
ned Author (as he did in those of *Grotius*) and  
will not suffer one place in all the *New Testa-*  
*ment* to be meant of *Eternal Election*. In his  
*Annotations* he makes the *Elect* to be *Christians*  
*chosen in time out of the World by Faith*, but he  
takes no notice of Election from Eternity.

And as for the *Damnatory Decrees*, these  
kind and good-natured Gentlemen can by no  
Means brook them. They tell us that we  
charge God with Injustice and Cruelty, when  
we assert the Eternal Reprobation of some Per-  
sons, and in so doing speak the Sense of the  
Holy

Holy Scriptures. The \* Author whom I last quoted tells us that these Words, [*As many as were ordained to Eternal Life*], can't signify a fixed number of Persons, absolutely ordained by God to Eternal Life, so that they, and they only shall obtain it, and all others be excluded from it, because this Exclusion charges God with the greatest cruelty: and he is not afraid to say (what others have said before him on this occasion) that *it makes God as instrumental to Mens ruine as the very Devil.* But if they think this to be too harsh and severe, yea Unjust, I desire them to observe what the Apostle saith, after he had maintained that Proposition, *He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy: and whom he will, he hardneth;* Rom. 9. 18. He thus applies himself to the Person who raises an Objection against this, *Nay, but, O Man, (saith he) who art thou that repliest against God? Hath not the Potter power over the Clay of the same lump to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another to Dishonour?* v. 20, 21. As if he had said, shall the Creator be charged with Injustice for doing what he pleases with his Creatures? May he not, out of the universal Mass of Mankind, look'd upon by him as laps'd and corrupted, and therefore Guilty, and deserving Condemnation, choose whom he pleases to Life and Salvation, and doom the others to Eternal Misery for their Sins?

Surely, out of humble deference to the Absolute Lord and Sovereign of all, we may grant

\* Dr. Wb. on the Place.

this to be his Prerogative, especially when we find it so often asserted in the Holy Oracles. But this will not move and affect some Men, such as have mean and sordid Thoughts concerning the Great and Sovereign Being. The very mentioning of *the Elect* in one of our Sermons would be a Prodigy to them, and the pronouncing of *Reprobation* would be more surprizing and amazing than a sudden Thunderclap. Yea, some of our Preachers themselves would hardly recover their Wits, if such a Horrid Word should pass thro' their Lips. Thus *the time is come* in which *the sound Doctrine* which St. Paul preached, is *not endured*.

The next Doctrine, namely that of *Original Sin*, hath been also rejected, for tho' it had been universally held in the Church for the four first Centuries, yet *Pelagius*, who appeared in the fifth, disputed against it, and utterly denied it, and (as St. *Augustin* and other Fathers who wrote against *Pelagius* acquaint us) maintained that no Persons are conceived and born in Sin, that no Man is naturally enclined to Vice, and that no Vicious Inclination or Propension was or could be derived from our first Parents; or supposing such a thing, it is not accompanied with Guilt, and it is impossible it should deserve Punishment. And as the *Pelagians* of old, so the *Romanists* afterward corrupted and obscured this Doctrine of Original Sin; and especially this was done in the Council of *Trent*.

*Socinus* took the same side, and hath the confidence to say, \* *That Device of Original Sin is a Jewish Fable, and brought into the Church from Antichrist.* And his followers tell us that † *there is no such thing as Original Sin.* The *Remonstrants*, and those of that way come little short of this, and declare that Original Sin is || *neither a Sin, nor a Punishment, but a Defect, or Infirmity, a Calamity or Infelicity inflicted by God on Mankind*: and sometimes 'tis called a *Misfortune.*

What some of our Divines, and in our own times, have thought, yea and published concerning Original Sin, is well known. A Prelate of the Church of *England*, shall I say, or *Ireland*, hath deliberately and professedly appeared against it, and with great Industry endeavours to prove that *Adam's Sin* doth not affect us at all. *It is a cruel and harsh thing*, saith (a) a late Writer, *that God should ruine all Mankind for so small a Fault, and that committed thro' the levity of a silly Woman.* And therefore he concludes that the History concerning *Adam's Fall*, and all the things that are said about it, is a Romance, a Legend, a Fable. The late Archbishop, tho' he seems to own *an universal degeneracy of all Mankind by the Sin and Transgression of our First Parents*, yet when he comes to speak to it, he falters, and tells us only

\* Dialog. de Justificatione.

† Cat. Racov. cap. 18. de Lib. Arbit.

|| Apol. cap. 7.

(a) D. Burnet Archæolog.

cap. 7.



\* 'tis a great depth, and tho' the Scripture mentions it, yet it speaks but little of it: but he saith nothing of the Consequences of it to Adam's Posterity. But his Popul is free and open, and it may be speaks out what the other kept in, † *Moses*, saith he, *said these things meery to conciliate a reverence and regard to his Laws, which command many things trivial and indifferent.* Another of our Churchmen talks thus, || *What am I concerned in Adam's Sins, which had never my will or consent, more than in the Sins of Mahomet or Julius Cæsar, nay, than in the Sins of Beelzebub and Lucifer?* We are like to thrive well with our Points of Divinity if such rude and prophane Language as this (you must pardon me if I can't bestow better Epithets upon it) comes from the Mouths and Pens of our learnedest Divines.

A late Writer comes sober to destroy this Point, and with great Pains endeavours to prove that (a) *the Posterity of Adam did not Sin in Adam.* And yet he grants that it is proved from *Rom. 5.* that *the Punishment of Adam's Sin is devolved on his whole Posterity.* Wherein he plainly confutes himself, for *Punishment* supposes *Guilt*, and this supposes *Sin*: and therefore if he grants that *Punishment* is devolved, he must acknowledge that *Sin* went before.

\* Serm. Vol. 7. p. 72, 73.

† Archæolog. cap. 7.

|| *Glanvil of the Præexistence of Souls.* chap. 2.

(a) *Dr. Whitby's Annotat. on Rom. 5. 13. and 19.*

I could mention others who are not lightly tinged, but deeply dyed in this grain: and if you should ask them one by one what their Sentiment of Original Sin is, I question not but they would agree to answer in the words of a late Lay-Author, who professes that \* *Original Sin was ever a difficult Pill with him to swallow, his Reason stopping it in his Throat, and not having Faith enough to wash it down.* This we may gather from what they have said and Writ, and from observing that this is a Doctrine seldom taken notice of and regarded in our Sermons, and wholly neglected in our Prayers. Briefly, *Pelagius*, who first appear'd against this Doctrine, was a *Britain*, and his Country at this time affords too many of his Perswasion.

*Imputed Righteousness* is another Doctrine that will not be endured. We could not perhaps expect any other thing from the *Papists*, who are wont so extravagantly to cry up their own Meritorious Works and Righteousness. But to hear Men, who call themselves *Protestants*, deny the imputed Righteousness of our Saviour, is very strange and prodigious. And yet this is done by the Followers of *Socinus*, by the *Arminians* and *Remonstrants*, by the late Set of *Quakers*, and even by some of our own Church. The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, saith one of them, † *is no where delivered in the Holy Oracles, but is mere Imagination contrary to the Attributes of God, and*

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\* Orac. of Reason. p. 10.

† Mr. *Glanvil's* Essay 7th.

to the Doctrine and Designs of the Gospel, and is exceedingly pernicious to Christian Life and Virtue. We know another of our own Order who hath drawn his Pen in this Cause, and looks upon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness as mere Jargon and insignificant Banter. He hath a notable Talent of saying what he pleases on any Subject, and accordingly he peremptorily asserts, that \* *in all the New Testament there is no such expression as the Righteousness of Christ, or the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness* In the † same place, and ‖ elsewhere, he confidently saith, that *Imputed Righteousness plainly contradicts the Gospel of our Saviour, that the Gospel is perfectly silent about it, that it is no where to be found but in Mens Fancies.* The Book in which these and the like Passages occur was publish'd with Dr. Parker's *Imprimatur* to it, over which Honest Dr. Dupont wrote these Words with his own hand (as I find them in that Book which was given by him to *Trinity College Library in Cambridge* and is there now to be seen) *I fear such Discourses and such Imprimaturs will bring no credit to the Reformed Religion, nor to the Church of England.* No surely, unless that Religion and that Church can derive Credit and Repute from a Prophane and Impious Droll, not only on the *Imputation of Christ's Righteousness*, but on his *Satisfaction*, and the *Vindictive Justice of God*, and the *Applying of Christ's Merits by Faith*, and the *Uni-*

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\* Discourse concerning the Knowledge of Jesus Christ  
p. 243. † P. 242, 243. ‖ P. 373.

on of Christ and Believers, and on several other Great Mysteries of the Gospel. A *Lucian*, a *Julian*, a *Rablais* could not have acted this part more dexterously and exactly.

But there is another that set out about the same time with this Writer, and perfectly agrees with him in running down the Doctrine of Imputation, In a Discourse where he gives us an Account of *the Principles and Practises of certain Moderate Divines of the Church of England*, he tells us that \* *we hear no talk from their Pulpits of an Imputative Righteousness*. Nor is there any such thing in *their Bibles*, as he adds afterwards, † *Imputed Righteousness is not to be found in all the Bible, as it relates to Christs Righteousness*. This is just what the other Gentleman said, that there is not one place of Scripture where Christs Righteousness is said to be imputed. Which also are the very express Words of *Bellarminc*, as well as of *Socinus*. But he grows Insolent and Passionate, and intimates that none but *Arrant Hypocrites desire to have more told them* concerning the Imputation of Christs Righteousness, than what he had said of it *Part 1. p. 126*. Who would think it that these Men who stile themselves *Moderate Divines*, should be so intemperate in their Tongues, and so given to Insult? Whilst they are Enraged, and spit Fire, they would perswade us that their Mouths are Cool. Whilst they appear in an Agony, and are next to Raving, they pretend to Moderation. But

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\* Part 1. p. 125.

† Part 1. p. 132.

he proceeds, and in the same place affirms, that *Christs Righteousness being made ours, is grossly false, and a dangerous Notion, and Nonsense*; yea, in \* another place he condemns it as a *Sottish Doctrine*. Still here is a great deal of Passion and Confidence, but no Argument or Proof.

I might further observe the Inconsistency of this Reverend Author with himself, for tho' he declares himself all along stiff and peremptory, magisterial and positive in all the *Arminian* Points. yet he intermixes very luscious talk about *Freedom in Opinions*, and would have none to be *Positive and Dogmatical*. Which soon reminded me of what I met with in Bishop *Sanderfons Pax Ecclesiæ*, where he bids us take notice of *the Cunning of the Arminians, to advance their own Party, in pleading for a Liberty for every Man to abound in his own Sense in things undetermined by the Church, that so they may spend their own Tenets the more freely: whereas yet it is too apparent by their Writings and Speeches that their intents and endeavour is to take the benefit of this Liberty themselves, but not to allow it to those that dissent from them*. Thus that Judicious Prelate.

There is another dignified Man of our Church who lately tells us, that † *there is no mention in the Scripture of the Imputation either of one Mans Sin, or of his Righteousness, to another*. And he adds soon after, that tho' for the Obedience of one many are and were delivered from

\* P. 140.

† Dr. *Whitby's* Annotat. on Rom. 5. 13.

that death to which they were obnoxious, yet *they are not made righteous by our Saviours Righteousness imputed to them.* And several of our Theologers are of the same mind, and therefore the Doctrine of *Imputation* is generally laid aside, and in most Pulpits is no longer heard of: or if it be, it is exposed to contempt and scorn. And yet one would think this Doctrine should not be questioned in the least, but that all Persons should readily give their Suffrage to it, because we are assured that there is no righteousness of our own, whereby we can be justified, all our Inherent and Personal Righteousness being imperfect: therefore it must be an Imputed Righteousness that we are to rely upon. Wherefore, instead of deriding, we should rather admire the Grace of God, and adore his Goodness that, seeing no Man hath such a righteousness of his own as is sinless and perfect, there is provided for us a Righteousness that hath those Qualities. And this may be truly said, that if we are not deeply apprehensive of this unspeakable Gift and Privilege, it is a sign we have no sense of our Sinful and Wretched State: but where this is there is a sense likewise of our absolute need of Imputed Righteousness.

That other part of *Sound Doctrine*, namely, *Justification by Faith alone*, is expressly denied, not only by those of the Roman Communion, but by the other Parties before mentioned, and even by our own Clergy. Some Years ago, when no Theological Books were to be published without a License obtained from an Archbishop or Bishop, a Friend of mine had occasion

to make use of one of their Chaplains for that purpose, that is, in order to the publishing of a short Discourte : but he refused to grant his *Imprimatur*, merely for this Reason, because there were ( as he alledged ) some Touches of *Calvinism* in it. And what was the *Calvinism* objected against, and which hindred the publishing of the Book? It was this, that *Good Works and Holy Duties are not the Ingredients of Justification*. Notwithstanding there are in the *Bible*, not only light Touches and Specimens, but large and ample Confirmations of that which he calls *Calvinism*. *St. Paul's Epistles* are all over *Calvinistical*, and particularly in the Point of *Justification*, which is the thing I'm now speaking of. It is certain, if we will adhere to this *Apostle*, we cannot hold that we are justified by *Works* in Conjunction with *Faith*, as some of our present Clergy assert, both in their Writings and Sermons. And it is observable that they use the very same Arguments in this Cause which the *Roman Writers* do. They are either so lazy or so unskilful as not to offer any of their own: but they plentifully borrow of the Champions of the Church of *Rome*, and set down what they say Word for Word.

If it be objected that *St. James*, another *Apostle*, maintains this Doctrine, and in express Terms asserts that *by Works a Man is justified, and not by Faith only*, *Jam. 2. 24.* there needs not much be said to reconcile these two *Apostles*, tho' there hath been great toiling and sweating about it in the Writings both of Protestants and Papists. The short is this, that the *Apostle Paul* speaks of that *Justification*  
which

which is *before God*, and *St. James* of that which is *before Man*. The former is by Faith alone, the latter by Works joyn'd with Faith. In the sight of Men we are truly said to be reputed Just and Righteous because of our Holy and Religious Actions which are taken notice of by Men; and we cannot otherwise be pronounced Righteous by them, for our Faith is invisible to them. But before God our Faith alone is sufficient to constitute us Righteous, he having appointed this to be the sole Instrument whereby we apprehend Christ Jesus. But our Best Works are not able to render us Innocent and Acceptable in the sight of God.

This is a plain and easy Solution of the Difficulty, and this is grounded on the Distinction which the Scripture it self makes between Justifying *before God*, and *before Men*, Luke 16. 15. Rom. 3. 20. Rom. 4. 2. Gal. 3. 11. for where the former of these is mentioned, it is in Contradistinction to the latter, which is necessarily supposed, tho' not expressed. In a Word, Faith alone is the Instrument of Justification before God, but Good Works are necessary to justify our Faith before Men. Thus *St. Paul* and *St. James* perfectly agree. And thus it appears that Justification by Faith alone is a *sound Doctrine*: and I have made it appear likewise that it is *not endured*, no not by our *English Preachers*.

And the same may be said of that last Doctrine which I insisted upon before, I mean that of *Special and Supernatural Grace*, and the necessity of it in order to Conversion and Salvation. *St. Augustin* and other Writers who give us an account of the Heresy of *Pelagius*, acquaint



quaint us that this was the principal Part of it, that Man is born with that Natural Power and Strength whereby he can choose that which is spiritually Good, and perform all Good Works, without being beholding to a Special Grace. Some of the Church of Rome favour this Opinion: but *Socinus* and his Partisans professedly maintain it. In the *Raccvian Catechism* there is this Question put, \* *Is there not need of the Inward Gift of the Holy Spirit, that we may believe the Gospel?* and the Answer is, *Not at all.* And their chiefest Authors boldly assert that there is no more required to Conversion than Preaching of the Word and Moral Suasion.

The *Remonstrants*, it is true, acknowledge that nothing is done aright in Religion without the help of the Spirit; they grant that the Divine Assistance is necessary to the doing of every Good Action. But by this Help and Assistance they generally mean no more than God's Ordinary Concurrence. Which is no more than what the *Pagan Philosophers* † willingly granted. They all held that Divine Assistance was necessary to make Men Vertuous, especially in a High Degree. Nay, some of the *Remonstrants* scarcely acknowledge so much, for they tell us that one Man is helped by God as much as another. They hold that God doth as much for those that perish, as for those that are effectually saved, as much for *Judas* as for *Peter*: and if there be any thing extraordinary, it is

\* De Prophetico Christi munere. cap. 6. Qu. & Resp. 9.

† Multos & nostra civitas & Græcia tulit singulares viros, quorum neminem, nisi juvante Deo, talem fuisse credendum est. Cic. de Nat. Deorum. l. 2.

done by a Mans own self. It is from Man's Free Will and the right exerting of it that God's Grace becomes Effectual.

And this is the general Perswasion of Our Churchmen at this day, who so extol Man's Free Will and Natural Power as to derogate from Supernatural Grace. They are never so Romantick and Rapturous as when they talk of Free Will and Liberty of Choice : \* *by vertue of this, saith one of the chief of them, a Man moves himself by his own Internal Principles, and Vital Energy, and can determine himself to this Object or that. He hath such a Helm within himself that he can sail aganst Wind and Tide: he can move himself in a Calm, and stay himself in a Storm: in a word, he can move which way, when and how far he will, and stop his own career when he pleases.* And such mighty things are generally attributed to this Faculty as we seldom or never hear ascribed to the Almighty Grace of God. You shall find our greatest Divines applauding and magnifying the Power of Nature even in Persons that are in a state of Unregeneracy. † *The worst and most vitiously inclined Men, saith the forecited Author, do some Good.* And as for those that can assert the most Vertuous Actions of Unregenerate Men to be express Sins, they may pretend what Patrons they will of their Opinion, but I'm sure neither Scripture nor Reason will countenance it. Say you so? then what think you of those who

\* Dr. Goodman's Winter Evening Conference. Part 2. p. 170.

† Dr. Goodman's Penitent Pardon'd. p. 77.

composed the *Articles* of our Church? do you look upon them as Good Patrons, or not? do you believe that they had neither Scripture nor Reason on their side when they asserted that \* *we have no power to do good Works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the Grace of God, by Christ's preventing us?* or do you think that *Unregenerate Men* have the *Grace of God by Christ, preventing them?* And is there no Scripture or Reason to countenance this Assertion, that the *Actions of Unregenerate Men* are *Sins?* why then did you subscribe to that other Article of the Church of England, † *Works done before the Grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin?*

This is the Language of our Church, and of the Scripture, and yet we see it is an unknown or a barbarous Tongue to those who pretend to understand their Mother when she speaks, or rather they do understand her, but willfully and obstinately disguise it, to favour their own Opinion and Sentiment. They directly contradict the plain and express Words of the Articles, composed by our Reverend and Pious Reformers, rather than they will disown the upstart Doctrine of the *Remonstrants*. These may call themselves *Churchmen*, but they must be beholding to a *Catechresis*.

\* Artic. 10.

† Artic. 13.

But let us go on, and hear what some others of our Preachers say \* *God's Government of Man*, saith one whom I had occasion to quote before, *consists in laying external restraints on him, and affording him internal Assurances of Grace: and when this is done, it becomes God to leave him to his own Choice, and to reward and punish him as he deserves.* This Writer allows of some assistance of Grace, but none to influence upon a Mans *Will* and *Choice*; here every Man is *left* to himself, and his own Natural Power. If he will convert and save himself he may, but God hath nothing to do with it; for if he should interpose and act, then *Merit* would be taken away, then the Man could not be rewarded and punish'd as he *deserv'd*. Thus presently after he saith, *It is very becoming the Wisdom and Justice of God to leave every Man to the Freedom of his own Choice to do Good or Evil, to deserve Rewards or Punishment.* This is the fine Hypothesis of our Divines, and they unanimously cry it up. *God proposes aptly, and invites tenderly*, saith † One of them, *but then he leaves us to the discretion of Compliance: he moves and assists us to the best, but still he leaves us with Power to do as we please.* He makes God a mere Propounder, an Inviter, a Mover and an Assistant in the great Business of Conversion, but he can go no further; it is the Sinners *Discreet Compliance* and his *Power to do as he pleases* that finishes the Work.

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\* D. Sherlock, Of Divine Providence. p. 61.

† Dr. Young's Sermon on several Occasions. Vol. 1.

I will add one Writer more, that we may see that they speak the same Language, and are in one Tone. \* God, saith he, *proceeds with Men by Methods of Perswasion, and not of Constraint. He allows the Means that are sufficient, but he doth not think himself bound to render that which is sufficient, necessary and irresistible.* — *The Success of all his Methods turns upon our complying with, or holding out against them. In short, all that is done (viz. by God) and all that can be done in this Case, supposes an honest and diligent Application of our Minds, to render it Effectual.* Which is as much as to say, God indeed uses the Means, he doth his Indevour, he doth what he can towards the converting of Sinners, he makes some Essay towards it, he offers at it, and doth all that can be done by him, but he is not able to effect the Business of himself, notwithstanding his Omnipotency. But when God hath exerted all his Force and Power to no purpose, then comes the Sinner, and gives Success to the whole, and renders it Effectual. This in plain Terms, without disguising it, is the profess'd Doctrine of our Preachers at this Day: and all our Free-Willers agree in this Proposition, that Man is the Principal Agent in his own Conversion, and not God: for they assert that after all that God hath done, or can do, it is the Man himself that effects the final Work of Conversion.

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\* Dr. Stanhope Paraphr. and Com. on the Epist. and Gosp. p. 235, 236.

We find that Learned and Pious Prelate, whom I mentioned before giving his Judgment of the *Arminians* thus, † *When they have done and said what they can, they must stand guilty of Symbolizing with the Pelagians both in their Principles and Conclusions, in giving Mans Will (and not God's Grace) the chiefest stroke, and the deciding and last determinating and casting Power in the Work of Conversion.* From whose Judicious Sentence we may inter that *Pelagianism* is now indeed the *British* Heresy. And what if it be? One of our Divines will defend it, and the Author of it. † *One of the things, saith he, which gives occasion and encouragement to so dangerous a Doctrine as Calvinism is the over-beated Zeal of St. Augustine, St. Jerom, and others of that Age against Pelagius.* And presently after, *It must be acknowledged to the Credit of our Country, in which he had his Birth, that he was a very Wise, as well as Vertuous Person, and that for the clearness of his Reason he had incomparably the Advantage of all his Adversaries put together.* What would you have more said in commendation of *Pelagius*?

And so I have gone thro' the several Heads that I propounded, and have particularly and distinctly shew'd that *the time is come wherein Men will not endure sound Doctrine.* Now I may truly say, as our Saviour in another case, *This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears.* You are, I doubt not, fully convinced that the Indictment

\* Bp. Sanderſon's *Pax Eccleſiæ.*  
Middle Way, &c. p. 390.

† Mr. Turney's

was truly laid, and the Bill is found. You are sensible that what I have said is no False Accusation, no Slander, no Calumny. Their own Books and Writings, their own Sermons and Discourses, their own Arguments and Reasonings are an undeniable Proof of this. I would not be mistaken : I most freely grant own and profess Our Church to be a True and Sound Church, and therefore I charge not these foregoing things on our Church itself, but only on some that call themselves Members, yea, and Sons of it. Nor are these Particulars design'd to be a Reflection on the *whole Body* of the Clergy ; far be it from me to affix these things on All, for I know there are some, and I hope there are many who have not bowed their Knees, have not submitted and resigned themselves to these Errors and Falsities.

But that there is a great Declension from the Primitive Truths, and from those particularly mentioned, is too manifest to be concealed : yea, and the Persons concerned do not desire it should be concealed, for they proclaim it to the World, and therefore they can't complain that I have done them any wrong. The popular declaiming against the Anti Remonstrant Doctrines, which the Pulpits of late resound with, is my Compurgator. The Writings and Discourses of our Divines bear witness daily that the *Arminian* Points are their Delight : and these they are continually cultivating, and bringing to perfection. *Remonstrantism* is espoused by our Chiefs : it appears in a Canonical Habit, it is voted to be Orthodox, and it even passes for the Articles of our Church. Nothing will go

down with the Bulk of our Clergy but this. All other Doctrine is esteemed by them but as a Religious and better sort of Canting and Gibberish.

And yet, by the way, it is observable what good Company these Gentlemen keep, *Pelagians*, *Papists*, *Socinians*, and even *Quakers*. These all along in the several Tenents are their Associates, their Comrades, their Friends, whom yet at other times they pretend to dislike, and to hold no correspondence with: yea, they seem to shew a great Antipathy against them. But it seems they can Unite very peaceably in these Doctrines; which I wish may not be a presage and forerunner of their joyning together in more. God grant that the Persons who are most concerned in this Discourse, may seriously Consider what I have said, before it be too late. So much for what I intend under the *Second General Head* of my Discourse.

I PASS now to the *Third*, which is this, to enquire what is the Spring of the Disorder, whence it is that Men *will not endure sound Doctrine*, whence it is that there are those among us who take as much Care and Pains to unreach Men the Gospel, as the First Planters of it did to instruct them in it. One reason that is to be assigned of it is the Judicial hand of God. He, in way of Punishment delivers Men up to Errors and Mistakes. For seeing we are told that



that God gives some up to their own Hearts Lusts, Psal. 81. 12. to Uncleaness, Rom. 1. 24. to vile Affections, v. 26. it is not to be doubted that he also gives Men up to the Belief of False Doctrines. Which is according to that Prediction in 2 Theff. 2. 11. *God shall send them strange delusion, that they should believe a lie.* And so what our Blessed Saviour said when he was upon earth, is now again fulfilled, *Thou hast hid these things from the Wise and Prudent.* Thou hast hid them from those who have a great Opinion of their own Wisdom, and would make that the Standard of all Divine Truths.

And thus it happens that whilst some deny those Doctrines which I spoke of before, namely, Eternal Election and Rejection, and the Necessity of Special and Supernatural Light and Grace in order to Divine Knowledge and Conversion, they give a Proof and Experiment of this themselves, for their very opposing of these Doctrines is a Conviction of the Truth and Reality of them. For by this obstinate rejecting of Truths so plainly reveal'd, they make it evident from their own Example that Light and Truth are withheld from some Men, that God opens not their Eyes to behold them, and that he vouchsafes his Special Light and Grace to those only whom he pleases to confer it on: which is the Consequent of the Eternal Decree, but not caused by it. Here it is exemplified that *God gives unto some the Spirit of Slumber, Eyes that they should not see, and Ears that they should not hear,* and we may truly add, *unto this day,* Isa. 29. 10. Rom. 11. 7, 8. This is in

way of Punishment, for God makes one Sin the Penalty and Recompense of another.

And as *God* in way of Punishment, so *Satan* in way of Delusion may be said to be the Author of this Spiritual Blindness and Deafness. Thus the Apostle lets us know how *his Gospel was hid* from some Persons, *the God of this World*, saith he, *hath blinded their Minds, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them*, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. or rather I conceive it should be rendred thus, \* *That the Illumination of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ should not shine unto them*, that is, should not be savingly manifested to them. Whence I gather that the Splendor of the Evangelical Truth is very great and powerful, and plainly discovers to us the Glorious Methods of Salvation by Jesus Christ; but the Evil Spirit, the Spirit of Darkness by the Efficacy of his false Perswasions blinds the Eyes of Men, and hinders them from receiving any Benefit by that Glorious Light and Splendor which accompany these Divine Discoveries.

It is a thing that I have sometime wonder'd at, that Men of Learning and Judgment should so resolutely set themselves against the Clear and Radiant Manifestations of the Gospel, and I have been ready to put that upbraiding Question to them that *St. Paul* did to the *Galatians*, *Who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth*, that you should not comply with Doctrines that are so bright and shining, and

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\* Ἔτις τὸ μὴ ἀναγῆσαι αὐτοῖς τὸν φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

carry self Evidence along with them? And truly it must be this *Witchery*, that is, this Satanical Facination which the Apostle here mentions, that is the Cause of this strange effect. And we cannot but observe (which is much to our present purpose) that this *Inchantment* which the *Galatians* lay under, was in respect of one of those very Doctrines which I have insisted on, to wit, *Justification by Faith alone*. By the strong Delusion of Satan, (which the Apostle here calls *bewitching*, because this sort of Operation is by the help and particular concurrence of that Infernal Spirit) these People were prevailed with to revolt from their former Belief, and to be perswaded that they were to be justified by their Works.

But we are the greatest Inchanters our selves, and so I come in the next place to inquire into those Causes of Mens embracing *Unsound Doctrine*, which have reference chiefly to something that is wilfully Evil and Faulty in themselves.

I. And first, one great Reason why our Divinity at this day degenerates from what it was, is because a Spirit of *Pride* and *Arrogance* reigns among us. This intoxicates our Minds, and makes us heady and presumptuous, and inspires us with false and dangerous Notions, and disposes us to vent and deliver such Doctrines as are inconsistent with the Soundness of the Christian Principles. This is that which the Apostle has long since observed, *If any Man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is Proud, 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4. It is a sign that he is an Arrogant and Self conceited Person, and therefore (as it follows) *knows nothing*, nothing of those *wholesome Words* before mentioned. He is conceited of his Knowledge and Wisdom, and this is the source of his Error. Thus we see at this day Men of Parts and Wit, who have wonderfully improved their Intellectuals by Reading, and Study, and Conyerse, and are of great Sagacity and Reach, and are skilled in all Business, yet shew themselves Dull and Blockish in the Matters of Religion and Divine Wisdom, in Points of Faith, and in the Things of the Kingdom of God. Which should abate our wonder at what we see in the World; namely, that many of that forementioned Character are wretchedly mistaken, and fall short of the true Notions of God's Decrees, of the Power of God's Grace, of the Necessity of Christ's Righteousness, of their Natural Weakness and Inability, and other great Principles of the Gospel. Which may truly be resolved into this, that True and Saving Wisdom is rejected by such who vaunt themselves the Sons of Wisdom.

This was seen in the Pharisees and the Clergy of the *Jewish* Church, who were of a very Assuming and Arrogant Temper, for their Knowledge puff'd them up, the Conceit of their great Parts and Acquirements made them haughty and insolent: and therefore they resented it with great Disdain and Superciliousness that they were found fault with and corrected by our Saviour. *Are we blind also?* said they.

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What! we that are Men of Learning, we that are Guides and Leaders of the People? No surely, we are not Blind: we are the Men that See more exactly than the rest of the World. Nay, all the World is blind in Comparison of us. Therefore we will hold fast our Principles of *Judaism*, and despise Christianity and the Author of it. Where Pride gets the Ascendant, there the Purity and Simplicity of the Gospel are despised, there Mens own fond Notions are magnified, there they are enslaved to their own Hypothesis, and doat on their Beloved Maxims, and refuse to submit to the Wisdom of God. Their Business is to quarrel with Heaven, to find fault with the Determinations of the Sovereign Being. And to say all in a Word, they bid adieu to *Humility* and the *Faith* together.

But on the contrary, *Modesty* and a *Humble* Mind prepare Men to embrace and approve of the Christian Doctrine. They cause them to acknowledge all to be Just and Right that God delivers, notwithstanding it contradicts our common Reasonings. If we were arrived at this Holy Temper and Disposition, we should soon take up our Old Doctrines again, and return to our Primitive Principles, with the humblest Adoration of the Divine and Heavenly Wisdom. If we be *Meek* and *Humble*, there is assurance given us that we shall be *taught* of God, and endued with all saving Wisdom, *Psal.* 25. 9. concerning the *meekest* Man on Earth, we are told, that *God knew him Face to Face*, *Deut.* 34. 10. which signifies that he had the most Intimate Converse with God, that he had the

greatest Communications and Discoveries from him. It is certain that Meekness is a great Advancer of our Spiritual Knowledge, and Capabilities us for the receiving all Sacred Mysteries. This fits and prepares us for the Impressions of Truth, and makes us ready to comply with its Dictates. Now we are forward to give Ear to those Doctrines which are displeasing to Flesh and Blood, and repugnant to our Corrupt and Depraved Nature. This is the Reward of *Meekness* and *Humility*.

In order to this, we must be thoroughly apprehensive of our Natural Ignorance and Blindness. We are told by one who was a Great Proficient in Philosophy that the first thing required in one of that Character is \* *to throw away all Conceit of Knowledge*, for a Man will never learn those Things which he thinks he knows already. We are sure that the first step to the Christian Philosophy is to cast away that Esteem which we formerly had of our Natural Knowledge: and we must willingly and readily abandon our false and mistaken Notions, in order to our receiving true ones. And this cannot be done unless we extirpate Pride, which is the Root and Spring of our Errors and Mistakes. To which purpose we should seriously ponder what a Great and Learned Man of our Church saith, † *With great worldly Wisdom*, saith he, *there is always great Pride, the great-*

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\* Ἀποβλεῖν ὕμνησιν. Antonin.

† Dr. Jackson. Vol. 1. E. 2. Chap. 14.

*est Adversary to True and Sanctified Christian Knowledge. All the skil which Men so minded can attain to in Heavenly Matters, is but like Lessons got by rote. It must be quite forgotten, at least utterly renounced and laid aside, before we can be admitted into the School of Christ.*

If some Men among us had listen'd to this, they would not have depraved those Doctrines which I have discoursed of, they would not have disfigured the Gospel, and with intolerable Presumption and Arrogance transformed the Principles of it. This proceeds from the want of a due Sense of the Defect of their Natural Understandings, with relation to Divine things. Therefore saith the Apostle, *If any Man among you seemeth to be Wise, let him become a Fool, that he may be Wise, 1 Cor. 3. 16.* Let him be apprehensive of the Weakness and Shallowness of his Understanding, let him see that he hath great Mixture of Foolishness, and that Ignorance hath possess'd him in a great Measure: and this is the direct way to conceive true Notions of the Divine Doctrines which are proposed to him, and to attain to Spiritual Wisdom.

II. Another Reason why *sound Doctrine is not endured*, is because Men shape and mould their Religion according to their Worldly Interest. These are of the number of those whom the Apostle speaks of, who *seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ, Phil. 2. 21.* the same that by *Ignatius* are called *χρηστέμποροι*, such

as make Merchandise of Christ and the Christian Religion, and set Christianity to Sale. The love of Interest preponderates that of Truth and Integrity. They take up such a Set of Doctrines to serve their Temporal Ends: but for *Unprofitable Truths*, they will have nothing to do with them. These are every where spoken against, and the Professors of them despised, and loaded with Contempt and Obloquy. This we see in the *Jews*, to whom *the preaching of Christ crucified was a Stumbling-block*. The Cross lay in their way, and hindred them from coming to Christ, and acknowledging his Doctrine. *Nicodemus*, a Man in Place and Authority, was afraid to own our Saviour, and to be seen at Mid-day in his Presence: and this was an Impediment to his knowing those Divine Truths of *Regeneration*. And others of the Jewish Church and Nation, rather than they would quit their worldly Interest, and Indure Tribulation for the sake of Christianity, chose to inflict it, and that with the greatest Severity, on the Christians.

And the *Gentiles* imitated them in this cursed Wisdom and Prudence: thus we read in the *Acts* of the Apostles how *St. Paul* sped among the *Athenians*, how unkindly he was treated by those Masters of Civility and of Arts, those Sons of Reason and Philosophy: they reviled and mocked him, and they haled him to *Areopagus*, which was the severest Court of Judicature among them, intending without doubt to get him Sentenced as a guilty Criminal. Thus was he used at *Athens*, that famous Univerfity, the Nursery of Arts and Sciences,



ences, the Greatest Mart in the World for Philosophy and all sorts of Learning, because those Men would not embrace that Religion, and approve of those Doctrines which were attended with Disgrace and Worldly Disadvantages.

And this is still a reason why in many parts of the World these things were hid from the seemingly Wise and Prudent. As we may plainly see in the Church of *Rome*, where many Excellent Truths are stifled and opposed, because they are thought to be against their Interest. Popery is Unreasonable in many clear Instances, as being against Common Sense, and against plain Scripture, and yet for Temporal Ends it is assented to and complied with, yea and stily maintained and vindicated. \* Their Preachers (as *Erasmus* heretofore complained of some of them) profess and teach any thing in Religion, even against their Consciences, not because they conduce to their Peoples Welfare and Salvation, but because they make for their own Advantage.

This we see among our selves, many Mens Minds are disposed, and their Judgments bribed by those Emoluments and Preferments which are held out to them, and they are forward to adopt such Opinions as they know are attended with Profits and Rewards. For there are *Preachers*, as well as *Soldiers of Fortune*, as they are called. There are true *Switzers* of the Pul-

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\* Quidvis dicunt, scribunt, suadent, & contra conscientiam probant, non ut salutarem reddant gregem, sed ut magnificam sibi parent fortunam. In Ecclesiaste.

pit, who always take to that side which Pays best. There are Hackney Divines that Mind the Hire chiefly, and we are not to think that such are concerned what Doctrine is True, and what False. The greedy *Pluralist* doth not take Care about *Orthodoxy*, but his *Income*: and his Curate is under the Temptation of being of the same Perswasion with him.

Alas! how many are there that talk of advancing the Church and our most Holy Religion, and yet design no other than the worshipping of *Mammon*? We may apply to Our Times what the Platonick Philosopher said of his, \* *Merchandizing and Hucksterring are to be found every where*, and hereby Mens Understandings are perverted and blinded, and their Judgments debauched. So that it is no wonder that Unsound Doctrines are vigorously defended by some Persons. It is no wonder that they employ their Tongues and Pens to maintain that which carries its Recompence with it, the Favour of the Great Men of their Order, Promotion and Grandeur. The expectation of this, or the actual Fruition of it furnishes them with Rhetorick and Logick, whets their Stile, and sets an edge on their Arguments. This enables them to make their way thro' all Objections and Difficulties, and even to trample upon Scripture it self. Some of the Doctrines they maintain are so Improbable, that we have Reason to think that they believe not what they say, but that

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\* Νῦν δὲ καπηλείας πάντα μετὰ καὶ ἐμπορίας.  
Max. Tyr. Diss. 26.

they are otherwise perswaded than they profess to the World: only they are resolved to gratify some Base Humor or Interest, and therefore they strike in with the prevailing Party for Gain and Advantage; as the Jackal hunts with the Lion for part of his Prey.

And here under this Head I would offer this, as a reason why we degenerate in our Divinity, because we intermeddle with Worldly Affairs, which are not suitable to our Function. It is true, *Aaron* and *Moses*, *Eli* and *Samuel* were Civil Judges, and Prophets too; but this was an Extraordinary Case, and was not practised afterwards among that People, till there was a great Disorder and Degeneracy among them. But now especially under the Gospel the Secular Employment is inconsistent with the Ecclesiastical in the same Person, as is clear from *Mat. 20. 25. Luke 22. 25.* where Christ forbids his Disciples to exercise any such Power. And we know what was the practice of the Apostles: they gave themselves entirely to the work of the Ministry, yea, they threw up the Office of Deacons, tho' it was not a Civil Office, because it was attended with Trouble and Distractions, that they might wholly attend to their Proper Work. And afterwards, we find that in those Primitive times the Clergy were not permitted to undertake any Lay Office: yea, we read in one of *St. Cyprians* Epistles (the 66th.) that he severely condemns one for nominating a Priest to be Guardian to one of his Relations. He tells us that it was a considerable time before forbidden by a Council of Bishops, to appoint any Clergyman in a Will to be either Guardian

or Executor, and he gives this Reason, namely, that Clergymen are wholly to be employed in Religious Works and Duties of their Calling. Out of *Origen* and other Antient Fathers it might be proved, that they were against the Secular Employments of Churchmen. The Ecclesiastical Historian might here be produced, who complains of some Bishops that lashed out \* beyond the limits of their Priesthood into Temporal Dominion and Power. I will add only *St. Ambrose*, *Let a Clergyman*, saith he, *fulfil his Office that he hath undertaken, being solicitous in the Things of God, and free from worldly Business: for it is not fitting that one and the same Person should have a double profession.*

This is confirmed by the Canons of several Councils, as of *Calcedon*, of *Sardis*, of *Carthage*, and other *African* Councils. Yea and according to the *Canons of the Apostles* (as they are commonly called) † *no Ecclesiastical Persons are to take upon them Secular Cares: or if they do, they are to be degraded.* And a good Reason for it was entirely assigned, If || Lay-men must not meddle in Church-Affairs, that is, the administration of the Sacred Function, then

\* Πέρα τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἐπὶ δυναστείαν. *Socrat. Hist. Eccl. lib. 7. c. 11.*

† Ἐπίσκοποι καὶ πρεσβύτεροι, καὶ διάκονοι κοσμικὰς φροντίδας μὴ ἀναλαμβάνετω· εἰ δὲ μὴ, καθαιρεῖσθω· *Can. 6.*

|| Indecorum est Laicum esse vicarium Episcopi, & Seculares in Ecclesiâ judicare: in uno enim eodemq; Officio non debet esse disper professio. *Concil. Hispal. 2. Decret. 9.*

Churchmen must not take upon them Lay-Offices, they must do their Own Work, and not anothers. The contrary Practice would breed Confusion, because it takes away the difference between Ecclesiastical and Civil Matters, and the Causes and Jurisdictions which belong to them respectively. And it invites Lay-men to invade the Rights and Jurisdictions of the Clergy: for if these encroach on Civil Affairs, by the same Reason the others may make bold with the Ecclesiastical ones.

Thus if we appeal to our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, to *Fathers* and *Councils*, and to the *Reason* of the thing it self, we must be forced to acknowledge that Churchmen must not be *Secular Men*: Temporal Jurisdiction agrees not with the Spiritual Office. Nay, if we appeal to the *Philosopher*, he will teach us the same, \* It is to be laid down as granted, saith he, that Priests are a distinct thing from Civil Magistrates. Much more now is the Distinction to be kept up. A Man of God, a Minister of the Gospel ought to mind his Spiritual Work and Employment, for the real good of the Church of Christ, and not thrust himself into other Business and Concerns. We are Spiritual Men, and consequently Temporal Matters are not our Task. The Work of the Guides and Pastors of the Church is wholly different from that of others, and therefore we prophane our Function by taking upon us Mundane Cares and Business.

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\* Τὸς ἱερεῖς ἕτερόν τι παρὰ τὰς πολιτικὰς ἀρχὰς  
θεῖον. Aristot. Polit. l. 4. c. 15.

And besides, We claim Priviledges and Honours above the Laity, and why then do we not distinguish our selves from them by our proper Work and Charge? Our Province is to Pray and Preach, to intercede with Heaven for a blessing on the People, and to instruct them in the Doctrines of Christianity, and in the practise of them, to administer the Holy Sacraments, and to be every ways assisting to the good of Mens Souls. But if we mix our selves with the World and its Employments and Business, we make our selves unfit to discharge this Task, and we become incompetent Judges of Heavenly Mysteries, and we shall sacrifice the Truths of the Gospel to our Temporal Interest.

Hear what an Eminent Man of our own Church saith, \* *The vigilant thoughts of Men attentive to worldly Business can be no better in Sacred Matters than dreaming Fancies in matters secular.* And hence it is that we have too many Doctrines founded only on Fancy and Imaginary Notions, which have no Foundation in the Holy Volume, which is the only Standard of Divine Truths. Hence it is that Right Principles are so scarce, for too great Numbers of Men are corrupted by Worldly Views. A brief Character is given of these Men by St. John, *Epist. 1. c. 4. v. 5. They are of the World, therefore they speak of the World (they preach such Doctrines as are acceptable to Men of Worldly Principles) and the World beareth them, and embraces their Doctrines.*

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\* Dr. Jackson. Vol. 1. B. 5. Chap. 51.

III. The depraving of Theological, but especially Evangelical Truths, arises from the entertaining of false Notions concerning Humane Learning, and imagining that none are capable of the Knowledge of the Divine Truths but such as are Learned Men. I have found it to be no unusual Prepossession among some of Academick Education, that those who are not cultivated by Arts and Sciences have no skill in Divinity, and cannot judge of its Doctrines. They would Monopolize to themselves all Divine Knowledge, and they look upon others as overrun with Ignorance and Barbarism. But this is a false Apprehension, and hath done a great deal of harm.

To give check to it, the All wise God doth often permit Men of Learning and Skill to err most grossly in Religion, and to talk like Fools and Idiots in some of the chief Matters of Christianity. We see that Men of the brightest Faculties, and famed for heightning and improving of them are devoid of Heavenly Wisdom. We see that those who are of Liberal Education and are of Excellent Accomplishments are hurried into dangerous Errors. Learning fumes, like strong Wine, in their Heads, and makes them stagger and reel from the Truth, and disturb themselves and others with their Giddy Notions. It may be said of them as of the Wise Men of *Caldea* (in *Isa.* 47. 10.) that *their Wisdom and their Knowledge hath perverted them.* Whether you ransack Antient or Modern Times, you will find that of *Luther*

holds true, \* the Church is never more Indangered than among the Men of Title and Learning. None have more depraved Religion and mischief'd the Truth than those of this Character. Not that it is any real Disparagement or Prejudice to Learning it self that some have Abused it, and made it serviceable to the vilest Errors and Deceits. But this may Moderate our Esteem of it, and teach us not to overvalue our own or other Mens Parts and Acquirements. For Satan makes use of the Learned as Fittest and most able Instruments to execute his Designs. Humane Learning, instead of being a Blessing, sometimes proves the greatest Curse. For this being abused is like the poisoning of a Dart, which is too apt to Kill of it self. The Serpent is now not only Subtil but Venomous. As *Seneca* said of a Dice-player, the Better he is at his Game, so much the Worse is he: the Better Player, the Worser Man: So here it is true that the more Skill'd and Learned Men are, the more Pernicious and Destructive they may prove. Angels when they Apostatize turn Devils: their Parts and Accomplishments make them more mischievous. And thus it is with Men; the greater Gifts and Abilities they are indued with, the more capable are they of Ruining themselves and others.

Here then let us correct our Mistakes: I speak to those of the *Gown* especially. Undervalue not any Persons for their want of Good Let-

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\* Nunquam magis periclitatur Ecclesia quam inter Reverendissimos.



ters. Reverence and Love Holiness wherever you espie it, even in the poorest and meaneſt, and moſt Illiterate Perſons. Be convinced of this, that Humane Learning is not ſufficient to enlighten Mens Minds in the things of God, and to enable them to know them in a ſaving manner. Know that the Doctrines of the Goſpel (and thoſe particularly that I have mentioned) may be underſtood without the Accompliſhment of Learned Arts, and aſtually they are underſtood by Good and Holy Perſons who are not thus accompliſhed; whiſt many, who are ſkilled in all Sciences, arrive not to the true Knowledge of them. Whereby the Apoſtles Words are verified, 1 Cor. 1. 19, 20, &c. *It is written, I will deſtroy the Wiſdom of the Wiſe, and will bring to nothing the underſtanding of the Prudent. Where is the Wiſe? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Diſputer of this World? Hath not God made Fooliſh the Wiſdom of this World? ye ſee your Calling, Brethren, how that not many Wiſe Men after the Fleſh are called: but God hath choſen the Fooliſh things of this World to confound the Wiſe. And then the Apoſtle adjoyns this as the Reason of theſe ſtrange dealings, v. 29. and 31. That no Fleſh ſhould Glory in his Preſence: but that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him Glory in the Lord.*

Next unto this Great End, the right uſe that we ſhould make of this, is to give Divine Knowledge the Preference to all Humane Learning. Perhaps it may ſeem ſtrange, but we have it from a good Hand that the famous *Albertus*

*Magnus*, Bishop of *Ratisbone*, who had that Surname of *Great* from his Great and Universal Knowledge, desired of God five Years before he died that he might forget all that he learnt of Philosophy and Humane Arts, and that he might wholly be addicted to Religion. Cardinal *Perron*, who was an Eminent Scholar and Universal Student, rid his Library of all Books of Humanity, and left not one in it, that he might give himself up entirely to Divine Matters. *Petrarch*, the celebrated *Italian* Poet, bid adieu to that sort of Study, and devoted himself to Theology several Years before he left the World, reckoning this the best sort of Learning. Archbishop *Usher*, one of the Greatest Scholars and Divines of this last Age, was sensible of his immoderate love of Humane Studies, and (as we are told in the Account of his Life) was troubled at it. I would, said *Grotius*, a little before he died, give all my Learning and Honour for the plain Integrity and Innocency of *Jean Urick*, a poor Neighbour of his, who spent much of his time in Prayer, and was an honest plain Man, and industrious in his Calling. We see by these Examples what a high value was set on Divine Wisdom and Saving Knowledge, and (that which is the true result of it) a Godly Life.

I hope none of my Readers, especially my Brethren, will imagin that I design this as a disparaging Reflection on *Humane Learning*, as if Grace and Good Letters were inconsistent, and like the Northern and Southern Poles can never be seen together. I presume they will not  
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so understand me as if I were advising them to throw away all Humane Authors, and to trample on the Arts and Sciences. I hope no Man will be so unjust and uncharitable as to think I attempt to reproach the Schools of Ingenuous Education and Good Literature. If this were my design here, I have chosen a very Unfit Occasion for venting these Thoughts, for I speak to Learned Men; and besides, I should contradict my self, for I have proved that \* a Complete Divine and Preacher is one that is skilled in all Parts of Humane Learning.

And now further, to prevent Mistakes which may arise from what hath been said, I declare that it is my Perswasion that skill in Ingenuous Arts is so far from being any ways blamable in it self, and inconsistent with Divine Knowledge and True Piety, that it is a singular Ornament to them. Religion embellished with these is the more Excellent. That Holy Patriarch *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, had (if *Josephus* may be credited) great Skill in *Astronomy*: and perhaps there was a Reference to that when God said to him, *Look now towards Heaven, and tell the Stars, if thou be able to number them: so shall thy Seed be*, Gen. 15. 5. It is particularly taken notice of by the Holy Spirit in Scripture that *Moses was Learned in all the Wisdom of the Egyptians*, Acts 7. 22. which was large and Multifarious, made up of

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\* The Preacher, Part I. p. 252, & 268.

Mathematicks, Natural and Moral Philosophy, besides the Hieroglyphick Learning.

*Bezaleel* and *Aboliab* are praised for their Skill and Art which they used about the Tabernacle. Yea, and this is attributed to the Spirit, for it is recorded that *they were filled with the Spirit of God, in Wisdom and Understanding, and in Knowledge, and in all manner of Workmanship, to devise cunning Works, to work in Gold and in Silver and in Brass, &c.* Ex. 31. 3. 4. And by the by, I remember a late Learned Writer, Dr. *More*, who had a Great Opinion of the Ingenious *Des Cartes*, compareth him with this *Bezaleel* and *Aboliab*, concluding he was *Inspired* from above with so Curious a Mechanick Wit.

*Job*, who by the Testimony of God himself \* was a Perfect and Upright Man, and one that feared God and eschewed Evil, Adorned those Divine Graces with Skill in Natural Philosophy, and more especially in Astronomy, of which we have divers notable Specimens in his Book : and indeed the Country he lived in was very serviceable to the Promoting his Inquisitive Inspection into the Heavenly Bodies. It is part of *Solomon's* Encomium given him by the Spirit of God, 2 Kings 4. 33. that *he spake of Trees, from the Cedar-Tree that is in Lebanon, even to the Hyssop that springeth out of the Wall: he spake also of Beasts, and of Fowl, and of Creeping Things, and of Fishes, which are the several distinct Ranks of Creatures made by God :*

\* Job 2. 3.

so that hence it appears he was throughly skill'd in all parts of Natural Philosophy. It is this Royal Penman who acquaints us that *Wisdom dwells with Prudence, and finds out Knowledge of Witty Inventions*, Prov. 8. 12. to let us know that Quickness of Wit and Skill in Humane Arts are not unworthy even of *Divine Wisdom*, of which he speaketh in that Book. Of Holy *Daniel* and his Associates it is recorded that *they were skilful in all Wisdom, and cunning in Knowledge, and understanding Science, and were taught the Learning of the Chaldeans*, Dan. 1. 4.

But to come on furth r, it might be added here that the Eminentest Fathers and Lights of the *Christian Church*, were not only Masters of acquired Wisdom, and bred up in Learning, and skill'd in the Ingenuous Arts, but they thought these were needful for the Preservation of Religion, and the Confutations of Errors and Heresies. Though *St. Basil*, in his 24th Homily, which treats concerning reading the Books of the Pagans, condemns the Practise of those who make the reading and studying them their chief Business, and advises Young Men to peruse such Writings with Caution and Discretion, yet he shews that they are in their kind useful, and particularly sets down several notable Examples and Instructions which he took from those Gentile Authors. And there are others of the Antients who have expressed how serviceable those Writings are even to those who are employed in Theological Studies. But of this I have spoken in another place.

But some silly People have been taught to Object thus, Christ and his Apostles were no Scholars; they were no Students or Graduates in an University; therefore such Learning cannot but be useless, if not Unlawful and Sinful. But the Answer to this Foolish Cavil is easy, for first as to our Blessed Saviour, he was the Essential Wisdom of the Godhead it self, which swalloweth up all Inferior and Humane Knowledge, and yet at the same time virtually contains it all. But it is recorded of him, as he was Man, that he *Increased in Wisdom*, as well as Stature, *Luke 2. 5.* And in the same Chapter we are taught from his own Example, that *Reasoning* and *Arguing* are to be used when there is occasion, for he was found *Disputing* with the Jewish Doctors and Priests.

And then as to the *Apostles*, they were not all of them unletter'd Men. It is probable that *Matthew* who was taken from the Receipt of Custom, was not such a one. But we are certain that *Paul* was not, for he was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, and was versed in the Greek Poets (three of which he quoteth) and was a Man of Great Accomplishments both Natural and Acquired. \* As for the rest of the Apostles, it is granted they were poor Fishermen, and not bred up in Learning: but they had that *Ancienting* St. *John* speaks of, which *Taught them all things.* † They had no Learn-

\* See what is said in the *Preacher*, Part I. p. 270, 271.

† Quicquid aliis exercitatio & quotidiana in Lege meditatio tribuere solet, illis hoc Spiritus Sanctus suggerebat, & erant, juxta quod scriptum est, docibiles Deo. Hieronym. Epist. ad Paulin.

ing gained by Study, but they had Knowledge by Inspiration. Their Learning was not Acquired, but Infused, which was a higher sort of Learning, and therefore was an Abundant Recompence for their want of that which was Lower and Meaner. There was no need of Arts and Sciences when they were indued from above with Extraordinary and Miraculous Gifts. What though they were not skilled in Artificial *Logick*, and could not dispute in Mood and Figure, or with Art take off an Argument which was very pressing upon them! yet they could remove Mountains, which was a harder thing to do, but was far more serviceable to the Conviction of Mens Minds that their Doctrine was from Heaven. Though they were not versed in Natural Philosophy and *Medicks*, yet they could Cure all Diseases. And was not that a powerful *Rhetorick* whereby they could speak a Diseased Man into Health, and cure him with a Word? And might they not pass for Good *Linguists* when they could Speak and Interpret all Languages?

The Apottles being thus extraordinarily fitted for their Ministry, there was no need of ordinary Indowments and Qualifications. But seeing those extraordinary and miraculous Gifts are ceased in the Church of Christ, the ordinary ones are now become needful. In this present dispensation of things even Divine Knowledge must be attained by Study and Prayer, as well as by the Assistance of the Holy Spirit. You must know this, that though Humane Knowledge be beneath Christian Faith, yet it is not contrary to it, or destructive of it: and those  
Men

Men who, being Taught of God without all Humane Helps, and particularly Book-Learning (as they call it) are an extravagant sort of Persons, and nourish in their Minds Fond Imaginations, and are running into gross Enthusiasm, and have forgotten under what Dispensation they are. But of this likewise I have said something in my last Discourse, and therefore will add no more now.

I will only here transcribe the Words of an Eminent and Pious Father of the Christian Church. [\* I conceive, saith he, it is agreed upon by all Persons of sound Minds, that Learning hath the first place among all Humane Good Things, I mean not only this more Noble Learning of ours, whereby we arrive to the Knowledge of Christianity, but also that other which even those who are without are Masters of. Many Christians reject this sort of Learning, as deceitful and dangerous, and such as will turn them from God: but these Men have false Notions of Things, and Learning is not to be vilified because some have these Conceptions of it. But rather this, we are to think that these foolish and unskilful Souls are thus affected, because they would have all Men like themselves, that so they might safely hide themselves in the Common Herd, and escape reprehension for their Ignorance.] Thus he. And all serious and understanding Christians

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\* Greg. Naz. Orat. Fun. in Basil. Mag.



agree with him, and highly value Humane Letters, and blame the vilifiers of them.

Unto you therefore who live in the Schools of Humane Literature, who are the sworn Votaries of the Muses, who are the growing Hopes of these Nurseries of Arts and Sciences, unto you I can offer nothing more seasonable, upon you I can urge nothing more Important than this ; Be as Learned as *Moses* and *Paul*, but desire to be as Good. Add to your Learning Religion: to all your Acquirements joyn the Knowledge of Christ Jesus. Let Grace and Humane Knowledge meet, *Jerusalem* and *Athens*, the Gospel and Philosophy, the Oracles of Scripture and Humane Authors. One \* has been so unkind to you as to tell you, *Nullus in Academiis solidè Eruditus evadit*. I am certain his Words will prove True if you joyn not Spiritual with Humane Wisdom, if your skill in Philosophy and in the Arts be not attended with Supernatural and Divine Knowledge, for this latter is the True and Solid Learning. And let me tell you, this is the best way to improve your other Studies. This will befriend your Faculties, this will teach you to manage your Notions aright, this will concoct your Crudities and Indigested Heaps of Sciences, this will make *Philosophy* and *Vain Deceit* not to be Terms convertible. This will add Heat to your Light, this will make your Knowledge useful and operative.

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\* *Barclaius*.

Set then a due Estimation on Humane Learning, but do not over-rate it. Think not by dint of mere Art to comprehend and conquer Divine Doctrines, for these are above Humane Reason and Learning, and consequently must be hid from those who have attained to no higher a pitch. Be thoroughly perswaded of this, that a Sanctified and Sincere Mind, directed by the Scriptures, tho' unacquainted with Arts and Sciences, will sooner understand the Sacred Truths and Mysteries of the Gospel, (and those particularly that have been the Subject of the former part of this Discourse) than a Mind embellished with all Humane Arts, but destitute of Sincere Piety.

This is a great and experienced Truth, but is disregarded by too many of those that I'm now applying myself to, and accordingly they will not admit of any but Letter'd Persons to judge of the great Points of our Christian Faith. This is a great Fault, and a gross mistake, and I cannot but number it among the Causes of that Corruption in the Evangelical Doctrines which is among us.

IV. Another Cause of it is, the ill managing of their Studies, and contenting themselves with wrong Aims and Designs, and that both in their ordinary Studies, and those that particularly relate to Divinity. If I may be permitted to be free with some of my Brethren, I think it may be look'd upon as a Fault in some of them that, tho' the study of Theology be their main Province, yet they employ themselves in Disquisitions of a far different Nature,  
and

and such as are impertinent and useleſs to their Great Purpoſe. They affect Enquiries that are foreign to the great Points which are their Buſineſs. So they become Strangers to neceſſary things, becauſe they are occupied in thoſe that are unneceſſary and ſuperfluous, as \* *Seneca* ſpeaks. We are buſy in doing nothing, as the ſame † Author ſaith, whiſt we ſpend our time about Matters that are mean and frivolous, idle and trifling. And a great Man among the *Chriſtian* Writers of old hath || caution'd againſt this Unprofitable and Abuſive way of Learning (as he rightly calls it) which conſiſts only in things that are to no real purpoſe.

On the contrary, we ſhould think our ſelves concerned to follow after ſound and uſeful Learning, ſuch as may moſt avail to the Good of thoſe we converſe with, and may redound to the Honour of the Divine Majeſty. For even this Deſign muſt go along with us in the purſuing thoſe Studies which relate only to Humane Arts and Sciences. To which purpoſe we have an excellent Pattern ſet us by a Worthy Man, (a) “ I carried along with me, ſaith he, “ in all my Studies this great Deſign, namely, “ of improving them, and the Knowledge acqui- “ red by them to the Honour of God's Name,

\* — Ideo non diſcentes neceſſaria, quia ſuper vacua didicerunt. *Epift.* 88.

† Operoſè nihil agunt qui literarum inutilium ſtudiis detinentur. *De Brev. vit.* cap. 14.

|| Τὴν πολλὴν δὲ ἀχρηſτίαν παραſιλήον ἀπαγορεύσαν κερὶ τὰ μὲν προſήκοντα. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* l. 5.

(a) Judge *Hile's* Account of the Good Steward.

“ and the greater Discovery of his Wisdom,  
 “ Power and Truth, and so translated my Se-  
 “ cular Learning into an improvement of Di-  
 “ vine Knowledge: and had I not practised  
 “ this Design in my Acquests of Humane Learn-  
 “ ing, I had concluded my time mispent: be-  
 “ cause I ever thought it unworthy of a Man  
 “ that had an everlasting Soul, to furnish it on-  
 “ ly with such Learning, as either would die  
 “ with his Body, and so become unuseful for  
 “ his everlasting State, or that in the next Mo-  
 “ ment after Death would be attained without  
 “ Labour or Toil in this Life. From which  
 admirable Example we are admonished to strive  
 to be Masters of Good and Serviceable Learn-  
 ing, which is really of some considerable use  
 in the Life of Man, but that especially which  
 will fit us for another World. Even in our  
 lower Studies we should have Right Aims, we  
 should refer them to Religion and a Holy Life,  
 tho’ they have no *immediate* Tendency to this  
 high end. And it is certain, that if our Stu-  
 dies and Disquisitions of Humanity be managed  
 aright, they may be made serviceable to this  
 purpose, they may be useful to rectify our  
 Thoughts, to widen the Capacities of our Souls,  
 to polish our Minds, and to fit us for Vertuous  
 Impressions.

Much more, when we apply our selves to the  
 Study of Divinity, if we do not propound to  
 our selves Pure and Upright Ends, we shall  
 miscarry in our Enquiry into those Divine  
 Truths. Want of true Intention in these Sa-  
 cred Studies doth oftentimes blast them. Some  
 are busy in their Searches after Divine Know-  
 ledge,

ledge, but it is to satisfy their curious and inquisitive Humors. Or they intend to make their Reading and Studying subservient to nice Quarrels and Controversies. They read many Authors, and devour many Books, that they may Talk and Dispute, and nourish and maintain that Principle of Opposition which is in them. Or, they desire to know more than others out of a Principle of Pride and Ostentation: they know, to be known, and to conciliate Applause. Or, they make the study of Divinity serviceable only to their Preferment, which is no uncommon thing with this rank of Men. Or there are some other Sinister Designs which they are governed by.

But the Wisdom of God and the Wisdom of the World are different, as on several other Accounts, so in regard of the *End*. It is no wonder then that those who in their search after Religion and Truth are led only by By-Ends (such as Curiosity, Affectation of Disputes, Pride, Ambition, or Covetousness) never attain to a Spiritual Discerning of the most important Doctrines of Christianity, and the saving Truths of the Gospel, and to any relish of the Goodness and Excellency which are in them: it is no wonder that these are hid and sealed up from them.

But the Right and True Ends whereby Men should be acted in their pursuit after Divine Knowledge are of another Nature. They should make God's Glory the first and chief End of all: and next to that they should desire to know the Truth, that they may acquaint themselves with their particular Duties, and  
that

that they may live and practise according to their Knowledge : also that they may be beneficial to those who are of weak Understandings and mean Capacities : that they may edify the Church of Christ, and set forward the Conversion and Salvation of Mankind. These are Godly Intentions which should be prosecuted in the discharge of the Pastoral Office : the want of which it is to be feared is one Root of that Defection and Degeneracy in the Doctrines of Christianity which I'm complaining of. For an Upright and well designing Mind is the best Refiner of our Thoughts and Notions in Religion : and a Man of Simplicity of Heart will understand more than an *Angelick* or *Seraphick* Doctor. But on the other side, the Truth is hidden from those Mens Eyes whose Aims are corrupt and unwarrantable, selfish and worldly ; as we may remember that one of the Reasons assign'd by our Saviour why the Persons he spoke to, did not understand his Doctrine, was because *they sought their own Glory*, John 7. 18.

V. The next Cause of the Change and Corruption that is in our Doctrines is this, that Men will not be at the Pains to inform themselves aright ; they will not use the proper Methods for the attaining of Divine and Heavenly Knowledge. For this is a thing that ought not to be doubted of, that this Knowledge must be attained to in the orderly use of Means, and consequently we must be Industrious, Careful and Diligent ; we must be active and unwearied in our Applications relating to this end. *Then shall we know, if we follow on*

to know the Lord, Hof. 6. 3. that is, if we pursue it with all Diligence, if we make it our Great Business. The admirable *Plato* lays down several Qualifications of a Hopeful Learner or Scholar, one that is like to improve in Understanding and true Knowledge; and among the rest this is one, he must be \* a *Lover of Labour*, one that will be very Industrious, and spare no Pains. This holds true even in Spiritual and Divine Attainments: Earnest Endeavors, Great Diligence and Industry are necessary Conditions and Requisites in him who is a Disciple and Candidate of Religion and Saving Wisdom, and especially in him who is design'd to be a Teacher of others.

To descend to some Particulars, there must be a great deal of Study and Meditation to arrive to this. There must be much Thinking and Considering, and Comparing one thing with another. We must represent to our selves the whole entire Scheme of Religion, and set it all before us, and survey all the Parts of it; that we may see the Consistency and Harmony of them. We must duly examine every Point of Christianity; we must leisurely, calmly and impartially ponder the Arguments that relate to them. It seems it agrees not with the Constitution of some Persons to busy their Heads about these Matters, and to examine and search into them. And thence we shall find that some who talk much against those Points which I have treated of, do least of all understand them.

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\* Φιλόπορον. De Repub. lib. 6.

Which is according to what a Learned Divine, whom I had before occasion to cite, *hath often observed*, he saith, \* that in *Questions of greatest Moment none resolve more peremptorily for their own, or more uncharitably against others Opinions, then such as have least sounded the fundamental Principles of True Divinity.* And indeed, what can we look for from these Men who have never turned their Thoughts in good earnest to things of this high Nature, whose Minds are taken up with little Ceremonies, or with Secular Business, or Diversion, so that they leave no room for these things which require great application?

I have observed that tho' in the compass of several Years last past there have been Debates among some of the Divines of our Church about Criticism, History, &c. and some lesser Points relating to Divinity, yet they have seldom or never encounter'd one another about these of the greatest Moment, but they peaceably hang together, and contentedly sit down with what some of their Chieftains and Ringleaders have dictated to them, and never make it their serious work to penetrate into these Matters, and to look on things on both sides. This is an easy way that they have taken, they tamely and blindly follow their Leaders, to save themselves the labour of searching into the Doctrines that are propounded to them. They generally receive their Sentiments about them from Others, and never take Pains to examine them

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\* Dr. Jackson. Vol. 1. Book 5. Chap. 50.



themselves. They see that some Men of Note and Learning have espoused such Points, and therefore in deference to them, and *having Mens Persons in Admiration* ( which St. Jude assigns as one Cause of Error in the False Teachers he speaks of, *v. 16.* ) or that they may not be thought to be Ignorant, they close with the same Notions. So Doctrines pass from one to another without Enquiry, and hereby we are in danger of losing many a Solid Truth. If Men go on after this Rate, and are not desirous to have a Thorough Inspection of these Points, and care not to study them to the bottom, they will easily be imposed upon, and they will be tempted by those that pretend to more Knowledge than themselves, to change the Articles of their Belief, and to barter their Antient and Original Principles for Modern ones.

Again, too many forget to beg of the Father of Lights to direct and bless the Labours of their Minds, and thence we have so many Mistakes in our Theology. They come to the study of Divinity as they do to that of Arts and Sciences: they think their own Wit and Parts will carry them out, and therefore they look not after a Supernatural aid and Assistance. And this is one reason why they remain ignorant of the things of the Kingdom of Heaven. But we must be convinced of this, that unless we look up to God, it is in vain to look into Books. We must with inflamed Desires beseech the God of all Grace that we may *be fitted with the knowledge of his Will in all Wisdom and Spiritual Understanding*, as the Apostle prays for the

*Colossians, chap. i. v. 9.* None but the Soul enlightned from Above can judge aright of Heavenly Doctrines. None but the Spirit can give us a clear insight into the Mysteries of Religion.

Wherefore it is necessary that with earnestness and importunity we \* implore the Divine Blessing in our Contemplations and Studies, and with ardent Supplications crave the Direction of the Spirit to lead us into Truth, and to enable us to think and apprehend aright concerning the great Matters of Religion, and that we may have a Discerning Spirit and a Sound Judgment in the Things of God, and that we may not be perverted by false Principles. It is certain that there are some Ill Opinions and Perverse Notions, which, like some Evil Demons, cannot be dispossess'd but by Prayer and Fasting.

Besides diligence in Prayer, we must be careful to study our own Hearts. The neglect of this hath done us much harm, and hath hindred our discerning the Divine Mysterics of the Gospel. Whilst we ransack Libraries, whilst we are in search after Various Authors, whilst we turn over all sorts of Books, we forget to peruse the Volume of our own Consciences. This Book is out of request, and like an Old Almanack out of date, and indeed is thought

\* Non ex nobis est quòd intelligimus, sed ex eo qui quæ insensibilia erant, fecit intelligi. Itaq; ab eo speranda intelligentia est, qui & pulsantibus aperit, & quarentibus demonstrabit, & petentibus non negabit. Hilar. in ps. 120.

by some to be a Book not worth the perusal. But this is a great Mistake, and of all Books this must not be neglected by Divines and Clergymen. They must frequently retire into themselves, and rife and examine their Minds, and be thoroughly acquainted with themselves. Whilst others are gadding abroad, and entertain themselves with Foreign Objects, they should dwell at Home, converse with their own Hearts, and penetrate into the secretest recesses of them, and there in one Page read more than in a Hundred Authors. By knowing themselves, they will come to know God and his just Dominion and Prerogative, and their own Meanness and Inferiority : they will not then boggle at those Doctrines which I have asserted and vindicated, *viz.* the Impotency and Inability of Man's Free Will as to Spiritual Good, the absolute Necessity of Special Grace, and the Irresistible Power and Force of it, and those other Evangelical Doctrines which relate to this. The Study of our Hearts (for I hope I may have leave to mention it again, notwithstanding it passes for arrant Cant among some Men) will bring us to a Free Confession of all this. But because there are few that take this Method, thence it is that there are such frequent Mistakes about these Matters.

And further, our Diligence and Industry ought to be seen in our endeavouring to work out of our Minds all *Prejudice*, for it is this that makes us shut our Eyes, even when the clearest Light shines upon us. And therefore we are concerned to root out this, that we may

be in a capacity to admit the Beams of Divine Light into our Minds. We must be careful to enquire into the Truths of the Gospel with Simpleness of Heart, and without Partiality. To the neglect of this it may be imputed that we reject or despise some of the choicest Doctrines of Christianity, and that the Divinity of this Age confounds and destroys that of the former.

VI. This Change of Doctrines is from something that is yet worse, and that is the Corruption of Mens Lives, and the Irregularity of their Practises. We are told by the foresaid Celebrated Writer of our Church, that *\* without the Condition of doing God's Will, Men otherwise furnished with the best Gifts of Art and Nature, can never be competently qualified for Spiritual Instructors: but by performing it, the simple and illiterate shall be made capable of good Instructions, and enabled to discern true Doctrine from false.* Which he backs with those Words of our Saviour, *John 7. 17. If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* and let me add, he shall know what are those Doctrines that are not of God, and he shall have skill to discern them from the true ones. It is worth our observing, that when the Apostle calls upon his Brethren not to be carried about with strange Doctrines, he offers this as a Preservative, *It is a good thing*

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\* Dr. Jackson. Vol. 1. B. 2. Ch. 14.

*that the Heart be established with Grace,* Heb. 13. 9. This, this will guard us from Errors, and this will directly lead us to Truth, for by the effectual Influence of Gods Grace and Good Spirit on our Minds, we shall find in our selves a peculiar Eviſtion, which will prevail more than all Demonſtrations, will be more Apodictical than all Arguments and Reasonings. I may call this a Divine kind of Logick, which throughly confutes and convinces us, which answers all our Scruples and Cavils, and wholly captivates our Underſtandings, inſomuch that we are Fully perſwaded of the Truth and Reality of what is delivered to us.

This which I'm now ſpeaking of is the very Depth of Chriſtian Theology. You are brought, by what I here propound to you, into the moſt Inward Reſſes of Divinity. If you come to the true underſtanding of this, you are arrived to the greateſt Proficiency in the Chriſtian Religion. You muſt not expect I ſhould fully explain this Myſtery to you. If I could, it would not be ſo profound and admirable as it is. It cannot be ſo well deſcribed, as it can be Experienced. The Attainment of this Excellency, and the Diſcovery of it go together. There is no better way to apprehend it than to Poſſeſs it. There is a Practical and Senſible Knowledge which differs from the mere Notional one. Religion is better felt and reliſhed by Practiſe than it can be comprehended in the way of Speculation, as the Sweetneſs of Hony is better known by the Taſte, than by the Deſcription

of it. \* *This kind of Philosophy ( for so Erasmus calls it ) is placed, saith he, in the Affections more truly than in Syllogisms, it is Life more than Disputation, it is Inspiration rather than Instruction, it is Transformation rather than Reason.*

Therefore it is impossible that Men of bare Notion should ever be possessors of it. Indeed they may fancy that they are, and that they have attained it by their Humane Skill: but herein they are exceedingly deceived. They, like *Moses*, behold *Canaan* at a distance, but never enter into it. They are strangers to the Chief Mysteries of the Gospel, to the great Points of Christianity, though they have perhaps nicer Conceptions of them than others.

The Real and Experienced Christian differs from the Speculative one as the *Merchant* doth from the *Chymist*. The former hath no skill in Furnaces, and cannot talk of the nature of Gold, or the ordering of it according to Art, yet he is Rich, and hath Gold enough. The latter hath rare Notions of Gold, and can Discourse with great Skill and Quaintness about the managing of it, but yet the Man is Poor, and wants what he talks of. In like manner a true Practical Christian may be Rich in Grace, though he cannot learnedly discourse of it: and a Speculative Christian may be truly Poor though he can

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\* Hoc Philosophia genus in Affectibus situm verius quam in Syllogismis, Vita est magis quam Disputatio, Afflatus potius quam Eruditio, Transformatio magis quam Ratio. Paracelsi. ad Christ. Phil. Studium.

talk of the Spiritual Riches, and of that *Gold tried in the Fire* which the *Laodiceans* were counsell'd to buy, that they might be Rich, *Rev. 4. 18.* *Aristotle* Writ of the World, but his Scholar Conquer'd it. Many Read, Talk and Write of the great Things of God and another World, but the Practical Christian alone may be said to conquer them, and to be Master of them. He *Tasts* and *Sees* that God and Religion are *Good*, he hath a Spiritual Sensation of the Intrinsic Excellency of Holiness and of the real Turpitude of all Sin and Vice. In short, he *Experiences* those things in Religion which others only have a Notion of, and consequently he is the Wiser and more Learned Man. For (as the Jewish Rabins have said well in a Proverbial Way) *There is no Man so Wise as the Master of Experience.* This explains and illustrates things in a peculiar manner, this makes them Evident and Clear.

And besides, by a Right using the Spiritual Knowledge which he hath, and by practising what he knows, he hath the saving Mysteries of Christianity revealed to him in way of Blessing and Reward. To which purpose our Saviour's Words to his Disciples are remarkable, *It is given to you to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them (i. e. the other Jews) it is not given: for whosoever bath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.* You make good use of that Knowledge which is vouchsafed to you; which God is pleas'd graciously to recompense by increasing your Stock, and you have farther Discoveries made

made to you of those Mysteries which are hid to others.

You then that are the Sons of the Prophets, and that live in the Schools of the Prophets, and have dedicated your selves to the Sacred Ministry, ought to look upon this as a powerful Motive to the Practise of Religion. You indeed of all Persons, are concerned to live well upon all Considerations as well as this : and if you do not, it will be highly scandalous and opprobrious. For what an unanswerable Reproach is it to Men of Learning, to have it said of them, as a *Lacedemonian* said of the *Athenians*, \* They know well enough what is good and right, but they neglect to practise it? What a Reproach is it to a Student, and a Well-Read Man to be charged with Living as disorderly as the most Ignorant and Barbarous? What a shame is it to have very Bright and Glittering Notions, and yet to have Manners fordid, base and contemptible? Like that *Babylonian* Image, to have a Head of Gold, but Feet of Iron and Clay? Like the *Ethiopians*, who are nearest the Sun-rising, and yet are of the Colour of the Night. Shall Light produce Darknes, and Knowledge bring forth Black and Foul Actions? We that are Men of Study and Contemplation should be ashamed of such Monstrous Productions as these, and blush at the mentioning of them: and we should endeavour to ripen and digest our Notions into what

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\* Athenienses quod sit rectum sciunt, sed id facere negligunt. Val. Max. l. 4. c. 5.



is Affectionate and Practical. We should, with *Arianus*, represent to our selves how gallant a thing it is that a Man can say to himself, \* “ Whilst others are discoursing of Vertue in  
 “ the Schools, and speak big and brave things,  
 “ I am practising them. They are there Com-  
 “ menting on my Actions, and dispute about  
 “ me, and praise and applaud me. Such Lan-  
 guage will well become a Christian Philoso-  
 pher, a Divine, a Preacher, for *Practise* is his  
 greatest and noblest Accomplishment. He thinks  
 it more praise-worthy to Reform any part of his  
 Life than to understand the whole Book of the  
*Revelation*. Tho’ he values this latter Attain-  
 ment at a high rate, yet he prefers the former  
 to this and all Intellectual Acquirements.

For he considers that Affection and Practise  
 are the end of Knowledge, and that there should  
 not be a Separation between these. We find  
 that the Motion of the Brain is Synchronick  
 with that of the Heart, as in Fractures of the  
*Cranium* Physicians observe. And we can’t but  
 take notice that the Head and Brain are framed  
 on purpose to derive Sense and Motion and Ac-  
 tivity to the Body. Which Contrivance of  
 Nature fairly hints to us that *Understanding*  
 and *Knowledge* naturally lead to *Action*. And  
 thence it is that words of Knowledge denote  
 not only Affection but Practise. How natural,  
 how rational then is it that we should joyn  
 these together, and the rather because they have  
 such an Influence upon one another, and do

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\* Lib. 3. cap. 23.

such Wonders in Conjunction. But especially we are to remember what hath been suggested under this present Head, that by Living and Acting well we have the advantage of discerning the things of God and the Mysteries of Christianity, which are concealed from Carnal and Sensual Minds. For there must be a Divine Frame and Temper to capacitate us to receive Sound Doctrine. There must be a Sense of God and Religion very strong upon our Hearts, there must be a Principle of Divine Life in us, by vertue of which we shall become True Judges of Religion, we shall have a clear Taste and Relish of what is Truth. For it is this that refines our Apprehensions, and strengthens our Faculties, and darts in Light and Truth into our Minds.

But on the contrary, those who are unacquainted with the reality of Religion, those who have not undergone a Change in their Hearts and Lives, those whose Minds are not sanctified by Almighty Grace, are great Despisers and Opposers of the Truths of the Gospel. We find it confirmed by daily Experience that those who neglect to nourish a warm Sense of Goodness on their Minds are very liable to Mistakes and Errors in Religion. Their Vicious Affections distort their Reasons and Judgments. Profaneness of Life damps, and even extinguishes the true Sentiments of Christianity. Being debauched and corrupted in their Manners, they naturally degenerate in their Persuasions. So they make shipwrack of *Faith* and a *Good Conscience* together.

It must needs be so, because vitious Inclinations and Habits are in themselves Enemies to Divine Knowledge: they cloud and darken the Brain, they fully and pollute the Understanding, they corrupt and debauch the Rational Faculties, they will not permit the Mind to listen to Right Reason and Convictive Arguments, but they hurry the Soul into all Disorder, and so strangely Ruffle and Discompose it, that it is utterly Uncapable of receiving the Divine Impressions of Truth, and of imbracing the Excellent Maxims of the Christian Religion.

And from hence we may gather how we come to degenerate in our Theological Principles. Many are bred up in a loose way, and know nothing of Seriousness and Strictness of Life: they indulge themselves in worldly Pleasures and Vanities, in idle and vain expense of Time, they accustom themselves to the profanation of the Lord's Day, to Intemperance, Idleness, and Folly, and shew little of God and Religion in their Conversations. And thus by their early Pollutions they make themselves unfit for the Purity of Divine Doctrines, and they make themselves fit to receive any Impressions of Error. Let me tell you, It is hard to pass from an Evil Life to Good and Sound Notions. It is hard for a Young Man, a Loose Spark to start up a Solid Divine: from a kind of a Beau to become a Grave Preacher. Can we think that those who have scoff'd at serious Preaching, and condemn it as Canting, are fit to enter into the Ministry of the Church, or that when they are enter'd, they are fit to be acquainted with the Mind of God in his Word?

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Can we think otherwise than that those youthful Minds which have been corrupted with the Contagion of Bad Company, and have suck'd in from it Ill Principles, will certainly be prejudic'd against Sober and Divine Truths? What can we expect from those that have no good Foundation, that have not been inured to a Sense of Religion and Holiness, but to the contrary? What successful Instructions can we hope for from such Persons.

I will shut up this Particular with the Words of a Learned, Pious and Practical Divine, \* It is meet, saith he, that they who are to convert others, should be effectually converted themselves. *John* must first eat the Book, and then Prophecie, *Rev.* 10. 9. The Ministers of the Gospel must first themselves eat the Book of God, which is indeed done when they are not only in their Minds enlightned, but their Hearts are mollified, and brought in Subjection to the Word of Christ. Unless Christ be thus learned spiritually and really, Divines shall speak of the Word of God, as Men speak of Riddles, and as Priests in former times said their Matins, when they hardly knew what they said.

By this time, I hope, I have given you a good Account of the *Reasons* and *Causes* of the Degeneracy of the present Times as to Principles. I have let you see what is the true Rise

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\* Mr. Perkins's Commentary on the Epistle to the *Galatians*, chap. 1. v. 16.

of Mens *not induring sound Doctrine*. Nor have I yet finished what I designed. There are two other Springs and Sources of this Malady, and these I will more largely and amply insist upon than on those that I propounded before; because I think they are the most *General Causes* of this Disorder, and such as *universally* influence on those who in these Times cannot endure to hear of those Gospel Truths which I have set before you. This proceeds from their *Overvaluing of Reason*, and their *Slighting of Scripture*: which are the Two Heads I will insist upon, and I beseech the Divine Goodness to make them really serviceable to the Benefit of those who shall peruse these Papers.

First, The Unsound Doctrines which I have had occasion to mention together with the whole Sect of *Arminianism*, owe their Rise to the *Overvaluing of Humane Reason*. They tell us that it is below a Man of Sense and Parts (which they take to be their own Character) to admit of any Doctrine in Christianity which is not level with their Reason. Hence they must needs take up false Notions in Divinity, because there are many Doctrines belonging to it which are above that Level. The great Cry of the Men of this Age is that the *Arminian Points* sound more *Rational*, and are more easy to be conceived than the other Doctrines: and therefore for the sake of that which they call *Reason*, they change and new Model the Constitution of the Christian Religion. For they insist that a Man must use his Reason, and therefore the other Points are not to be admitted,

red, because they clash with this. They can't Understand, or give an Account of them, and thence they conclude that there is no such thing in reality.

But these Men are to know that our Reason was not given us to quarrel with Religion, and the Great Articles of Christianity which are delivered in the Gospel. † They are to know that Humane Reason, and Nature, and Philosophy have nothing to do with these things, because these are above those. But seeing they are for using and exercising their Reason (which is a very Excellent and Necessary Employment) I advise them to use it in the governing of their Passions, and correcting their Sensual Inclinations, for the proper work of Reason is to check and subdue these. Then we act like *Reasonable Creatures*, when we live the *Life* of such Creatures, not in giving way to Lust and unruly Appetites, but in Self-denial, and submitting ourselves to God and his Will. And by that time they have done this, they will find themselves disposed to believe and assert whatever God hath revealed, tho' it be not adjusted to their Natural Reason, and Ordinary Understanding. They will be convinced of this Important Truth, that Humane Reason is always vain and deceitful when it is carried beyond its proper bounds; that is, when it undertakes to determine of those things which come not under its Jurisdi-

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† Cessent propria hominum opiniones, neq; se ultra divinam constitutionem humana judicium extendant. Hilar. de Trin. lib. 3.

tion. Such are those Evangelical Truths which I have discoursed of, which are above the Sphere of Reason, and depend wholly on Divine Revelation.

In vain then do the *Socinians* and *Remonstrants* cry up Reason when they have to do with the Articles of Revealed Religion. They unwisely mix and blend those things which should be kept asunder. They imprudently and precariously argue from the seeming Reasonableness and Fitness of things to the Truth and Reality of them. They unduly measure and judge of the Nature of God, and of his Councils according to the suitableness of them to their own private Apprehensions and shallow Conceits.

This is the way of the *Roman* Catholicks, they fancy such and such Doctrines to be agreeable to Reason, and to be founded on Convenience, and then they vote them to be True and Certain; as in the Point of Supreme Head of the Church, and that of an Infallible Judge; and several other Doctrines, which they defend on the account of the Equity, Fitness, and Reasonableness of them. But our *Protestant* Writers tell them that these things may seem Reasonable and Fitting to us, but this is no Argument of the Reality of them: for that which is thought by us most Convenient, may not be judged to be so by God: and without doubt he is the best Judge. And why may we not thus speak like *Protestants* in the present Case, and tell the Friends of *Socinus* and *Arminius* that those Points which are controverted between us are not to be decided by Humane Reason,

and the natural Dictates of Mens Minds, but by the Word of God? Seeing we are short-sighted, and cannot penetrate into the Divine Secrets, it is highly unreasonable to find fault with them : but we ought to believe that there is a Reason for all that God saith or doth. We ought to think that all the Doctrines ( as well as the Precepts ) which come from him are Just and Good.

Nor are we to wonder that these Men guide themselves by other Maxims, and vilify many Evangelical Truths under the Pretence and Patronage of *Reason* : for this is no new thing, but the very same that was done when the great Truths of Christianity were first revealed to the World ; when such Evangelical Doctrines as these came to their Ears, namely, the Trinity of Persons in the God-head, the Incarnation of Christ, the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature, the Redemption and Recovery of Mankind by the Blood of Christ, the Resurrection of the same Body, the great Discoveries concerning another World, &c. the profound Sages among the *Gentiles* unanimously agreed to oppose them, and cry them down as Doctrines utterly repugnant to *Reason*, and contrary to the received Notions of Mankind. Hence it was that when St. *Paul* disputed with the Philosophers at *Athens*, he was Laugh'd at as a vain Babler, and a Man of unreasonable and absurd Principles. His most powerful Logick could not move those stiff Rationalists, and when he darted in among them the most Redundant Light, they were still in the Dark : and pardon me if I say that the very Owls of *Athens*



*Athens* were not half so Dim-sighted as the Philosophers there. Yet without doubt the *Athenians*, who were the Flower of all *Greece*, not only thought themselves incomparably the wisest Men in the World, and reckon'd themselves the only Civilized People, and all others beside them *Barbarians* (which was the usual Epithet they fastned on them) but really these Men were the most knowing Persons in the Heathen World, they were certainly great Philosophers, Acute Disputants, Excellent Virtuoso's, and highly improved in all Humane Arts and Sciences. But notwithstanding this, their Notions and Arguments were inconsistent with the Doctrine of Christ and the Principles of the Gospel.

What was the Reason? This most certainly, that the Knowledge of these things was not to be had by Natural Light, could not be learnt in the School of Nature. These Men of Philosophy sought after Wisdom as the Apostle saith (1 Cor. 1. 22.) i. e. the Wisdom which their Vain Philosophy taught them, which was founded only on the Common Principles of Nature, and respected not the extraordinary Power of God, and his Unlimited and Arbitrary Actings. Very Remarkable, and Surprizing are those Words of the Apostle in 1 Cor. 1. 21. *In the Wisdom of God, the world by Wisdom knew not God*, i. e. through the wonderful and over-ruling Providence of God, those Men that pretended most to Wisdom and Knowledge, attained not to the right and saving Knowledge of God by their knowing more than others: for they had their Understandings darkned by at-

tending to their Corrupt Notions which their Philosophy furnished them with. These thwarted the Articles of the Christian Faith, and ran counter to all the Doctrines of the Gospel. Jesus and the Resurrection seem'd strange and ridiculous things to them. It was counted Folly by the Philosophers and Wise-men to expect Life from Death, to hope to be saved by a Man that died on the Cross. This is that which the Apostle expressly asserts in *1 Cor. 1. 23. The Preaching of Christ Crucified was to the Greeks Foolishness.* It could not be otherwise when they proceeded only on Grounds of Common Reason, and when the Doctrines which the Apostles preached to them were far above it.

And so it is now, the Doctrine which I have treated of are accounted Foolishness, and are condemn'd as Non-sense by those that doat upon mere Philosophical Principles, and deify Reason. These Men look thro' false Glasses, and have deceitful Representations of things; they see nothing aright that relates to these Doctrines, because they proceed upon mere Natural Maxims, and use such Arguings as are Corrupt and Sensual. This is the perpetual Fault of those among us who addict themselves to the Opinions of *Socinus* and *Armin*: with reference to which latter the Learned and Judicious Bishop *Sanderfon* would have us take notice of *the Plausibleness of Arminianism, and the Congruity it hath in sundry Points with the Principles of Corrupt Nature, and of Carnal Reason.* For it is, saith he, *a wonderful tickling to Flesh and Blood to have the Powers of Nature magnified, and to bear it self flatter'd, as if*  
*she*

she carried the greatest stroke in the work of Salvation. This is that excellent Man's Judgment concerning *Arminianism*, in his *Pax Ecclesie*, published with his Life, and other Pieces by Mr. *Isaac Walton*. If the Divines of our Age would vouchsafe (as they ought) to consider what this Great and Famous Father of our Church here suggests, they would not suffer Corrupt Reason to pervade and poison their Divinity: they would not throw off the Doctrines of the Gospel, because they cannot see the Philosophy of them.

As to the *Obscurity* and *Difficulty* which attend some of these Divine Doctrines, this should not encline us in the least to disbelieve and disown them. It was rightly said by that Learned Author whom I have had occasion often to mention, that \* *It is not necessary we should abate the Strength and Vigour of our Assent to general Principles, for want of saving footing in special Difficulties*. And the Reason is plain, for if we must reject a Principle or Doctrine, because of some Difficulty in it, then we must reject most of the Great Truths of the Gospel. Do we not read that Christianity and its Great Articles are stiled *the Mysteries of Godliness*? But how can they be a Mystery, if there be nothing Obscure and Difficult in them, if all be Plain, Easy, and Natural? Where is the *Mystery* then? Which evidently shews that those of our Church who espouse the Opinions of the *Remonstrants*, because they

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\* Dr. Jackson. Vol. 1. B. 5. Ch. 50.

ſay they are Smooth and Facile, and fitted to our Common Reason, do not underſtand the Nature of the Chriſtian Religion, do not conſider that there are Myſteries and Abſtruſities in it, and that we ought not on the account of theſe, to think hardly of the Articles of Religion.

Nay, let me ſay, we ought to eſteem and prize the Chriſtian Religion becauſe it hath its Difficulties, becauſe it ſurmounts our Natural Reasonings, and goes ſo much againſt the Grain. I look upon this as a great Argument of the Truth of theſe Doctrines. If they were not as to ſome things Abſtruſe and Incomprehenſible (as all Heavenly things are) we might ſuſpect that they were from Men, and not from God. So then, that which our Adverſaries object againſt our Doctrines, is ſo far from diſparaging them, that it highly commends them. We may thence argue that they came from God, and are not of Humane Invention.

Here then let us underſtand our ſelves, and ſee plainly what is the Cauſe of Mens cavilling againſt the Truths and Doctrines which I have advanced. It hath its riſe from the Weakneſs and Narrowneſs of Mens Minds; which are wont to meaſure the moſt High by their own ſcanty and contracted Proportions. Thoſe that indulge themſelves in this Folly, will think all the Articles of Chriſtianity harſh and unreaſonable, and at laſt they will admit of nothing in Religion but what is according to the Model of their own vain Reasonings. It concerns us then to take care of our ſelves betimes, and to check this Folly, which is ſo diſcernable in this Age, and is grown into Repute. It is now eſteemed

steemed a great Specimen of Wit to raise Civils and Scruples about these Doctrines which I have been treating of : and he is thought by some the Best Divine, and the acutest Preacher that is able to argue and reason nicely against them. Propound one of these Points to them, and presently they try to understand the Philosophy of it, they examine whether it be exactly adjusted to the Laws of Reason. If they find it will not endure this Touchstone, they forthwith reject it as false and adulterate.

Far be it from me to discourage and dishearten any of you *Academicks* (for to those of that rank I speak at this time) in your Philosophical Studies. I wish you good Success in your Enquiries and Researches. But take this Advice along with you, make not use of your Learning and Philosophy to supplant Religion, and to disgrace Christianity. Do not Reason away your Religion and your Faith. Measure not God's Wisdom by your own. Beware of those Men who vaunt their Reason, in defiance of the Principles of Christianity. Which is the common Fault of many at this day ; among whom the great ground of all their Cavils and Objections against the foresaid Doctrines is the not believing that those Propositions may be true and certain which they are not able to make out according to the Common Notions which they have of things, according to the Arguments which Humane Reason furnishes them with. This Disbelief is very pernicious, as I shall shew afterwards. At present I will only take notice that hereby they let the World

understand that they are highly \* conceited of their own Opinions and Judgments, of their own Parts and Abilities, and these they call *Reason*.

The next and last Spring of the Miscarriage I have been blaming, is the *Slighting* and *Undervaluing of Scripture*. There are those who reproach Revelation, to defend Reason: to make themselves *Arminians*, they are forc'd to renounce the plainest Texts in the Bible. One would almost guess from some of their Sermons that they are of that Cardinal's Mind, who thus advis'd one who had been reading and studying the Epistle to the Romans, *Lay aside, saith he, these Trifles, these Fooleries, for they do not become a grave Man*. We have some of this Gravity amongst us, we have those that have very mean thoughts of this Apostle's Epistles: and from their despising the Doctrines contained in them we can't but infer, without breach of Charity, that they look upon those Writings as very Trivial Things. Tho' among the Apostles, *St. Paul* was more enlightned, and had greater Discoveries made to him than all the rest, yet, behold! he is more despised and neglected than them all. Even those who pretend to be great Admirers of Reveal'd Reli-

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\* Ad contumeliam Cœlestium Verborum pro excusatione hebetudinis suæ prorumpunt, dicentes in his nihil rationale, nihil esse perfectum, volentes ea quæ à se dicuntur, sola esse erudita, & doctrina suæ prudentiâ expolita. Hilar. in Psal. 118.

gion, have the least regard to this Great Man of Revelations. This Chief and Highest of the Inspired Apostles is the Lowest and Meanest with them. Of all the Epistles, his are most slighted and disesteemed. There we read that there is a Spiritual Contagion conveyed to us from our first Parents, but this is disbelieved and laught at by many. There we find that Christ's Righteousness is made ours by Imputation, but this will not gain assent among some Men. There we are told that there is a Special Grace vouchsafed to some, which is denied to others, but this will not be admitted of. There we are informed that Justification is by Faith alone, but believe it who will: some of our Divines refuse to receive any such Doctrine. There we are plainly instructed about the Nature of Eternal Election, but this is absolutely denied, and all the Texts that the Apostle hath left to establish and confirm it, are scorn'd and vilified. Thus fair *St. Pauls Epistles*, and the several Members of that *sound Doctrine* which are there delivered.

Yet certainly, as they are Revealed Truths, they call for our Belief, for we are obliged to assent to whatever God hath revealed, because it was revealed in order to our believing it. This was the very design of penning the Sacred Writings, and particularly of the *Apostolical Epistles*, which latter are very much despised of late. *We should have been never the less Disciples of Christ*, saith Mr. Le Clerc, *If any of*

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\* Annotat. in 1 Cor. 5. 9.

*these Epistles had been lost.* And another tells us, that \* *the Doctrines of the Christian Faith are not to be sought for in these Epistles, for they were not writ designedly, but Occasionally only, and by the by: which is the very way of disparaging the Epistles of the Apostles that \* Bellarmine uses: so that hence we may see from whom our late Writers borrow their Methods of vilifying the Epistles.* But the true reason of this Practise is because there are some Doctrines in these Epistles which they have no good Opinion of, yea, which they oppose and contradict: and such are these Doctrines that I have spoken of.

But we are not to take the Scripture by halves. The whole Bible was given us on purpose to fix and establish our Faith, and to render our Religion Sure and Certain. Immediate Revelations and Raptures are too high for us: and Natural Light or Reason is too low and mean, besides that it is unsafe and dangerous in our present State: wherefore the only true Path we are to go in, and in which we may expect a Blessing, is Scripture. We have this Book to Secure us, to Ascertain us of the Truth, and to prevent our being seduced and decoyed by pretences of Reason. The New Testament particularly was Endited and Written on purpose to obviate and remedy those Mischiefs which arise from the Luxuriancy of Mens Reasonings. And therefore it is a manifest af-

\* Mr. Lock's Reasonableness of Christianity.

† De Verbo non Scripto. Lib. 4. c. 10.



front to the Holy Writings, to refuse their Arbitrement, to reject their decision in Matters of Faith.

The rise of Popery was from this very thing, their neglecting the Scriptures, and forbidding the reading of them. And this is the Origin of the present Errors which relish of Popery. Men frame Notions out of their own Imaginations and Reasonings, without consulting the Inspired Writings. And if this be blamable in *Papists*, can it be commendable in *Protestants*? We make a great deal of Work with the Romanists for their denying the Scriptures to be the Sole Rule of Faith, and we very vigorously attack them on this account. When we are confuting them, we think (and we think rightly) that we baffle their Doctrine of *Tradition* by shewing that the *Bible* was given us to be the only Standard of Belief. Now, what *Tradition* is with the *Papists*, that *Reason* is with some *Protestants*. The former believe many Doctrines, tho' inconsistent with Scripture, for the sake of *Tradition*: the latter embrace other Doctrines (as repugnant to the Scriptures as those) for the sake of *Reason*. But both of them must needs hold that Scripture is not a Perfect Rule of Faith, for we see that one adds *Tradition*, and the other Human Reason to it. How little Difference then is there (as to this Matter) between *Papists* and some *Protestants*.

But you will say, these Preachers, whose Doctrine I dislike, are as conversant in the Holy Scriptures as those of another Perswasion, and they study them with as great Diligence.

I deny not that some of them do, but from their Discourses and Sermons which have seen the Light, we may be apt to think that they study them to pervert and deprave them: that they may thence have a Foundation for their own Doctrines which they have espoused. Accordingly we may observe what Artifices they make use of. They (as \* *St. Jerom* remarks concerning the like persons of old) pretend to support their Doctrines with Divine Authority, and Testimonies from Scripture, but then we may discern how deceitfully they go to work, they force a Sense of their own, they abuse Grammar and Criticism for their particular Ends, they voluntarily mistake the Scope of the Words: and the misapplying of Scripture is no Crime with them.

It is an usual practice to alledge † some single Passages in Scripture, to cull out some certain Words, without taking notice of the Connection and Dependance of them, and thence to make Conclusions on their own side. I could instance in some who have contributed much towards the marring the Doctrines of Christianity by this kind of practise. But this is not fair and just, for after this rate a Man may maintain any thing, tho it be never so contrary

\* *Sine Scripturarum autoritate garrulitas hæreticorum non haberet fidem, nisi videretur perversam doctrinam etiam divinis testimoniis roborare.* In *Epist. ad Tit.*

† *Hæretici particulas quasdam de Scripturis eligunt, quibus decipiunt imperitos, non connectentes quæ supra & infra scripta sunt ex quibus voluntas & intentio Scriptoris possit intelligi.* *Augustin. Cont. Adimant. cap. 14.*

to Scripture, and elude the clearest Texts in the Bible, and yet at the same time quote Scripture for what he saith. We must not pick and choose here : we must not be suffered to pare off one part from the rest, to establish from that one part a Proposition of our own inventing. Such Clippers are as bad as Coiners. It was a Rule that a Learned Writer among the Antients prescribed himself, \* We ought (saith he) not to judge of any ones Writings from a part of them, we ought not to take some Fragments, and from them to determine concerning the whole Mind of the Author. Which Direction is to be more especially observed, if it be applied to the Sacred Writings. We must not diminish or curtail any Text, or any part of the Bible : we must take it all together, one part with another, and never determine any thing from a single Sentence or Passage separated from the rest, where we know there is a Connection.

Again, there are those who use their utmost skill and art to *obscure* and *perplex* those Texts of Scripture which relate to the Matters I have treated of : that thereby we may be discourag'd from making use of them, and that we may be forced to submit to the Standard of Humane Reason. As these Points have some difficulty in themselves, so they are made much more so

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\* Μὴ δὲν ἐκ μέρους τὰ συγγραμματα κρίνειν, μηδ' ἀποσπαράγματα τινα λαμβάνοντες διὰ τέτων τὴν ὅλην τῆ γραφοντῆ ἐνδιαβίλλεν διάνοιαν. Eulog. Episc. Alexand. apud Phot. Bibliothec.

by Mens wilful entangling them. They start Objections and Cavils about the interpretation of the Words, to beat us off from the plain Sense contained in them. Their aim is to Amaze and Puzzle us, that by that means we may be dissatisfied, and no longer endeavour to make use of those Texts for our purpose. But we must not be catch'd thus, we must remember that we deal with persons that have a design upon us, and we are to fix this upon our Minds that the Truths of the Scripture, tho' Obscure, ought to be embraced by wise and understanding Men before the seeming Clearness and Plainness of Humane Opinions and Assertions.

We are to know this likewise, that as the Scripture offers some Difficulties to us, so it solves them best of all. The Bible it self is the best Interpreter and Reconciler. If a Man heedfully peruses the Scriptures, and diligently compares one place with another, and lets plain Texts expound those that are dark, and the Larger ones those that are but Brief and Concise, he will never fail of the true meaning of these Holy Writings. The Scripture is the Voice of God himself: if we attentively and carefully listen to it, we shall hear it interpret it self. The only Rule of Faith is the best Rule of Interpretation. This will certainly lead us to the True and Genuine Sense, and confirm us in it, if our Minds be not corrupted with Prejudice and Prepossession: for looking thro' so deceitful an Optic as this, we shall read the Text otherwise than it is. This is frequently done by the Persons I'm speaking of, they bring  
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the Scriptures to them, and do not go to the Scriptures. They are of *Socinus's* Mind and Resolution, who profess that \* tho' the Satisfaction of Christ were expressly mentioned in the Bible, yet he would not believe it. So though the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, Justification by Faith alone, Original Sin, the necessity of supernatural Grace, the Eternal Decrees be plainly taught in the New Testament, they refuse to give their assent to these Doctrines. Let the Gospel Writings be never so express in these Points, yet because they do not comport with the Principles and Notions which they have taken up, they give no credit to them. But now, if we apply our selves to Scripture first, and firmly resolve to adhere to that, and then regulate our Notions by what we find there, we shall act otherwise. Here therefore we must be very careful: when we study the Scriptures, and search into the meaning of them, we must mind what God himself saith, and not what our Fancy dictates. † We must look for the Sense from the Words, and not impose one upon them. We must bring back the meaning from the Text, rather than carry one to it. In short, We must not dare to deny that such and such Doctrines are contain'd in Scripture, because our Reasons boggle at them: but we should first own them to be (as

\* De Christo Servat. Pars 1. cap. 6.

† Optimus Lector est qui dictorum intelligentiam expectat ex dictis potius quam imponat, & retulerit magis quam attulerit. Hilar. de Trin. lib. 1.

certainly they are ) in Scripture, and then submit our Reasons to them.

But there is a Generation of Men that will not admit of this, and therefore tho' they seem to pay a Reverence to Scripture, and pretend to be determined by it, yet they do what they can to evade it. We may say of these Men as *Solomon* of the first Generation of Men in the World, *They have sought out many Inventions* : They are forced to make use of their Wits, to find ways how to rid themselves of those Texts which press so hard upon them : and the knot which they cannot untie, they boldly cut asunder. They set the Bible on the Rack, and do violence to the Words and Expressions of it by accommodating them to their own preconceiv'd Notions. But let them shew the Subtilty of their Wit in any thing rather than in wresting and perverting the Word of God. And they are to be reminded of this that Tricks and Evasions and Sophistry cannot hold out against the force of Holy Scripture, Divine Reason, and the Sense and Experience of Good Men. But so it is, tho' we often acquaint them with this, yet they are continually on their Guard, to defend themselves against the assaults of Truth. And by being so often upon Service, they come to be expert in War; they are always appointed and provided; and they handle their Weapons with great Art and cunning. But if they would be Free and Ingenuous, and resolve to submit to the Truth and Simplicity of the Gospel, we should soon see them lay down their Arms : for there would be no need of them.

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And briefly, If they would peruse the Bible with a sincere and unfeigned desire to find the Truth, if they would be perswaded that this is the only Canon of the Christian Faith, if they would look upon the Writings of the Gospel as the Will and Testament of Christ, and lay aside the Codicils and Supplements of Mens Invention, and lastly if they would be convinced that this gives the Bible the Difference from all other Writings, that it contains in it Mysteries to be believed, which are above our Understandings, they would soon change their Sentiments about the Doctrines above mentioned, and they would come over to us with great Willingness. But the reason why they dissent from these Articles is because they do not value the Scriptures: they frame a false Idea of these Great Points, because they do not sufficiently prize and esteem this Book. And thus you have seen what are the several Causes of the Degeneracy of Mens Principles in this present Age. I have largely shew'd whence these Corruptions in our Religion have had their Rise, and whence it is that they have gained so much ground.

I AM now in the fourth place to set before you the *Danger* and *Mischief* of this Degeneracy, of this *not enduring sound Doctrine*. The Apostle's Words are remarkable, 2 Cor. 4. 3. If

our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. Which is as much as if he had said, The Concealing, and much more the renouncing of the Christian Doctrine, or any substantial part of it, infers the Loss of Mens Souls, and the Forfeiture of their Happiness. I do not now speak of that Defection and Error which proceeds from Ignorance and Mistake, or Weakness of the Understanding, but I speak of such Errors relating to the Gospel as proceed from the depravity of the Will and Affections. Such as are guilty of these are pronounced *Lost* by the Apostle, they are in a State of Perdition. And in another place we hear such severe Language as this, *Tho' we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be Accursed*, Gal. i. 8. This is not like the *Curses* and *Anathema's* of the Church of Rome, which she thunders out against all that embrace not the Articles of the Council of *Trent*, for these will do us no harm. But the Curse here denounced by the Apostle will stick fast on those on whom it lights, because they deserve it for *preaching another Gospel*, and (as it is explained v. 7.) *perverting the Gospel of Christ*. Thus we see how Pernicious and Dangerous this is, with respect to Our selves.

It is so with respect to Others, and even to Religion it self. For 1. It visibly promotes *Scepticism*. 2. It advances the Cause of the *Deists*. 3. It conduces to *Irreligion* and *Atheism*. 4. It tends to a *Dissolute* and *Wicked Life*.



*First*, Nothing can be more apparent than this, that the Degeneracy which I have been discoursing of, fosters *Scepticism*, and that both in the Learned and others. When the former observe that not only *Philosophical* Systems and Theories, which have prevail'd a considerable time, at last wear off, and are laid aside as mere Fictions, and New Hypotheses mount the Stage, but that *Theological* Doctrines and Articles, which came down to us from the Apostles, and have been received a long time in the Church, are at length thrown off, and ridiculed as idle and vain Chimera's, doth not this tempt them to turn *Scepticks* in Religion, as well as *Philosophy*? doth not this disettle their Notions, and stagger their Belief concerning Divine Matters?

And when *others* observe the Carriage of the Preachers and Divines of this Age, that they vary from the Doctrines of their Predecessors, that they change their Articles as fast as others (and themselves too) do their Fashions, that what was Good Divinity at the Reformation and afterwards, hath not been thought to be so for above these Forty Years, that those of the Gown are as giddy and wavering as any other Men, that Churchmen play fast and loose with Religion, that they are justly chargeable with Inconstancy and Levity, when this, I say, is observed, may we not surmise the *Sceptical* Humour and Genius of these times is nourished and upheld by it? Doth not this Alteration, which is made in our Principles, move Men to think that Opinion bears sway in Religion as

well as in other things, that our belief depends upon the Impressions made on us by Education, by Prejudice, by Authority, and the like, and that Imagination and Custom are the Measures of Truth and Error? Thus it is as clear and bright as a Sun-beam that some among us by *not enduring Sound Doctrine*, but changing it for that which is of a different Nature, have promoted *Scepticism* and *Indifferency in Religion* in those who have taken notice of their Behavior. And how *Dangerous* these are, may be gathered from this, that they are the Forerunners of *Apostasy*, for *Scepticism* and this differ as a *Palsy* and a *Lethargy*, in degrees only, but they have the same Cause.

*Secondly*, In others it hath begot and encouraged *Deism*. I say *Deism*, which is the Great and Common Evil that in the Pulpits and in the Press, and in the Discourses of the Clergy is cried out against, and that most justly. But it is a very sad Reflection to dwell upon, that some of these are the Persons who promote and advance this Evil. For what is *Deism* but holding the Existence of a Deity, and owning a Natural Religion, but rejecting all Revelation? And consequently it appears that we have been gratifying the Deists, and even taking their part, whilst we have been Writing and Preaching against them. We have condemned them for their over-valuing of *Natural Religion*, and despising that which is *Reveal'd*: but at the same time we have let them see what a mean Esteem we have for the latter, in our renouncing of those Doctrines and Principles of Christianity.

stianity which depend wholly upon that Revelation which we have in the Writings of the New Testament.

But I shall begin higher, and shew that there are those among us who carry on the Design of *Deism* by vilifying those Discoveries which are made to us by the Divine Revelation in the *Old Testament* as well as in the *New*. The first Chapter of the Bible (as an Omen of what they will do with the whole Book afterwards) is cashiered by them. It is peremptorily asserted that neither the Sun, Moon, nor Stars are a part of the *Creation* recorded by *Moses*, altho' express Mention be made of them in his History of the Creation, altho' they be particularly inserted into the Narrative of the Six days Works, altho' 'tis expressly said *Gen. 2. 1. Thus the Heavens and the Earth were finished, and all the Host of them*, as the Sum of all that had been said in the foregoing Chapter. Notwithstanding this, we are told that the *Earth only was finished*. And whereas *Moses* saith the Creation was performed in Six Days, a new Calculation is invented, and 'tis declared that the Works of the Creation were six days a finishing.

The short is, that the first Chapter of *Genesis* concerning the Creation and Origin of the World is not adjusted to Truth. The plain and literal Sense of the Words of the History is to be rejected, to make way for a mere precarious Hypothesis. This Chapter must not pass for Inspired Scripture, because the Creation, as it is described by *Moses*, is not according to the Laws and Principles of *Mecanism*. Judge you

now whether a *Deist* hath not good footing here, judge you whether he be not encouraged to give *Moses*, the first Penman of Revealed Truth, the Lye.

They go on to the third Chapter of this Book, and there they plentifully ridicule the Narrative given us by *Moses* concerning the *Fall of our first Parents*, and what is said concerning *Satans tempting them*, and the other passages recorded in that Chapter. We are told that we must not shew our selves so weak and foolish as to give credit to such Idle and Improbable Stories as these, but we must look upon them as Allegories and Parables, and in plain Terms as Fictions and Fables.

By the way I might observe that this is somewhat a kin to Mr. *Le Clerc's* Comment on *Mat. 4. 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil, &c.* All which Narrative, he saith, is a *Dream*: it was only a Fancy and Imagination of our Lord whilst he was asleep, but there was no such thing in reality, tho' *St. Luke* afterwards relates the very same things concerning Christ's Fasting and Temptation, and tho' there is not one Word or Syllable that gives occasion to doubt whether it was a plain History, and Matter of Fact. This Writer then and the other, to whom I referred, agree in nulling the Letter and History of the Bible, tho' the latter be the most blamable, because he doth this in so Important a Subject as the *Fall of Adam*, which is the Foundation of several great and substantial Doctrines in our Religion. If such bold Insults on the Bible be not restrained, Revealed Religion will  
be

be in great Danger. And yet I have not heard that this Attempt has been censured by the Governours of our Church.

This Author passes to the Seventh Chapter of *Genesis*, and there he quarrels with the History of the *Universal Deluge*, as an Incredible and Romantick Relation. He denys the possibility of an Universal Flood, because he fancies there was not Water enough to drown the Whole Terrestrial Globe. These are the Precious Notions of some *Gotham* Divines, and this and all the rest is exactly according to the *Deist's* Tooth, and he could not have been more obliged than by such bantering of the Bible, and by finding fault with the Arithmetick and the Chronology of the Sacred Writings, as these and some others have done.

If we pass to the *New Testament*, we shall find that that is as ill treated as the other. \* He that made so bold an Attempt on the first Chapter of the Old Testament, is as daring in his handling the first Book in the New. He represents *St. Matthew's* Gospel as a strange Piece of Rapsody: and he tells us that the Compiling of that History was by mistake. He dreams of Dislocations every where: thirteen Chapters together are all out of Order. And a Wrong Timing of things (of which he complains) doth necessarily accompany so many Erroneous placings of Stories: and consequently the whole is shatter'd, disorder'd and confounded. Be-

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\* Mr. *Whiston's* Short View of the Harmony of the Four Evangelists.

sides, this *Harmonizer* holds that the Copy of *St. Matthew's* Gospel is not the same now as it was at the first: which if we grant, we may go further, and suspect the Copies of the other Books of the Bible. We may justly think that the Scriptures are not what they were at first, when they came out of the Hands of the Penmen. Which is more pernicious than what *Hobbes*, or *Spinoza*, or *F. Simon*, or *Mr. Le Clerc* have advanc'd.

And having mention'd this last, I can't but compare *Mr. Whiston's* Performance with this Writer's audacious Attempt on the first Chapter of *Matthew*, where he propounds the Opinion of a good Friend of his (himself without doubt) who thought *St. Matthew* lighted on a Genealogical Book of *David's* Family that was defective, and thence this Evangelist's Account of the Lineage of our Blessed Saviour is Defective, or, in plainer Terms, False. The *Harmonizer* doth not come short of this, but rather exceeds it, when he saith we have not the True Copy of *St. Matthew's* Gospel, and that the History and Chronology of it are fallly placed. Thus, as this Author before *Theorized*, so now he *Harmonizes* the Scriptures away, and accordingly he will, if he goes on, expose the Sacred Writings to the Contempt of the *Deists*.

But I proceed to shew how these Men are further gratified by some of our Divines. It is publickly proclaimed to the World that there are manifest Faults and Real Repugnancies in some parts of the Bible. It is avouch'd that the Miracles and Wonders wrought by our Saviour and the Apostles may be done by Impostors and Sorcerers;

Sorcerets, for these can work as True Miracles as they did, or could. Some, to shew how low and mean Opinion they have of the Christian Dispensation, tell us that Christianity hath no other Design than to improve our Natural Notions of Religion; that there is no more required in Christianity than in Natural Religion excepting the two Sacraments and Praying to God in the Name of Jesus Christ; that there is no distinction between Evangelical and Moral Righteousness; that the great Mysteries and Transactions in Christianity are in Imitation of the *Pagan* Notions and Practises, some whereof were Barbarous and Idolatrous. They tell us that they can't find the Existence of God and the Immortality of the Soul any where revealed in Scripture; that it is impossible to have an Idea of a Spirit, and particularly of God. We are told that Christians are nowhere bid to believe in Jesus Christ. We have those that deny the Divine Institution of the Lord's-Day. It is preached that tho' it be reveal'd that Everlasting Punishment is threatned to those that live and die in their Sins, yet God may not perform what he threatens: and so the main Prop of the Belief of the Eternity of Hell-Torments is taken away. Another known Writer of our Church makes short work with this Article, and roundly tells us that the Souls of the Wicked are Annihilated.

And to come nearer to the Matter which hath been before us, we have great Numbers of those who tell us that those Great Points of Faith, the Eternal Decrees, the Derivation of Sin and Guilt from *Adam*, the Imputation of Christ's Righte-

Righteousness, Justification by Faith alone, and the Necessity of Supernatural Grace are not Doctrines to be entertained by us: and yet any one that hath well convers'd with the New Testament cannot but own these to be found there.

Are we not then our selves the Authors of *Deism*, or the Patrons of it? Do we not disparage *Revealed Religion*, and whilst we Talk, and Write, and Preach against *Deism*, are we not the Persons that promote it? Doth not any Man that reads the forementioned Passages in the Writings of our Noted Divines, find ground to believe that they are not in good earnest when they declaim against the Deists? Yes, doth he not see that they teach the Contempt of the Scriptures, and of the Truths of the Gospel, those Truths which are proper and peculiar to Christianity? If this Affront were offered to Revealed Religion by Lay-men only, the fault would not appear so Heinous: but it is not a *Spinosa* or a *Hobbes*, it is not a *Clerc* or a *Coward* that hath done this: it is *not an Enemy* that thus *reproaches* our Religion, *then we could have born it, but it is thou*, one of our *Guides* and our *Acquaintance*. This is that which aggravates and inhanſes the Crime.

What think you? are we not like to atchieve great things against the Deists in our Pulpits and in our Printed Declamations against them, when we make such Proficiency in *Deism* our selves? Let us not deceive and flatter our selves: God sees us, and the World too, and our own Consciences. What rank Nonsense is it to assert and defend *Divine Revelation*, and yet to  
disown



disown those very Doctrines which are founded on it? What a Contradiction is it to Pen Discourses and Preach Sermons against those that deny Revelation, and yet to oppose the Revealed Truths of the Bible? This is the strangest Infatuation imaginable, to maul the Deists in every Sermon and Print, and yet to scorn to follow Divine Revelation our selves. Or, would we have the *Deists* shew a Reverence to the Scriptures and Instituted Religion, when we refuse to do it our Selves? For shame, either let us forbear rallying upon the Deists, or let us believe and profess the Principles and Doctrines which Divine Revelation hath imparted to us, tho' we can't give a Philosophical Account of them, yea, tho' they are wholly Unphilosophical, and contradict our Reason.

God hath revealed himself and his Will to us in his Word, and especially we have the Infalible Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles to direct us into Truth, and shall we not be guided and directed by them? It is reveal'd in the Divine Oracles that some are chosen out of the rest of Mankind to partake of Grace and Glory; and shall we refuse to give assent to it? It is revealed that all Men are born in Sin, and are by Nature Children of Wrath: and shall not this be received by us as an undeniable Truth? It is part of our Revealed Religion that Faith is the sole Instrument of our Justification: and can we alledge any pretence of disbelieving it? We have it discover'd and confirmed to us by Revelation that it is not our Personal, but an Imputed Righteousness that constitutes us Righteous in the esteem of Heaven:

ven: and can we think our selves obliged to believe it or not? There is sufficient Evidence from the Scriptures that Supernatural Strength is required to Conversion: and can we then excuse our selves from giving Credit to this Truth? No certainly.

If we especially, who are Divines, shall act otherwise, we shall be found to be Dissemblers and Deceivers, and we shall sink our own Credit, as well as that of the Christian Religion. We shall turn Moral Philosophers, instead of Evangelical Preachers; and nothing but Natural Religion will go down with us. We shall go no farther than the Heathen Ethicks will permit us: and it is to be feared that the next Age will scarcely tell what Christianity is. You see then there was Reason to enlarge upon this Head, that I might fully represent unto you the *Danger* of revolting from any of the Principles of Christianity. This is that which hath half ruined us: and if it proceeds, will perfectly undo us. This hath advanced the Cause of *Deism*, and will lead to *Atheism* at last. Which is the next Particular I am to say something of.

*Thirdly* then, It is to be feared that the Change of our Principles will be instrumental to the introducing of *Irreligion* and *Atheism*. For what will Men be apt to think when they see the Great Points of Christianity alter'd? When they take notice that Justification by Faith alone was a sound Doctrine at the Reformation, and a long time after that, but is not so now? that Eternal Election, without the

consideration of Faith or Works, was reckon'd an Apostolical Truth heretofore, but is now laid aside: and so that the rest of the Doctrines above specified were received by all the Divines of the Church of *England*, but are Preached and Written against by some of them now? I ask you seriously, what think you will be the result of this? Are you not sensible that by this shameful Defection the Name of God and Religion will be dishonoured, and Religion will be thought to hang upon the Times, and to be a Precarious and Mutable thing?

What we have experienced already among us, hath gone a great way towards the Proof of this. And if we proceed further, there is no need of the Gift of Prophecy to foretel what will be the dismal Effects of this spreading Degeneracy. If we change our Doctrines in the time to come proportionably to the Change we have made in so short a time already, we shall soon cashier all our Religion, and turn Christianity out of doors. And who will pay Respect to our Religion, when they see that some of the Preachers of this Age are the great Instruments in this Catastrophe, and therein forget the Design of their Ministry, disregard the Interest and Honour of Christianity, dispraise their High Calling and Profession, betray the Truth, prevaricate with the Gospel, and give Men occasion to suspect that whilst they cast off *these* Articles of Religion, their real Intention is to reject all of that Name? Thus *Infidelity* and *Atheism* are promoted.

And so, *Fourthly*, is *Dissolute Living*. For what shakes the very Foundations of the Christian Faith, and undermines the Ground-work of Christianity (as the Doctrines opposite to those which have been vindicated, certainly do) must needs corrupt our Morals. We cannot but think that Mens Lives must be mightily concerned in these Points, because they are of the very Vitals of our Religion. Not that I would suggest that every one must be charged with a Vitious Life, if he dissents from these Doctrines: for I am sensible that Men do not always live and act according to their Principles, and sometimes even Good Principles are not efficacious on the practise of those that entertain them. But generally it is otherwise: and the Notions and Sentiments in Divinity which Persons are furnished with, do operate on their Lives and Actions. Thus it is in the Case before us: if these Doctrines be heartily imbibed and embraced, and well digested, they have a strong Influence on the Practise: and it is impossible we should act as *Christians*, and continue to do so, unless we be set on Work by *Christian Principles*. They are *Evangelical Truths* that must make *Evangelical Lives*. When the former decline, the latter do so of Course.

There is too plain an Experiment of this amongs us: the growth of Vice hath been proportionable to the decay of our Principles. It was observed by a Hearty Friend and Lover of the Church of *England*, speaking of the times pre-

preceding the late Civil Wars, “ that \* they  
 “ who did recede from their former Principles  
 “ and Grounds of Doctrine to joyn with the  
 “ *Arminian* Faction, became for the most part  
 “ more Loose in their Lives, and Dissolute in  
 “ their Manners than before, confuting and  
 “ destroying their newly received Opinion of  
 “ *Free Will* by the Licentious Courses of their  
 “ Conversation, which they asserted by Argu-  
 “ ment and Discourse of Reason against them  
 “ who opposed the same: like Men destitute  
 “ of *Grace*, which they endeavour to weaken  
 “ in the Force and Operation thereof upon the  
 “ Soul of a Sinner. And the like Remark we may  
 make of the times after the Restoration, when  
 the *Arminian* System of Divinity took place  
 again, we may observe that a Loose and Pro-  
 phane way of Living came much in fashion.  
 Mens Manners and Actions have been careless  
 and disorderly since these Principles have had  
 footing among us. All this proves what I un-  
 dertook, that this Degeneracy is *Dangerous*  
 and *Mischievous*, and is attended with Dread-  
 ful Consequences.

Thus I have gone thro’ four of those General  
 Heads which I propounded; I have shewed  
 what is that *Sound Doctrine* which St. Paul  
 preached, I have let you see that *the time is*  
*come when it is not endured*: I have assigned  
 the True Causes of it: and I have set before you  
 the *Danger* that accompanies it.

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\* *England's Faithful Reprover*, p. 135.

IT REMAINS now in the *Fifth* and last place that I conclude with some *Proper Inferences* and *Corollaries* from the whole, in way of farther *Advice* to my Brethren, the Ministers of the Gospel, the Pastors and Teachers of the Church.

And first, it is requisite that you be thoroughly Sensible and Apprehensive of this great Disorder and Mischief which I have been speaking of. This strange Metamorphosis is not negligently to be passed by. Such a manifest Change in Religious Sentiments as there is, cannot but affect all sober Minds. It is occasion of just Grief to consider what Principles of Christianity were heretefore received, and how they are cast away now. We may bemoan our selves as the Church of *Jerusalem* did her Condition of old, *The fine Gold is changed, and the Silver is become dross.* There hath sprung up a New Generation which takes no notice of what Precious Doctrines their Fathers embraced, and what valuable Truths were maintained and asserted by the Preachers of those times, namely, from the Happy *Reformation* till a long time after. But instead of those they have introduced others of a Base Alloy.

But certainly it doth concern us to observe this, and to mind the remarkable Change that hath been made in the Writings and Sermons of our late Divines, especially in these last forty Years. And then we shall with unspeakable regret take notice how our Church is forsaken by her own Children, and we shall have occasion

sion to make use of the Words of the Prophet  
*Haggai, Who is left among you that saw this*  
*House in her first Glory and how do you see it*  
*now? Is not this House in your Eyes, in compa-*  
*rison of it, as nothing?* And there will be room  
 for this Lamentation, “ Who is there amongst  
 “ you that hath taken a survey of the House of  
 “ God as it was in the Days of the Blessed Apo-  
 “ stles of Jesus Christ? Who is there amongst you  
 “ that hath seen and considered this Holy Tem-  
 “ ple in her first Glory? And how do you see  
 “ it now? Is it not in comparison of the other,  
 “ almost as nothing? When ye look upon  
 “ them that have undertaken the Charge of  
 “ your Souls, and know how far these are for  
 “ the most part grown out of kind, how few  
 “ there be that tread the Steps of their Antient  
 “ Predecessors, ye are easily fill'd with Indig-  
 “ nation, easily drawn unto these Complaints  
 “ wherein the difference of present from former  
 “ times is bewailed, easily perswaded to think  
 “ of them that lived to enjoy the days which  
 “ now are gone. Surely they were happy in  
 “ companion of us that have succeeded them.  
 “ Were not their Bishops Men Unreproveable,  
 “ Wise, Righteous, Holy, Temperate, well re-  
 “ ported of even of those which were with-  
 “ out? Were not their Pastors, Guides and  
 “ Teachers able and willing to exhort with  
 “ Wholesome Doctrine, and to reprove those  
 “ which gain-said the Truth? And in a more  
 severe manner \* *Mr. Hooker* goes on, for they

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\* His Second Sermon on part of St. Jude's Epistle.

are his Words, tho' I believe the Reader did not in the least imagin they were. That Mild and Peaceable Men, thus bewailed the Degenerate State of his times.

But we have much more reason to bewail that of Ours, and to lay to heart the shameful Apostacy of some of our Clergy from the Doctrines of their Predecessors, which were also the Doctrines of the Holy Apostles and Primitive Saints. We may upbraid some of our Teachers themselves, as the Apostle doth some of the *Hebrew Christians*, that *they have need that one teach them again which be the First Principles of the Oracles of God*. In brief, he that beholds our Divinity in its Modern Dress, cannot but be offended at its strange Transformation; so strange that it gives occasion for the Wit and Satyr, the Banter and Railery of Atheistical Spirits. The least thing we can do is to be *Sensible* of this, and to lament it. But we must proceed further.

*Secondly*, Be perswaded my Brethren, of the Necessity of preaching these Doctrines which have been rejected by so many. I know you will be told by some that it is best to say nothing of them, especially in the Pulpit, for they represent that as a very Unfit Place for this Purpose: at least you must not be allow'd to handle these Points till you be Fathers, or Overgrown Sons of the Church. So in the twentieth Year of King *James the first's* Reign, Directions to the Clergy, for regulating their Preaching, were published in these Words, "That no Preacher of what Title soever, under



“ der the degree of a Bishop or a Dean, at the  
 “ least, do from henceforth presume to preach  
 “ in any popular Auditory the deep Points of  
 “ *Predestination, Election, Reprobation,* or of  
 “ the *Universality, Efficacy Resistibility* or *Ir-*  
 “ *resistibility of God's Grace,* but rather leave  
 “ those Themes to be handled by Learned Men,  
 “ and that modestly and moderately by Use and  
 “ Application, rather than by way of Positive  
 “ Doctrines, as being fitter for Schools and Uni-  
 “ versities than for simple Auditories. With  
 due regard had to the Royal Authority whereby  
 this was enjoyn'd, I humbly offer these fol-  
 lowing Particulars,

1. I do not see how it can be *Presumption to preach* of these Points in the Pulpit, seeing the Holy Scripture so often mentions them. Surely it can be no fault to deliver those Doctrines, even in a *Popular Auditory*, when the Holy Bible, which is put into the Hands of the People, delivers these Sacred Truths to us. May we not hear the same things from the Preachers Lips which we have from the Mouths and Pens of the Inspired Prophets and Apostles? I believe I shall never be convinced that a Minister of the Gospel, who is to take the matter of his Sermons from the Scriptures, is to be blamed for handling those very Doctrines which he finds there; and especially seeing they are represented there as Necessary to be believed, and of the Foundation of the Christian Religion.

2. It is observable that these Doctrines of *Predestination, Election, Reprobation, &c.* were

held to be *Orthodox* in those times (*viz.* at the close of King *James* the First's Reign) by our Church. For we see here that no Fault is found in them, yea, it is supposed that the things themselves are True, and according to Scripture, otherwise *no* Persons would be allow'd to preach and handle them: but *some* are here allow'd and authorized to do it. Now seeing they are own'd to be *Orthodox*, it is very strange and unaccountable that they may not be preached by all the Ministers and Dispensers of the Gospel. Have any Men power to cull and pick out of the Bible such and such particular Doctrines for the Pastors of the Church to discourse of, and to order that others shall be debarred the Pulpit? If any Warrant can be shewed for this, I shall be silent, but till then I must profess my self bound to believe that the whole Will of God, that is, all Doctrines in the Scripture relating to Salvation, are to be preach'd to the People by the faithful Embassadors of Christ. In the *Form of ordering Priests* in our Church, we find that the Bishop delivers to every one of them the Bible, saying, *Take thou Authority to Preach the Word of God*, but he doth not confine them to certain Texts, and Certain Doctrines, and give them Authority to preach only on them. No: The Bible in general is their Store house, and they may furnish themselves with all sorts of Divine Truths, and communicate them to their Hearers.

3. How vain and senseless is that, that a *popular Auditory* must hear nothing of these Doctrines of *Predestination*, &c. but the *Schools* and

and *Universities* may ring of them? As if there were nothing but matter of Dispute and Controversy in these Evangelical Matters. This is a great mistake, for there is Solid, Undoubted and Incontestable Truth in them, abstract from all debates and disputes. And the Vulgar and Illiterate are as capable of this as the most Learned, and therefore they ought not to be excluded from hearing these Doctrines, yea, they are hugely concerned in them, because by means of these they have an occasion of improving their Spiritual Knowledge, of strengthening their Faith, of heightning their Love and Affection towards the Holy Jesus, of admiring the Sovereignty, and extolling the peculiar Grace and Bounty of God. Is there any reason then to confine these Doctrines to the *Schools* and *Universities*?

4. That is very silly and weak that none but a *Bishop* or *Dean* must preach of Predestination and Election, and the like Doctrines, that none but Cathedral Men must venture upon these Points: as if the Gospel, which delivers these Doctrines, had commission'd those Persons, and none else, to treat of them. This is a palpable imposing on the Christian World, this is a plain lessening and debasing the Commission of Christ's Embassadors, this is an unwarrantable confining the Ministers of the Gospel, and the Gospel itself. Besides that it is a foolish Intimation that a *Title* or a *Dignity* makes a Man an able Minister of Christ Jesus. But I think no more need to be said to expose this Folly.

There are those that look upon these Doctrines as wholly *Indifferent*, and therefore advise that nothing should be said of them in the Pulpit. But these Men that talk thus, have either read the Scripture, or they have not: if they have, they can't but see that these Doctrines are not of an Indifferent Nature; if they have not, it is to be presumed that they have little regard to those Sacred Writings, and look upon *them* as Indifferent, as well as these Points: and perhaps they reckon all as such, and think one Perswasion as true as another. This Sceptical sort of Gentlemen, I hope, our Clergy will have nothing to do with, and consequently will not listen to what they say of the foresaid Doctrines.

Some others would have us believe that the Doctrine of the Decrees, and of Divine Concurrence, and of the Power of Grace, &c. are \**Philosophical Speculations*, and therefore are not fit for the People. And sometimes they call them † *Philosophical Disputes* and *Philosophical Hypotheses*. At other times they are said to be ‖ *Scholastical Notions*, and therefore are not to be regarded: as one among us lately was against the applying the Epithet *Idolatrous* to the Church of *Rome*, because it was (he said) a *Scholastick* Term.

\* Dr. *Sherlock*, Of Divine Providence, p. 115, 116, 117, &c.

† *Idem*. Sermon on Psal. 122. 6, 7.

‖ The Princip. and Pract. of some Mod. Divines, &c.

There are others of our Order that refuse to discourse to the People on any of these Points, because they carry some *Difficulty* with them, and they pretend that they are loth to perplex their Hearers Minds. But this is a mere Pre-*tence*, for on the same account some of the Articles of our Religion, which they themselves own necessary to be taught, are to be laid aside, as the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, &c. Therefore it is evident that the Eternal Decrees and the other Truths so often mentioned ought to be preached, tho' they be difficult. This must not deter us from delivering what is Truth, and what is adjusted to the Word of God. And yet here this ought to be inserted, that about the way and manner of handling these Points there is Caution and Prudence to be observed. The mere disputative part should not be undertaken ordinarily in our Sermons. The Abstruse Speculations that may arise from these Doctrines are not to be the Subject of our Discourses to the People: but the substantial part of them must be. For this being plainly and expressly contained in the Scriptures, we are obliged to discourse of it, as well as of other Truths contained in that Holy Volume. And let me tell you, if this were commonly treated of, with Judgment and Care, and with shewing what are the Useful Inferences that naturally flow from it, it would be easily apprehended, and readily embraced, and our Auditors would call for frequent Instructions and Applications relating to these Divine Subjects.

Well then, be perswaded of the necessity of acquainting your Flock with these Truths. We have *Philistins* that *stop up these Walls*, but do you open them, and let your People have free admission to them. Nay, account it no other than Sacrilege to rob the Church of these Holy Doctrines, which are her right and due. They being part of the Word of God (as I said before) take heed that as you *do not add to it*, so you *do not diminish ought from it*, Deut. 4. 2. Prov. 30. 6. Rev. 22. 18.

Here I will address my self first to the Fathers and Rulers of our Church. Not that I pretend to offer Advice to Persons of so Eminent a Character, but I humbly beg of you that you will give me leave to remind you that it is your undoubted Province not only to preach sound Doctrine, to deliver the Truth pure and uncorrupted, as it is in the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, but also to promote this Purity of Christian Doctrine by setting such over the People as are able to instruct them in it. Let me remind you that you should, with the Great Pastor of the *Ephesian Church*, *charge some that they teach no other Doctrine*, 1 Tim. 1. 3. Let me remind you that you should apply your selves to the right Method of stemming the present Torrent, and putting a Remora to the growing Mischiefe, and hindring the Leaven from infecting and fermenting the Whole Lump: that you should think your selves obliged in Conscience to arrest those Fugitives who are gone out from us, to put a stop to those Renegades, who have left their First Principles,  
and

and attempted the corrupting of our Christianity. And if some of your Order heretofore contributed to this by their Connivance, or by their Smiles, it is expected that you should now by your Frowns, and the exercise of your due Power undo what they did. I need not urge it that you should countenance those that assert and vindicate the neglected Doctrines of Christianity; and that you should encourage them to continue in that practise. And by this means you will convince the World that you Adorn that High Station wherein you are placed, and that you are worthy of that Dignity and Honour which you are possessors of.

And next, I turn my Discourse to those of my own Rank, the Ministers and Preachers of our Church. You must, with *St. Paul*, be *jealous over your flocks with a godly jealousy, fearing lest by any Means their Minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*, that is, in the Doctrine of Christ, *2 Cor. 11. 2.* The proper Remedy against this Corruption is *to do the work of an Evangelist, to make full proof of your Ministry.* Right Notions and Principles of Religion should begin from our Preachers, and so be propagated to the People. Where should we find Orthodoxy but among our Divines? And where should they find it but in the Scriptures? Wherefore either let us renounce the Sacred Canon, or preach the Doctrines which are contained in it. Let us keep and preserve Christianity upon its First Grounds and Principles, that is, those which the Apostolical Writings present us with. I doubt not  
but

but you are thro'ly convinced from what I have said that you cannot omit this without great hazard to your own and other Mens Souls. I question not but you are fully satisfied that there is an indispenfible Obligation upon you to agree unanimoſly in preaching and urging theſe Primitive Doctrines.

But here, before I proceed any further, I would not be miſtaken, and therefore I will explain my ſelf. I am not a rigid requirer of a *Perſect Agreement* among us about ſome *Dubious* and *Controverted Matters* that relate to theſe Doctrines, ſome *Nice* and *Subtil Diſquiſitions* about them, or indeed about any other *Theological Doctrines*. Theſe are not worth the Heat and Contention which are generally raiſed, and I believe it was never intended that there ſhould be any Deciſion of them. To ſuch the Great *Auguſtine's* Saying may be referr'd, “ \* There be ſome things in which the Learn-  
“ edſt and beſt Defenders of the Catholick  
“ Rule may diſagree among themſelves *Salva*  
“ *fidei compage*, without breaking the Bond of  
“ Faith, as well as of Charity. And of the like Matters the ſame Father ſpeaks thus, † *What need is there of affirming or denying, or nicely defining them, ſeeing we may be ignorant of them without any Fault?* Here I am for great Moderation and Latitude, for I can't be reconciled to that peeviſh Humour of ſome Men who

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\* Contra Julianum. l. 1. c. 2.

† Euchirid. cap. 59.



shew themselves angry with all that are not of their Particular Perswasion, all that differ from them even in small things, and such as are doubtfully precarious and nice. There is verily a fault among Christians that they cannot bear with their Brethren who dissent from them in Matters not Necessary and Fundamental, but require them to come up exactly to their Notions even about things of an inferiour Nature.

Which hath been often compared, and that fitly to the Wild Humour of the Inkeeper whom *Plutarch* speaks of, who when any Traveller came and lodged at his House, made their Statures even with his Beds, either by stretching their Bodies out to an unusual length, or by cutting them shorter : one way or other they must not vary from the Dimensions of the place they lodg'd in. Many Persons that do not like, and it may be do not believe this Cruel Fancy of his, are themselves guilty of the same or worse Conceit : for they would have their own private and particular Judgments the Standard of all Mens else, and every one must be forced to contract or stretch at their Pleasure. This is very unreasonable and absurd, and the Man that urges the practise of this, would be loth to be served so himself : I know no reason therefore why he should serve others so. It is in vain to desire that we should all entirely agree in our Apprehensions concerning things that are Disputable and Indifferent, for there never was and never will be a Concord of Judgment as to these. They are admirable

Words

Words of my Lord *Bacon*, “ \* Men ought,  
 “ fiith he, to take heed of rending God’s  
 “ Church by two kinds of Controversies : the  
 “ one is when the Matter of the Point Contro-  
 “ verted is too small and light, not worth the  
 “ heat and strife about it : the other is when  
 “ the Matter of the Point is Great, but is dri-  
 “ ven to an over-great Subtilty and Obscurity,  
 “ so that it becometh a thing rather Ingenious  
 “ than Substantial. In these Cafes let us not  
 disturb one another, and cause Division : espe-  
 cially let us not Anathematize and Damn one  
 another for difference of perswasion about them.

Nay, sometimes there is not so great *Difference*  
 as is pretended ; Persons hold the same thing,  
 but only exprefs it in other Words. They are of  
 the same Opinion, but they do not know it.  
 For they wrangle only about Terms, because  
 one takes a Word in one Sense, and another in  
 another. Some are so imprudent as to quarrel  
 with the very Names of things : these Men  
 fight with Air, and combat with Syllables. But  
 a wise and sober Man will not be guilty  
 of this Folly, but takes the Apostle’s Counsel,  
*Strive not about Words*, 2 Tim. 2. 14. When  
 he owns the Thing it self, he suffers any one to  
 call it as he pleases. And besides, he always  
 gives the fairest Interpretation of the Opinions  
 that are asserted by others, if they overthrow  
 not the Foundations. He is never Jealous and  
 Suspicious, he never surmises the worst of other  
 Mens Sentiments, but allows them a charitable  
 and candid Construction. And truly one would  
 think there is great reason he should do so, be-

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\* Essay 3.

cause he is willing that others should think favourably of his Assertions and Tenents. If there be a possibility of thinking well of his Neighbours Opinions, he will certainly do it. If they do but *resemble* Truth, or *approach* to it, or can be improved to any good Design, they shall so far have his Approbation.

And even when there is a *Real Difference* between him and others as to their Sentiments, in things of a *Dubious Nature*, he abates not of his Respect and Christian Affection towards them. He is not of the Number of those that bear a hatred to all who do not think as themselves; and whole Animosities and Antipathies against every one that is not of their Opinion, are reckon'd by them as part of their Religion. He takes care that the Unity of Brotherly Love and Charity be preserv'd, tho' the *Unity of Profession* cannot.

But in all *Necessary Points* of Christianity we must keep up even this latter; and (as without doubt the Apostle meant it) *all speak the same things, and be perfectly joined together in the same Mind and to the same Judgment*, 1 Cor. i. 10. We must unanimously assert and maintain the Great and Important Articles of our Religion, tho' in some particular Inferences and Deductions we vary. We must with joynt Consent and united Vigour hold these fast, whatever else we let go. Particularly, as to the Doctrins which are under our present Consideration, we may entertain different Notions, and use different Expressions concerning the *Manner* and *Circumstances* appertaining to them, but we ought to agree in the Main, that is, the necessity of asserting

serting and defending the *Things themselves* contained in those Doctrines. We must not let go the Grand Truths because of some Petty Differences. It was wisely said by St. *Ambrose* concerning the Genealogy of Christ in the Two Evangelists, which is set down with some Diversity, and therefore attended with some Difficulty, \* I am not able, saith he, to understand and give an exact account of the Series and Order of Christs Generation: but however, I will not, I must not be Ignorant of the Truth and Reality of it, I believe it and assent to it. The like we ought to say concerning those Doctrines I have propounded, there are some Difficulties relating to them which we cannot perfectly account for, but yet we have no reason to relinquish the Doctrines themselves. We have sufficient ground to believe them, and we ought to press the belief of them on others.

We cannot do otherwise if we consider that St. *Paul* makes it the great Qualification and Encomium of the Ministers and Stewards of the Gospel that *they be found faithful.* 1 Cor. 4. 2. And this very thing which I'm speaking of is part of this *Fidelity*. And they cannot discharge their Duty in this manner, unless they be observant of this: yea, on the contrary, they will shew themselves *False* and *Perfidious*. As we desire then to avoid this Imputation, and to approve our selves Faithful Dispensers of the Word, we must be careful to fix our Auditors

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\* Non licet mihi scire Generationis seriem: non licet tamen nescire Generationis Fidem. In Luc. cap. 3.

in the belief of these Great Principles, and we must be perswaded our selves of the Necessity of preaching these Doctrines. And you will not be backward to do this if,

*Thirdly*, You remember that it is the End and Design of our Preaching, to *Edify*. And this is it which I desire you to think of seriously. The Apostle tells us that *he that Prophecieth* (i. e. he that preacheth) speaks *to Men to Edification*, 1 Cor. 14. 3. And we are informed by the same Apostle that *Pastors and Teachers were given for the edifying of the body of Christ*, Eph. 4. 11. As we must *build up our selves* (Jude 20. v.) so it is the End of the Ministry *to build Men up in their most Holy Faith*. And they must be *built on the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*, Eph. 2. 20. Whence we may soon put an end to the Controversy about *Edifying or Profiting by Preaching*, which hath been much debated of late: we may easily know what Preachers *Edify* most, for 'tis but asking the Question, whether they build Men up in their most Holy Faith, whether the building be upon the *Apostolical Foundation*, to which Christ the Head-stone belongs, whether they preach such Doctrines as advance the Knowledge and Belief of the important Truths of the Gospel, and growth in all Divine Graces. One of the Bishops of our Church tells us that \* *Sermon is*

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\* Bishop Patrick's Discourse of Profiting by Sermons.

*then Profitable when it informs the Mind and Judgment aright in Divine Truth.* This is the first thing requisite to a Profitable and Edifying Sermon. And consequently it is impossible to edify by a Preacher who forsakes the Old Doctrines of Christianity, and affects New Schemes and Models of it, unknown to the Penmen of the Scripture.

I appeal to those that are judicious Hearers, is he a *Profitable Preacher* that would have you believe that those who are in a state of Grace, and by Adoption are made the Sons of God, yet may so apostatize as to be Children of the Devil? Do you call him an *Edifying Preacher* who labours to persuade you that the Almighty Power of God is not exercised in the Conversion of Sinners, but that every Man hath a Free Will and Power to repent and believe, and that his Conversion is owing to the Self-determining Power of his Will? Can you *Profit* by that Preacher who tells you that Concupiscence, or the Inclination to Sin is not Faulty and Criminal, and that Undue Lusts and Desires are no Sin? Are you *built up* in the Faith when you are told that God's choosing of Persons to Life and Salvation depends upon the foresight of their Obedience and Good Works: when you are told that Good Works are an Ingredient in your Justification, as well as Faith: when you are told that Christ's Righteousness is no more imputed to us than our Sins are to him, that is, not at all: when you are told that Christ hath paid a Ransom for every individual Person in the World, in order to their Salvation, and yet it is possible, by reason of  
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Man's Free Will and Choice, that not one of them shall be saved: when you are told that tho' God's Special Grace be Omnipotent, and is accompanied with a real and sincere Intention to convert Persons, yet it may be resisted and defeated? This is not *building up*, but pulling down: this is not rearing the Walls of the Spiritual Edifice, but it is razing the very Foundations of it. Therefore I say to you, my Brethren, be desirous to teach these and all other Doctrines that are *Edifying*. And it should be very pleasing to you to observe that your People *value* and *esteem* such Preaching, and that they have a *desire* and *longing* after it: For this certainly is one comfortable Sign and Evidence of their being Regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost.

*Fourthly*, By way of farther Inference, seeing it hath been made Evident in some of the foregoing Particulars that the Over-valuing of *Reason*, and the little deference given to the *Scriptures* are the great Causes of the present Corruption of Doctrines in this Age, it follows that you should not, and my earnest request to you is, that you would not over-magnify Humane Reason, and that you would set a very high value on the Scriptures. First, be prevailed with not to over-magnify and extol Humane Reason. Make not this an Umpire in Supernatural things: do not presume to concert and adjust Divine Matters by this. In judging concerning these there is no occasion for the Querks and Subtilties of *Logick*. The Articles we treat of are not fetched from Philosophy or

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from Humane Authority, or from the Common Notions and Maxims of Mankind: wherefore let us not renounce these Doctrines of Christianity because they interfere with these. Let us not turn *Infidels*, that we may be thought to be *Men of Reason*. Yea, let us remember this, that they who talk most of their Reason, and value themselves upon it, have no greater Share in it than the rest of their Neighbours. The Opposers of the foresaid Doctrines have not true Reason on their side, but are bold and confident, and assume to themselves the name of Reasoners, whilst they deal rather in plausible Harangues, than well grounded Arguments. A Man of truly rational and wise Thoughts will consider that God and his Ways are infinitely above the shallow Apprehensions of Mortal Men; that the natural Wisdom of Man cannot reach these Divine Secrets, because they depend wholly on God's Sovereign Will and Pleasure; that Reason cannot discover it self more than in submitting to things above Reason; in brief, that Reason ought to do obedience to Faith, and the Wit of Man stoop to the Wisdom of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

And that is the other thing which I heartily commend to you, highly prize the Sacred Writings, and be directed by them: and then you will value these Doctrines which have their Foundation in this Inspired Volume. Because Reason is short and deficient, we have the Scriptures given us to supply that defect: and they will supply it effectually, if we impartially consult them. In order to our successful



cessful making use of them, we ought to remember this, that the Design of the Holy Scriptures is to depress the Power of Man, and to advance the Divine Grace, and the Absoluteness and Uncontrolableness of God's Sovereign Will. I appeal to any one that hath seriously read the Bible over, especially the New Testament, whether the whole Strain and Tenour of it do not tend to this. And now, this Key will happily open, and let you into all the Secrets and Mysteries of the Bible that have any Reference to the Salvation of Mankind; or the Manner and Means of it. You will find the Truth and the Benefit of what I say: You will in a short time be convinced that the Doctrines of the Gospel are so framed that they directly contribute to Humility and Self denial, and to the exalting of God's Greatness and Sovereignty.

•And then you will meekly subscribe to such Principles as these ( the very same that I have so often inculcated and urged upon you ) That God's Eternal Decrees are the absolute result of his Sovereign Will and Pleasure: That it is just with him to bestow or with-hold Mercy, as he thinks fit: That our Wills are weakened and disabled by the Apostasy of our first Parents, so that we have no Power of our selves to change our Hearts, and to become New Creatures: That we are wholly Passive in the first Acts of Conversion: That that Grace whereby the Elect are converted, is Invincible and Irresistible: That we are accounted Righteous before God not for our inherent Righteousness and infused Holiness, but for the Righteousness of an-

other reckon'd to be ours : That Good Works have nothing to do in our Justification in the sight of God. All these Propositions and many such like you will most readily submit to, if you once arrive at the true Knowledge of the Scriptures, and see into the Design and purpose of them, which is to magnify and advance the Free Grace of God in Jesus Christ, and to set forth the Impotency and Insufficiency of lost and depraved Mankind : and you will be fully perswaded that the contrary Principles are wholly inconsistent with the Tenour and Scope of the Gospel.

I must tell you before hand that this will expose you to the Censures of Men, of those especially who boast of their *Reason* ; which is the Sanctuary they betake themselves to when they are baffled by *Scripture*. But you must take Courage, and think never the worse of your Principles because they are disliked by that sort of Men. Why was the first preaching of the Gospel called *Foolishness*, but because to the Great Reasoners and Pretenders to Philosophy it seem'd to be a Foolish, Irrational and Illogical way of talking to the People ? And yet we see that this Foolishness of Preaching prevail'd, notwithstanding these strong Prejudices : it made its way into the Hearts and Consciences of those that despised it, yea, of those that were the professed Enemies of the Gospel. And tho' the Preachers of it were hooted at as Broachers of New Doctrine, yet they so powerfully wrought upon many of their Hearers, that they caused them to quit their former Notions and Apprehensions, and to embrace the Simplicity

city of the Gospel. And so I hope, thro' the Divine Grace, it will be with some of you that are my Readers at this time: you will be convinced of the Truth of the Doctrines which I have declared to you, and of the necessity of believing them. And it cannot be otherwise if you be thoroughly perswaded that the Scripture is the Standard of Divine Truth, and that the Bible is the only Rule of Faith.

This therefore is the thing which I now press upon you, Seriously and Diligently read the Scriptures, and compare them with one another. I speak to you who are yet but Candidates and Students in Divinity, that so you may begin aright, that your Foundation may be well laid. You have liberty to have recourse to other Authors, and you can't be excused if you be Strangers to them; but the most Authentick Knowledge is to be had from the Books of the Scripture. Tho' there were Two Hundred Thousand Books in the Library which *Ptolomeus Philadelphus* erected at *Alexandria*, yet it was the *Bible's* being added to it that made it the Repository of True Learning. Much more where there is the New Testament, there is an Amassment of all Divine Knowledge and Learning. You that are engaged in the Search after Divine Truth, must seek for it here. Let the *Heathens* consult their *Ritual Tables*, if they be yet extant among them: let the *Jews* fly to their *Talmud*: let the *Mahometans* consult their *Alcoran*: but we that profess the Religion of Jesus must be determin'd by the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, together with those of the Inspired Writers of the Old Testament.

Upon this account I cannot but repeat my Advice that I offer'd before in my former Discourse to you that are Young Students in Theology. I cannot but again commend to you Archbishop *Usher's Sum and Substance of Christian Divinity*: wherein he shews you how you are to make use of Scripture. For he hath by Pertinent Texts proved, confirmed, or illustrated all his respective Particulars and Heads, which are Many and Various. For this Excellent Man hath with singular Skill and Art, with great accuracy and solidity branch'd out Theology into a Multitude of Heads: so that here is a continual Source, a perpetual and never-failing Spring of Preaching-Matter: which is the thing that Young Preachers (who are the Persons that I speak to) stand in need of. On which account it is a very Useful Book, and may for a time serve as the Young Divines Library.

This is in pursuance of what I'm now tending to my Brethren, namely, that they would make the *Scripture* their Rule and their Guide, and thank the Divine Goodness that they live in a Church which puts the Scriptures not only into their Hands, but those of the People, and bids them make use of them. And tho' you can't satisfy your selves or others about the Reasonableness of some Doctrines, yet this ought not to hinder your Belief of them, if you see they exactly agree with what is reveal'd in the Holy Writ. This gives them sufficient Authority, that they are delivered by God. We are sure of this, that if we govern our Apprehensions

hensions and Belief by God's Word, we shall never err, we shall always be wise. We are told by the Inspired Psalmist that it is the *Fool* that *saith in his Heart, there is no God*: but the *Atheist* among those of his own Tribe passës for a *Wise Man*, at least a *Wit*, and one that is of a deeper Penetration than the rest of Mankind. Let us always attend to the Judgment and Decision of Scripture, and then we shall judge and think aright. This, this gives us the true Account of things, and we may rely upon it.

This hath been the firm perswasion of others besides those that have looked towards the Church and Ministry. We are told in the brief Account which is given us of Mr. *Selden's* Life by the Primate of *Armagh* that that worthy Person, who was one of the greatest Scholars and Antiquaries of his time, who made a vast Amassment of Books and Manuscripts from all parts of the World, a Library scarcely to be equall'd in the whole World, and himself a greater Living Library, we are told, I say, that this great Man of Books and Learning profess'd toward his latter end to the Primate (when he had an opportunity to discourse with him more seriously about the weightiest Matters) that he had a far greater Esteem for the Holy Scriptures than all Humane Writers whatsoever, and *could rest his Soul wholly upon these*. This was that Excellent Man's Expression. And indeed here, and only here is sure footing; and consequently seeing our Religion depends upon the Bible, and is founded wholly on this, we have a most Solid Basis to rely upon. We are sure that

those Doctrines are True and Certain which are according to this Rule : and such are those that I have recommended to you. Revelation is the Standard of those Truths that we Christians profess : and we cannot count any Doctrine Sterling without this Stamp.

One of the Antients speaks admirably to this purpose, \* “ We may not, saith he, indulge  
 “ any Doctrine of our own Heads, nor admit  
 “ of such that any others have brought in of  
 “ their own Heads. We have the Apostles of  
 “ our Lord for our Authors, who chose nothing  
 “ of their own Heads, to impose upon us ;  
 “ but faithfully deliver’d that Doctrine which  
 “ they had received of Christ. Therefore  
 “ if an Angel from Heaven should preach  
 “ any other Gospel, he is to be accursed by us.  
 So this Learned Father. And there is good Ground for what he saith, for what is to be preached to Mankind is not founded on the fallible Reasons of Men, but on the Divine Testimony which cannot fail us. If you turn over and diligently peruse the Writings of the most Renowned Moralists, you will not find a Syllable of it there. You hear nothing like this from *Socrates* or *Plato*, from *Aristotle* or *Zeno*, from

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\* Nobis nihil licet ex nostro arbitrio indulgere, sed nec eligere quod aliquis de arbitrio suo induxerit. Apostolos Domini habemus Autores, qui nec ipsi quicquam de suo arbitrio, quod inducerent, elegerunt : sed acceptam à Christo disciplinam fideliter nationibus assignarunt. Itaq; si Angelus de Cælo aliter evangelizaverit, anathema diceretur à nobis. Tertul. de Præscript. Hæretic.

*Antoninus* or *Seneca*, no nor from *Confusius*. None of the Philosophical or Witty Men have discover'd these things to us. No: it is JESUS alone that is our Instructor: and therefore your Esteem for these Doctrines should be very singular, and your Care to retain them should be very great.

And as to those Particular Doctrines which I have recommended, I humbly beg of my Brethren that they would judge of them according to *Scripture*. And of every one of my Readers I request this Favour, that they would be pleas'd to comply with my Desire, so far as briefly to set down in Writing these five Doctrines, and lay them before them, and then take the *Apostolical Epistles* into their Hands, and, having first put up their Prayers to God to enlighten their Minds and give them a right Understanding of these Divine Things, begin to read them with Attentiveness and Seriousness. And before they have gone thro' the first Epistle, namely, that to the *Romans*, I question not but they will find all these Doctrines plainly assert-ed. And let them then proceed to the other Epistles, and attend to the Doctrinal part of them, and they will acknowledge that nothing is more plain and evident there. I importunately intreat the Reader to make this Experiment, and I doubt not of Success by the Divine Goodness.

In the *Fifth* place, Let me beg of you, my Brethren, to bear it in your Minds that these are the Faith and Doctrine of the *Church of England*. And this Consideration, I hope, will pre-

prevail with you, tho' none of the rest should. The Doctrines of the Decrees, of Original Sin, of Justification by Faith alone, of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, of the Necessity of Supernatural Grace, are plainly delivered in the *Articles*, *Liturgy*, and *Homilies* of our Church, and in the Writings of her Bishops and most Eminent Churchmen, and heretofore of her whole Clergy. It is not the Church of *England*, but only a Party of Men (now unhappily the greatest part) that espouses the contrary Doctrines: and yet as the *Jews* of old cried *the Temple, the Temple*, so these Men loudly talk of the *Church*, the *Church of England*, tho' at the same time they vilify her Doctrines. These Persons should be reminded that to be of the *Church of England* is not only to observe her Rites and Discipline, but to own her *Articles*. It is not sufficient that they are liberal and free in their Professions of honouring our Church, if they forget to give Proof of the reality of it by asserting her Pure Doctrines. What is the meaning of this, to stile our selves *Sons* of the *Church of England*, and yet to disown our *Mother* speaking in the *Articles* and *Homilies*, and to slight and dishonour the Memory of our *Archbishops* and *Bishops*, and of the rest of the Clergy who faithfully adhered to her Principles? It is an unsufferable boldness to usurp the Name of *Churchmen*, yea and to permit none to bear that Name but themselves, and yet at the same time to live in an open Detestation of some of the Doctrines of the Church. This is to abuse the best Church in the World, and to shape it into what Form they



they fancy most. These Men frame a Church out of their own Conceits, and then tell us that it is the Church of *England*. And if you will not hold as they hold, you are no Sons of the Church. A most gross and unpardonable Affront to her ! And those Good Prelates who laid their Hands on these Men may for ever Repent of that Imposition.

I know there is a great Cry among some Men of late that the *Church is in danger*, that it is *Falling*, that its Ruine and Destruction are approaching. And I say so too, but not as these Men understand it : my meaning is that our Church is in great Jeopardy by reason of the late Degeneracy in Doctrines. The Orthodox Faith of the Church of *England* is disrelished, its Legally establish'd Articles are vilified. Our Old *English* Divinity is rejected, and all our Old Episcopal Divines are disregarded. But those very Men who make that Outcry about the *Church's Falling*, are the Authors of this rejection and this Disregard. They are the Men that renounce the Articles and Determinations of our Church, and thereby she is apparently endanger'd, and her Ruine seems not to be far off. But in the Sense that they mean it ( if they have any sense ) it is a false Alarm, and a groundless Fear, and the Danger which they talk of is Imaginary.

But if they be heartily and sincerely desirous that the Church of *England* should be taken care of, and that its downfall should be prevented ( which is the Wish and Prayer of all Good and Wise Men ) then they should be solicitous that care may be taken that the Governours and  
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Rulers of the Church discharge their Office faithfully, that they spend their Revenues in that way that is Honourable and Charitable, and serviceable to the Church; that they be not tainted with Nepotism, or with Simony, that their Officers and Servants do not squeeze and oppress the poor Clergy, and that they do not bear themselves superciliously or irreverently towards the rest: that they shew their dislike of Pluralists and Non Residents: that they advance not those to the Ministry who are strangers to True Religion and the Design of Christianity. To take care of the *Church* is not only to look after and secure the Glebe and the Tithes, the Profits and Revenues, which is necessary to be done, but to see that the Clergy preach sound Doctrine, and lead Holy Lives: to see that fit Labourers be placed in the Lord's Vineyard, and that they behave themselves as Embassadors of Christ: to see that Godly Discipline be restored, and Prophaneness and Impiety severely check'd: to see that the Worship of God be maintained in its purity: to see that the Sacraments be reverently administred, that none be admitted to the Lord's Supper but such whose Lives and Conversations declare their Fitness.

This is to take care of the *Church*, this is to secure it from Falling, this is to study its Welfare and Happiness. All besides this, which is talk'd of with a loud Cry for the *Church of England*, is mere Noise and Babble. And who would listen to those that talk so loud of the Languishing and even Dying Condition of the *Church of England*, merely because the Queen will

will not knock all the Dissenters on the Head, and because some of the Bishops were not satisfied about passing the Bill against Occasional Conformity in the late Juncture? This Clamour is made use of only as a Blind, whilst another Design is carried on, which is really to destroy the Church of *England* and the Protestant Religion. For this we must conclude upon, on deliberate Thoughts, that the Church of *England* is not capable of being supported but in that way which I have briefly mention'd. Those that talk of setting up the Church by any other Methods, are the Persons that will ruine it. They may bestow upon themselves the Title of *Churchmen*, but that doth not render their Case the better. There were *Hereticks* that call'd themselves *Apostolicks*. And none make a greater Cry for the *Church* than the *Romanists*. These Men will erect the Church as those that pretend to build the *Temple* with *Nehemiah*, and took it very ill that he would not admit of them, whose design yet was to *hinder* and *obstruct* the rearing of that Building. These are for the Church as the *Jewish Zealots* afterwards were for theirs, and stickled very warmly for it, and yet they were the Men (as the *Jewish Historian* acquaints us) that procured its Destruction. One that wore a Miter, and is own'd by all the Learned World to have deserved it, was pleas'd to say on such an

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\* Epiphian. adv. hzref. l. 2. Tom. 1.

occasion as this, \* *If Phaetons drive the Chariot of the Sun, the World will be soon on fire. I mean such in the Church whose Brains like the Unicorns, run out into the length of the Horn, such who have more Fury than Zeal, and yet more Zeal than Knowledge or Moderation. It is for the safety and interest of our Church to understand the aim of these Men, and to remember that it was the attempting to set the Church (as well as the State) too high, that was the cause of its Fall in King Charles the First's Reign. It can't be denied that they were Churchmen and Conformists that helped to pull it down, when they saw that it exalted it self too furiously, and began to make some approaches to High Church, that upon the Seven Hills. And this reminds me of the next Particular which I'm to commend to the serious Consideration of my Brethren.*

*Sixthly*, Let it be thought of that by the disowning those Doctrines which I have so often recited, we not only abandon our Own Church, but we go over in part to that of Rome; or at least, we shew our Inclination and Good Will to that Church. I touch'd upon this before, in my *Preface to the former part of the Preacher*, but now I will enlarge upon it. We must know then that there was for many Years a Design carried on to make an Alteration in the Religion profess'd in *England*, and to change

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\* *Stillingsfleet's Irenicum. Part 1. ch. 2.*

our *Protestant* Principles into those of *Rome*. However the two Princes were inclin'd of themselves (which I shall not now debate) it is certain that they were Influenced by those who were not so well affected to the *Protestant* Cause as they ought to have been. And the latter of them was in danger of receiving a pernicious Tincture from her who lay in his Bosom. In his reign it is too manifest that the Chief Minister, who was permitted to act in the Affairs of the Church (not to say of the State) without control, gave evident Signs of his Inclination to the Superstitious and Corrupt Doctrines of *Rome*. \* He very much and often opposed the *Pope's* being called *Antichrist*, and was very angry with those that applied that Epithet to him. But he was pleas'd to accept himself of that Pontif's Titles, for the same † Author tells us, that the University of *Oxford* in many of their Letters and Addresses to him called him *His Holiness*, and *Most Holy Father*.

What can hinder us from giving Credit to what the Pious Bishop *Hall* saith of him, Decad. 3. Epist. 5. wherein he expostulates with him for his *Unsettledness in Religion*, and tells him that *to day he is in the Tents of the Romanists, to morrow in ours, the next day between both, against both*: and a great deal more of free and plain Language there is there to the same purpose. Nor can we think that so Mild and Charitable a Man as Bishop *Hall* was,

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\* Dr. *Heylin's* Life of Archbishop *Laud*. Book 4. p. 306, and 406. † B. 4. p. 316.

would have given him this Character unless he had deserved it.

After the Testimony of one of his own Order, I might produce what \* a Foreign Historian saith of him, *that not content to repair a disfigured Image of Christ Crucified, he ordered to be painted afresh that of God the Father, in the shape of an Old Man.* And other things are mentioned by him which argue that Prelate's Good Will to Rome.

What King *James*, who had a very great insight into Men, thought of him betimes, we may gather from what he said when some solicited him to bestow the Bishoprick of St. David's on him, \* [*I keep Laud back, saith he, from all places of Rule and Authority, because I find he hath a restless Spirit, and cannot see when Matters are well, but loves to toss and change, and to bring things to a pitch of Reformation floating in his Brain.*] And it appear'd afterward what that *Reformation* was which he was then contriving, namely, a new Modeling the Church of *England*, and accommodating it to that of *Rome*. In my Judgment there is enough in Dr. *Heylin's* Account of this *Archbishop's* Life to prove him to be affected to *Popery*, tho' that Writer design'd to clear him of it. But an impartial Eye may plainly perceive that there are many Instances mentioned by him (and he was not only the Archbishops Chap-

\* Histoire du Regne de *Louis* 13. par Mic. le Vassor.

† Bishop *Hacket's* Life of Archbishop *Williams*. Part 1. p. 64.

lain, but his intimate Friend, and therefore was well acquainted with the Particulars he sets down) which are undeniable Proofs of his tendency to *Rome*.

If he and his Friends did not really design to bring in the *Roman* Religion, yet this must be said, that they did all they could to beget that Suspicion in the Minds of the People: for they multiplied Ceremonies, and were every day more and more augmenting the outward Gaiety, Grandeur and Splendor in the Publick Worship, therein imitating the Church of *Rome*, and (as they themselves confess'd) endeavouring to gratify her. Mr. *Chillingworth* in his Preface to the Author of *Charity maintain'd* lets us know that the Governours of the Church at that time did more than formerly promote Ceremonies and Outward State and Pomp in the Worship of God, *out of a persuasion and desire that Papists might be won over to us the sooner by the removing of that Scandal out of the way, (that is, the too much Simplicity in the Publick Service of God mentioned before) and out of a Holy Jealousy that the weaker sort of Protestants might be the easier seduced to them by the Magnificence and Pomp of their Church Service, in case it (that is, the foresaid Scandal) were not removed.* Here we plainly see what the Archbishop and his Party were driving at, for Mr. *Chillingworth* knew very well his Godfather's Mind, and here he is so honest as to tell it to the World. But he most shamefully Prevaricates when he suggests that the Case of the weaker Protestants was consulted, and that that was one reason why the Governours of the

Church brought State and Pomp into the Divine Worship: as if, because some silly superstitious People were taken with the Popish Rites and Ceremonies, this were a sufficient Reason for the Governours of the Church to fetch them in as fast as they could.

But Mr. *Chillingworth*, as conscious of his false suggestion, soon quits this Reason, and flicks to that which he had mentioned before, namely, the design of *winning the Papists over to us*; and the Method that was taken in order to it was vehemently to urge the *Ceremonies*, and to *Add* to them, instead of countenancing the plain and simple way of worshipping God: and they laid the great stress of Religion on the former of these. In the next Paragraph but one he acknowledges that the Names of *Priests* and *Altars* were in those times resumed, and more commonly used than of late for this very reason, that *our Inconformity with the Church of Rome* might not be objected to us. We see now to what End *Conformity* was so earnestly prest in those Days, namely to make us of the Church of *England* conformable to *Rome*. This is downright dealing, and plainly proves what I am offering: and so do many other things which I will now briefly recount.

In this Archbishop's Ecclesiastical Reign the *Pulpits* and *Schools* were taught to make a near approach to the *Roman* Doctrines: and his *Liturgy* which he sent to *Scotland* first of the *Roman Service*. When he had the Ascendant in the Church he made the *Press* (as well as the *Pulpits*) speak favourably of these; for  
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in those Books which were brought to be Licens'd, all passages that might be offensive to the *Papists* were expunged: But those Books that favoured the *Papish* Points, yea, some that expressly maintained them, were Licens'd and Authorized, and the Authors of those Writings were encouraged and preferred. The reestablishing of the Doctrine of *Praying for the dead* was endeavour'd: and many Churchmen (as Dr. *Heylin* owns in his Introduction to Archbishop *Laud's* Life) held the *Real and Corporal Presence of the Natural Body of Christ in the Eucharist*. And if *Auricular Confession* was approved of, and was to be brought into the Church, the same Writer tells us that \**it is no more than what the Liturgy commends, and what the Canons have provided for*. But it is rather to be thought, that this and the other Innovations were in compliance with *Popery*. And it was confess'd by themselves that Sports and Revels on the Lord's Day were enjoyn'd on purpose to *please the Papists, and win them to our Church*. And in short, out of that implacable hatred which they had entertained against the *Puritans*, they resolv'd and design'd to break all their Power and Interest by strengthening the Hands of the *Roman Catholics*, and by bringing in one Extrem to expel another, as they reckon'd it to be.

I do not say that there was a downright Design to introduce *All the Roman Religion*, and

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\* Archbishop *Laud's* Life. B. 4. p. 415.

at once. They were too wise to attempt that which would be so much against their Interest, that which in Probability might bring in Foreigners to borrow their Bishopricks of them, and other Ecclesiastical Preferments: For the Pope would pretend to have these in his disposal, and would be desirous that his *Italians* should be served first, as in the Days of Yore. Therefore my Lord *Faulkland* said rightly that the Bishops *laboured to bring in an English, not a Roman Popery*. They knew that the Doctrine of the Pope's Supremacy was dangerous, and some other Doctrines which are parts of the *Roman Religion* were not for their turn, because they are not well consistent with the *English Constitution and Monarchy*, nor do they suit with their own Profit and Advantage, and therefore they were not for a *Total Conformity with Rome*, but rather opposed it.

This solves all that was said and pleaded by the Archbishop concerning his hindring some Persons from embracing the *Roman Religion*, and his reducing others, of which several Instances were produced by him at his Trial. This takes off that seeming and plausible Objection which might be raised against what I have said, for he was not eager of any bodies going over to the Church of *Rome* till she in some part was come over to us, and the Terms on both sides were settled and adjusted.

And this gives an account of this Prelates publishing (after a long time) his *Conference* with *Fisher* the Jesuite, and writing against the Popish Doctrines. If we remember that the Learned *Grotius* in his Book of *Christ's Satisfaction*

*tion* runs counter to the *Socinians*, and yet afterwards in his *Annotations* on the *Epistles* favoured this and other *Racovian* Points; if we remember that he made shew of the Protestant Religion, and yet discovers himself to be a Well-willer to the Church of *Rome* in his *Discussio Apologetici Rivetiani*, where he openly professes his Approbation of the *Roman* Religion, and propounds Terms of Reconciliation. I say, if we remember these things, we shall not wonder at the Archbishops Conduct. He might at first be perswaded that some of the Popish Points were Erroneous and False, but perhaps this perswasion lasted not long: or he disputed *pro formâ* only. We know that *Mountague* Writ against some things in Popery, and yet his other Writings smelt rankly of it. I do not imagine that the Archbishop and his Partisans approved of every thing in the *Roman* Church, and that they intended to fetch in Papacy in the *Lump* and *Gross*, but yet they were strongly enclined to it, notwithstanding this. Some in their Doctrines and in several Points of Practise may keep at a great distance from the Papists, and yet have affinity with Popery. We grant this in the *Quakers*, who are very different from the *Roman Catholicks* in most things, and cry out against them: and yet we are not backward to believe and declare that they came from, and tend to *Papery*.

From Mr. *Thorndike's* Writings it is clear that a Man may appear against several things that are held and practised by the Church of *Rome*, and yet himself hold and approve of many Popish Doctrines. We see that he speaks

of *Tradition* much after the rate that the *Papists* do, and he allows of *Prayer for the dead*, the *Corporal Presence of Christ* in the Sacrament, *Auricular Confession*, *Extreme Unction*. He asserts the *Eucharist* to be a *Proper Sacrifice*, and he speaks favourably of *Images* in Churches, of the *Reliques of Saints*, and of the Order of *Monks*: but yet he will not admit of the *Pope's Supremacy*, of his *Infallibility*, of *Purgatory*, of *Praying to Saints*, and some other Doctrines held by the Church of *Rome*, and he professes himself to be of the Communion of the Church of *England*. So the Archbishop and his Friends did not take up *Popery* by wholesale: they pick'd out of it what they pleas'd, and laid the rest aside, at least till there was a more fitting Opportunity.

And this gives us the true account of the Answer which the Archbishop returned to the Person who once and again came to him with the offer of a Cardinals Cap, \* *He would not*, he told him, *accept the Offer till Rome were otherwise than it was*. That is, he expected that *Rome*, to gain the Church of *England* to her, would submit to certain Terms, and then we should be ready to run into her Embraces, and then a Red hat might be accepted of with safety.

Now, that there were certain *Overtures* and *Terms* on foot at that time, and that a *Reconciliation* between the Church of *Rome* and ours

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\* Dr. Heylin's Life of the Archbishop. B. 4. p. 253.

was in agitation, I apprehend is very plain. For they did not deny this themselves, but professed it to be their desire and aim to joyn the Church of *England* and that of *Rome*. “ If  
 “ the Papists would be content, saith \* one of  
 “ them to wave their last Four Hundred Years  
 “ Determinations, or not obtrude them upon o-  
 “ thers: if they would rest satisfied with their  
 “ Old Patriarchal Power and their Primacy of  
 “ Order, much good might be expected, —  
 “ and we might yet in time hope to see an U-  
 “ nion, &c. And at another time he hath  
 † these Words, “ Were the Pope’s Supremacy  
 “ of Power reduced to a Supremacy of Order,  
 “ and the Patriarch of *Rome* content to be in  
 “ the Universal Church what the Primate of  
 “ *Ireland* is in that National one, were there  
 “ so much Modesty as to own themselves to  
 “ be Fallible, Christians might in some time  
 “ say their Prayers together, and different Opi-  
 “ nions in smaller Matters would rather tend  
 “ to the Beauty and Harmony of the Church,  
 “ by exercising our Charity and mutual Tolera-  
 “ tion, than become Matters of Schism and  
 “ Separation. It seems *Supremacy* and *Infalli-*  
*bility* were the only Obstacles of an Union be-  
 tween *Rome* and us. All the other things are  
 look’d upon as *Opinions in smaller Matters*.  
 And the Bishop of *Limerick* (who writ Bishop  
*Bramball’s* Life) adds that these Opinions and

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\* Bishop *Bramball’s* Epistle to Mr. *Militiere*.

† His Life writ by the Bishop of *Limerick*.

Articles are such that *Protestants might for Peace sake acquiesce in them.* We see that *Peace and Toleration* are allow'd of, when the *Papish Points* are talked of, but no such thing must be granted to *Protestant Dissenters.*

And *Heylin* is to be commended for his plain and open dealing: he expressly owns the Design of a *Reconciliation with Rome*, and that in order to it the Archbishop of *Canterbury* prepared the way by all that he did. \* “ What Encouragements had the Papists, saith this Writer, “ for resorting to our Congregations, when “ they should hear the Pope defamed, whom “ they behold with Reverence as their Common Father; their Ceremonies to be counted Antichristian, their Mass Idolatrous? “ These Rubs were first to be removed, before “ they have any Thoughts of uniting to us. “ And for the removing of these Rubs, the “ Archbishop fell upon the Courses before “ mentioned. This Author had said before, that † *The greatest part of the Controversies between us and the Church of Rome not being in any Essential Points of the Christian Religion, I look upon it (saith he) as a most Pious Work to endeavour an Atonement.* And again he tells us that in the Controversies between the Church of Rome and us, ‖ *It is no difficult Matter to atone the Differences, if the managing of them were committed to moderate and prudent Men.*

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\* *Heylin's Life of the Archbishop.* B. 4. p. 417.

† P. 413.

‖ P. 39.

And he looked upon the Archbishop to be of that Number, and represents him every where as a friend to the *Roman Church*, and endeavouring to procure a Friendship and Agreement between that and the *Church of England*. He owns his \* *Compliances with the Church of Rome*, and tells us † *he shewed Favours to those of the Catholick Party*: and from many Passages related by him in the *Life* of that Prelate it is evident, that he not only shewed himself favourable and kind to those that were actually Papists, but to all those of our Church whom he found enclined to their Principles; at the same time exercising a very great Severity upon those that publickly expressed an Aversion to them.

It is true, we cannot pronounce him a thorough Papist, because he had not formerly renounced the *Church of England*: but neither can we account him a Protestant, because he shewed his Good-will to Popery in so palpable a manner. A Learned and Religious Man, who was afterward one of the Fathers of our Church, determined the Case rightly when he said concerning the Men of *Laud's Faction*, that || *they kept themselves so near the brink, that upon occasion they could step over to the Papists*.

And indeed some of the High Churchmen slept over without any farther dallying, as Bi-

\* P. 408.

† P. 411:

‡ *Dr. Rob. Abbot* in his Sermon at *Oxford*.

shop Goodman, Dr. Baily, Dr. Goff, Dr. Vane, who plainly told by their Practise what the rest were aiming at. They knew that Popery was intended, and therefore they were not willing to conceal and disguise themselves any longer. Yea, the Archbishops great Familiar and Confident, as well as Agent, to whom all his Designs and Contrivances were known, I mean one of the Principal Secretaries of State, could no longer dissemble his Perswasion, but went over to the Church of *Rome*, of which he knew his Great Friend was such an Admirer. Thus it appears that it was agreed upon by the Archbishop and his Complices to favour Popery and the Abettors of it, in order to the introducing it, so far as it would serve their turns, and in that Time which was ripe for it.

And what *Principles* were chosen for this purpose but the *Arminian* ones? For they had an Apprehension that these would make way for those of the Church of *Rome*, and agree very well with them. Accordingly all the Favours, Respects and Preferments in the Church were conferred on those that were Men of this Kidney. \* Bishop *Hacket* tells us that *Bishop Laud* (for he shew'd what he was before the Archbishoprick of *Canterbury* was conferred upon him) *was not only a great Patron of them that maintained Arminius's Doctrine, but a great Discountenancer. of the opposite part : and since*

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\* Life of Archbishop *Williams*. Part 2. p. 86.



he shook the Box, they (i. e. the *Anti-Arminians*) were but *Duices and Trais* in all Church-Preferment. These are the Bishop's own Words. And again he lets us know that \* *it was then palpable that there was no other way to fly over Mens Heads in the Church, but with the Wings of Arminianism.* And with these Wings they fled to *Rome* or hover'd over it, for it was observed in these times that *Remonstrantism* and a good liking of the *Popish Points* went together.

They were remarkable Words of a Reverend and Learned † *Divine* of the University of *Oxford* whom I cited before, in a Sermon which he preached there, with Relation to *Dr. Laud* and his Fraternity, " In the Points (saith he) " of *Free Will, Justification, Concupiscence being a Sin, Inherent Righteousness, and Certainty of Salvation*, the *Papists* beyond the " *Sea*s can say they are wholly *Theirs*: and " the *Recufants* at Home make their brags of " them. And they had good reason to do so, because they knew that the *Arminian* and *Popish* *Doctrines* promote each other.

We have a plain and undeniable Proof of this in *King James* that then Reigned, who at his first coming to the Throne was equally incens'd against the *Papists* and the followers of *Armin*, as his Printed Works, as well as his Actions, acquainted the World. *Armin* himself was stiled by him an *Enemy of God*, and his Friends were represented as *Heretical* and *Blas-*

\* P. 82.

† *Dr. Abbot.*

*phemous*, as we may see in the King's Declaration against *Vorstius*, and in his Letter to the States of the United Provinces. But afterward it is notorious that when his dislike of *Arminianism* abated, he also shew'd favour to the *Popish* Party. At the same time that he threw off the *Calvinian* Points, he express'd his Approbation of some of the *Roman* Tenents, and was kind to the *Roman Catholics*, and was designing a Toleration of them, but was cut off by Death.

The Sum of all that can be said under this Observation is this, that the *Calvinian* Doctrines were believed, profess'd and maintain'd by our Church and Churchmen, and the *Popish* Doctrines were manfully opposed and withstood by them from the beginning of the Reformation till the latter end of King *James* the first, and the entrance of King *Charles* the first's Reign, at which time the *Arminian* Doctrines together with the *Popish* ones began to advance, and every day more and more increased.

Whence, in the Character given of the *Church of England* by a Jesuite in King *Charles* the first's time, there is this Passage, \* *The Professors of it love Temper and Moderation: the Doctrines are altered in many things, as about Free-Will, about Predestination, Universal Grace, Inherent Righteousness: the Nine and Thirty Articles are ambitious of some Catholick Sense.* And

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\* Preface to *Charity Maintain'd*. Sect. 20.

Dr. \* *Heylin*, who rehearſes this Paſſage, adds, *So far the Jeſuit ſpeaks nothing but Truth.* Which is a plain acknowledgment that our Churchmens embracing the *Arminian* Doctrines, was very acceptable to the *Romaniſts*. And we are ſure it could not be ſo, if *Arminianiſm* did not conduce to *Popery*, if it were not in ſome Reſpects ſerviceable to that Cauſe.

Here it might be remembered that at the ſame time with Archbiſhop *Laud* in *England*, there was Archbiſhop *Maxwell* in *Scotland*, and Biſhop *Bramball* in *Ireland*, who all three carried on the ſame Deſign, namely, of favouring ſome Practiſes which were for the Intereſt of *Rome*, and advancing ſome Points wherein the *Roman Catholicks* and *Remonſtrants* agree: for they ſaw that ſome of the Principles of *both* theſe Parties did wonderfully ſymbolize, and help one another.

Yea, it is obſerved concerning thoſe times by one that was a ſincere lover of our Church that † “ Some of the moſt Zealous Advocates for  
“ the *Arminian* Doctrine were ſince fallen away  
“ from the *Reformed* Church, being perchance  
“ the more eaſily induced thereunto by the  
“ Progreſs which they had made in the way  
“ before. And he adds, It was wonderful to  
“ hear what virulent Speeches were utter’d by  
“ Men of this Stamp againſt the firſt Reformers  
“ of the Church. *Perfecto odio odi Calvinum*, was

\* Life of Archbiſhop *Laud*. B. 4. p. 252.

† *England's Faithful Reprover*. p. 135.

“ reported to be the expression of one famed  
 “ for his Learning. And this Spight and Hatred which they bore to the *Calvinian* Doctrines, pushed them on ( as I have partly observed before ) to favour and advance those of the Church of *Rome*, because they were so opposite to these. And hence it was that in the Speeches of my Lord *Faulkland* ( a Name very much esteemed and honoured by some of our Clergy ) and other Wise and Understanding Men in the Parliaments before the Civil Wars, it was complained that *Popery* and *Arminianism* went hand in hand : and even those Senators who were no friends to Non-Conformity, but wholly in the Interest of the Church of *England*, consulted of Methods to stop the Growth of those two Evils which were then springing up, and were observed to thrive together.

And the same Spirit hath recovered it self since, and hath sufficiently appeared among us. A noted Man of our Church, \* *professed he had a greater Kindness for the Roman Catholics than the Fanatical Presbyterians or Calvinists* : and he made good his Profession before his Death, tho’ he did not actually embrace all Popery. The like I have often heard with these Ears from the Mouths of some of my Brethren. But by the way, we may observe that a little thing will make them quit their most Holy Religion, as they frequently stile it : they would choose *Superstition* and *Idolatry* before the

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\* *Dr. Parker’s Pref. before Bishop Bramhall’s Works.*

strictest Model of Religion, that is of Doctrine and Discipline among the greatest part of *Protestants* in the World. As heretofore, so of late a Reconciliation between the Church of *Rome* and that of *England*, would not have been ungrateful to some Men. *Cassander's Consultation* and *Francisc. à S. Clara's* Endeavours to reconcile the *English Articles* with the *Tridentine* were talked of: and *Forbes* and *Blanc* and such who strive to Accommodate the Popish and Protestant Points, were thought to be the best Divines.

This was in the Days when *Le Strange* was the great Director and Guide of one part of the Inferior Clergy, when no Man's Writings were more admired and believed, and (as far as could be) practised than his, when he told them that there was little difference between the Church of *England* and that at *Rome*, excepting a few Modes and Ceremonies, and small Variations in some Doctrines. But every understanding and considerate Man knows that there is a vast difference between them, and particularly between the Doctrines of the Church of *England* and those of the *Romanists*, and especially as to those Points which I have handled. On which account it is that these are detestable to our *Arminian* Clergy, who are forward to joyn with the *Church of Rome* rather than with their *Own*, which professes the Belief of the *Eternal Decrees*, *Justification by Faith alone*, &c.

But we are to remember that these very Doctrines were the great Barriers against *Papery* after the Reformation. These were a good  
Hedge

Hedge and Fence to keep us from approaching too near to the Roman Church. And therefore now, they being thrown away by so many of our Chief Churchmen, it is to be fear'd that it will be difficult to preserve our selves from coming too close.

Indeed we begin to come into Favour with the Great Men of the Roman Church, they observing that we are not such Warm *Protestants* as we used to be, and that we flinch from some of our Received Principles. *Arminianism* brings us near to them, and admits us into their Society and Friendship, as we see how \* *F. Simon* caresses our *English Divines*. We may say, saith he, of the *English Episcoparians* what *Cardinal Palavicini* spoke on the like occasion of some *Learned Protestants*, that They were rather no *Catholicks* than *Hereticks*. And again in the same place, *The True Religion of the Church of England differs very little from the Roman Religion in outward Appearance*. The reason is because we have let go several of our Doctrines which heretofore we openly asserted and maintained, and whereby we were distinguished from *Papists*, I mean the Doctrines of *Eternal Election*, *Original Sin*, the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness*, &c.

These Doctrines were heretofore held by all our *Protestant Divines*, and opposed by none but the *Writers of the Church of Rome*. We are justified by our Works, and by our inherent

\* *Crit. Hist.* Book 3. Chap. 21.

Righteousness, and not by our Saviour's Imputed Righteousness, say the *Papists*, and accordingly \* *Bishop Hall* reckones this among the *Popish Points*. And we know that the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness was the Doctrine of the *Protestants*, by *Bellarmin's* particular and ample Answers (such as they are) to all their Arguments for it; as we see in his Book of *Justification*. We shall find in *Brerely's Protestant Apology for the Roman Church* (as he is pleased to call it) that he reckons the Points of *Free-Will*, *Justification by Works*, and the like, among the Doctrines of the *Roman Church*. And at the latter end of our own *Confession of Faith* annexed to the *Prayers* set forth by our Church, we may see that *Free Will* is ranked with the *Mass*, *Purgatory*, *Prayers to Saints*, and other *Popish Doctrines*. And yet tho' *Free Will*, and *Justification by Works*, &c. are both by our own Church and that of *Rome* accounted Points of *Popery*, they are entertain'd and profess'd by our Divines at this day.

And 'tis worth our observing again (for as I remember, I mention'd it before) that the very same Individual Arguments which *Bellarmin* (the *Roman Champion*) uses against the *Imputation of Christs Righteousness to believers*, and against *Justification by Faith*, are used by our Preachers and Writers: yea, the very same individual Texts are quoted by them, and managed with the same Turn of Art, and with the same Air of Sophistry.

Now, for our Divines thus to take part with the Church of *Rome* in these Doctrines, is a very high Crime in my Judgment. And I will give this one Reason here for what I say, They are the *Articles* and *Doctrines* of our Church that chiefly constitute it a *True Christian Church*, and therefore here we should be most concerned. And they are *these* that chiefly distinguish us from the *Church of Rome*: for there are some External Rites and Ceremonies which are common to us both, and the Ecclesiastical Government and Discipline of both Churches are *in part* the same: but they are the *Articles* and *Doctrines* that make the Grand Difference between us, and consequently we ought to keep this up with great Care and Diligence. These are our *Sibboleths*: by pronouncing of these we are known to be what we are. Not to derogate in the least from the Establish'd Constitution, I may truly say I never heard any sober Man assert that Episcopacy and the Discipline that goes along with it are *Essential* nor absolutely necessary to the Church, that is, that the Church ceases to be, if they be wanting. Our Church (according to the Concessions of some of the Learnedst Men among us) might be a True Church without these, but she can't without her Doctrine. It is this that makes the Substantial Distinction between a True and a False Church, but the other things do not.

Hence we see how reasonable, yea, how necessary it is to look after our Doctrines, and to maintain and keep up the same Principles of Christianity. And suffer me to tell you, my Brethren, that this is the right way to settle

*Unity*



*Unity and Uniformity* among us, which have been so much talk'd of: though those that urge these most, are generally least concerned for them, that is, they are very careless in using the right Means in order to it. Talk no longer of Union in the Church, till you unite in Doctrines, in a joint Profession of the Divine Truths which our Church it self hath commended to you, and which our First *Reformers* left with us. They knew right well what Doctrines were *Papish*, and we are taught by them in the *Articles* and *Homilies* what are the *Contrary* to them. It is our Business now to assert and defend these latter, and to take all possible Precautions for preventing and hindring the Corrupting of them, lest unawares we run further into Popery.

Here I would not be misunderstood, I do not pretend to perswade the Reader that all *Arminians* are *Papists*, or all *Papists* *Arminians*: for we know that there are *Arminians* that are not *Papists*, as the *Lutherans* are generally for the *Arminian* Points, and yet are not *Papists*: and so in *Holland* the *Remonstrants* are no *Papists*. And we know on the other side, that there are some particular *Papists*, as the *Dominicans* and the *Jansenists*, who are not *Arminians*, but *Calvinists* as to the Doctrines I have spoken of. But this is that which I say, that *Arminianism* contains in it several Doctrines, which are held by the *Generality* of the *Roman Church*, and on that account it tends to the promoting of Popery. Mens Minds being possess'd with some *Papish* Doctrines, they are the more easily enclined to embrace the *rest*: tho' All do not actu-

ally embrace them, because of some certain Obstacles that are in the Way.

And in the nature of the thing it self we cannot but acknowledge that *Arminianism* is an Introduction to *Popery*, and makes way for it; thus from the exalting of *Free Will* Men pass to *Merit*; and from magnifying the Powers and Efforts of Nature they pass to *Supererogation*. By being not well grounded in the Doctrine of Christs Merit, and our Reliance upou him for Justification, they fly to Masses, Indulences, Satisfaction, Purgatory, &c. Thus the Opinions of the *Remonstrants* have a secret Tendency to the Roman Church, and they look that way. On which account the favouring of the Remonstrant Points hath been practised as an artificial way to hook in Popery, and hath been rightly called the Back door to it.

And again, as *Arminianism* proceeds wholly on *Reason*, it is serviceable on that account to root out in time the Evangelical Doctrines, which entirely depend upon *Revelation*. And when this is set aside, then Mens Reasonings and Inventions succeed in its place, and so there is a Door set wide open for the *Roman* Doctrines to enter in, which are generally founded on Worldly Reason and Politick Considerations. Thus there is a plain Correspondence between these two, *Popery* and *Arminianism*, and they grow up together. And hence the latter is a crafty way of undermining the True Reformed Religion, and advancing the Popish Interest. And in other respects it might be shewed that the *Arminian* Doctrines are like to be Forerunners of *Popery*, as *Beatifying* is of *Canonization* among the Romanists.

Let

Let me then argue and expostulate with you, my Brethren ; Unless you are enclined to have a good Opinion of the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, why do you forsake those of the *Protestants*, and of your *Own Church* in particular ? Why do you every day more and more run away from your Antient Principles ? Do you not give broad Signs by your thus shifting the Scene, that the next that opens will be *Rome* ? The Matter is self-evident. If we cast off the Doctrines of our own Church, and of the generality of the Protestant Churches abroad, it may easily be gathered what Church that is which we most Favour and Respect. One of a short prospect may foresee that we are putting off the Mask, and appearing bare faced.

But in the mean time we are self-condemn'd : for whilst we complain of the *Papists* for endeavouring to corrupt our Religion, and infect us with False Doctrines, we our selves do the same. And this is the greater Reproach to us, because we see that the *Papists* are stedfast in their Errors, whilst we are unstable in the Truth. They adhere to the corrupt Doctrines of their Forefathers, but some of us, as if we were ashamed of what our Predecessors believed and professed, and as if we were weary of the Protestant Religion, have alter'd our Perswasions in some of the most considerable Points of Christianity. And hereby we are justly liable to the censure, not to say the scorn of the Church of *Rome*. Whilst we maintain our Separation from their Communion, we embrace their Doctrines, and are so far preparing our selves to Communicate with them.

*Seventhly*, The next Consideration by way of Inference and Application, shall be with relation to those among us who *dissent from the Church of England*. I desire you to consider how unreasonable it is to complain of them as *Dissenters*, when we are such our selves. We dissent from our own Church, and from the Reverend and Pious Reformers of it as to our Doctrines. I hope this is not done in meer Opposition to our Dissenting Brethren, who generally profess these Doctrines. I should be loth to think that the Antipathy between any of us and the Non-Conformists runs so high, that we throw off the Articles of our Church, because they are received and believed by those Persons. But whatever is the Cause, we are sure of the Effect, and we see how scandalous it is, and how contradictory. We blame them for departing from our Communion, and making Gashes and Schisms in the Body of the Church: but we are injurious to it our selves, and we wound it with our own Hands.

Not to speak of the Practises which are contrary to the *Canons*, Constitution and Laws of our Church (as I can and may sometime prove that of the Hundred and one and forty *Canons* of our Church there are not a quarter of them observed by our Churchmen) not to speak, I say, of any Illegal and Uncanonical Practises, it is sufficient that I have made it appear that some of our *Chief Doctrines* are contrary to those that our Church delivers in her Articles and Homilies. How then can we blame the *Dissenters* for disgusting the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church,

Church, when we our selves disrelifh its Articles? How can we reprove them for being faulty in the former, when we are defective in the latter? yea, when we know that they out-do many of us in Purity of Doctrine, and that they are very careful in Afferting and Maintaining it.

Let it not seem strange that a Member and Minister of the Church of *England* calls upon you to take notice of the Good Hand of God and his Wise Providence in this very matter. If we would open our Eyes, we should fee that we are beholding to the *Sober and Moderate Dissenters* for the Continuance of a considerable part of our Theological Principles among us, even those which the Church of *England* and her Reformers had left us. If there had been none of that Party, the Church of *England* had been long since ruin'd, for if the High Churchmen had had no check, they would have brought in Popery before this time, by a Side-wind of *Arminianism*, and by their over-valuing of *Ceremony and Pomp* in Divine Worship. If that Body of Men had not been among us, we should have run into greater Extravagances than we have done. For tho' we dislike those Persons, yet we cannot wholly disregard them; and we are loth to expose our Selves and our Actions to their Censure and Check.

If we had not these Spies about us, I question whether we should be kept in that Decorum which we are now in. We prophane the Christian Sabbath very openly and professedly, but we should do it much more, if they were taken away. We should not have the Preaching in

our Chutches that we have, if they were removed: for we see our Churchmen have set up Lectures in several places, and in *Cambridge* particularly, on the Lord's Day, meerly because the People might not be tempted to frequent the Meetings. They would never have done it but on this occasion. And if the Meetings were silenced, those Lectures would have the same Fate. *What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached: and we therein do rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce.* And particularly I am glad to see that our Bishops and chief Clergymen disdain not to imitate the Dissenters in what is good and edifying. I wish they would do the like as to some of the Doctrines preached by them, those very Doctrines which were delivered to us at the Reformation, those which I have particularly insisted on: that so when they call upon their Flocks to meet together, they may entertain them with that which is indeed the Word of God.

*Eighthly*, Consider how unreasonable and absurd it is to cry out against *New Lights*, to profess our dislike of *Innovations*, to condemn the *Giddy Sectaries* for turning about with every Wind of Doctrine, and yet to be really guilty of this our selves. *Arminianism* is a New Scheme of Religion, which defaces the Antient Pourtraiture we had of the Divine Nature and Attributes. It is a New Fashion and Mode of Divinity. And yet we boast that our Faith is Immoveable, that we stand fast, and keep our ground, and are fixed on our Center, whilst other  
other

others fly off from it, and describe a very va-  
grant Circumference. Our Churchmen gene-  
rally talk of *Antiquity*, and what fine things  
there were of old in the *Primitive* Times, and  
they are displeas'd with those that shew any  
dislike of them. But how self-condemned are  
they whilst they revolt from some of the *Anti-*  
*ent* Doctrines of the Apostles and the *Primi-*  
*tive* Christians, from the persuasion of all the  
Prelates and Divines of our Church that were  
our Predecessors since the Reformation, and  
from the Determination of the first Reformed  
Churches abroad? Where then is our Stability?  
Where is our Unmoveableness? Where is our  
Abhorrence of Innovations?

If it be required of *Deacons* that they be not  
*double Tongued*, 1 Tim. 3. 8. surely this is as  
requisite in our *Priests*. As the Principles of  
Honesty and Christianity suffer them not to  
say one thing, and mean another, so neither do  
they allow them to speak one thing at one time,  
and another that is contrary to it another time.  
They must think it their Concern to imitate the  
*Primitive Believers*, who *continued in the Apo-*  
*stles Doctrine*, who persevered in the Profession  
of those Truths which had been instilled into  
them. You live in a Sceptical and Atheistical  
Age, wherein most Men follow the Range of  
their own Imaginations, but be not led by  
their Example, but attend to the Apostle's  
Counsel, *hold fast the form of Sound Words*,  
2 Tim. 1. 13. and to what he saith in ano-  
ther place, *Stand fast in one Spirit, with one*  
*Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Go-*  
*spel*, Phil. 1. 27. and to that also of another  
Apo-

Apostle, *Earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, Jude v. 3. And you have reason to stand fast, and to contend for it, because it is no Indifferent and Arbitrary Thing, and because being *once delivered*, and that for ever, you can't expect any other Model of Faith and Doctrine.

Let the Age we live in have as much New Philosophy, New Theories, New Hypotheses, New Medical Prescriptions, New Discoveries in Anatomy, Chirurgery, Mathematicks, Geography, Chymistry, Botanicks, Musick, Criticism, &c. as much of these, I say, as they please, but let us have our *Old Divinity*, and the Antient Simplicity and Purity of Doctrine. Let us have no New Gospel, no New Faith, no Innovations in the fixed Notion of Christian Theology. If the Moralist's Vertuous Man was to be *τετράγωνος*, as steady as a Die, then certainly the Gospel requires that we should be fixed on our Basis, and not easily removed from it. If there was such a thing as *ὁμολογία*, a Man's being Constant to himself in what he saith and believes, (which was the thing that *Zeno* and the Philosophers of his Sect required of every one) surely the *Christian* is not to be fickle and variable, inconstant and wavering. But what *Cyrus* said of *Empire*, he should say of Divine Truth, \* I count it a great matter to acquire it,

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\* Μέγα μὲν οἶμαι ἔργον τὸ ἀρχὴν καθιερῶσαι, πολὺ δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον τὸ λαβύνην διασώσασθαι. Xenoph Just. Cyr. lib. 7.



but a greater thing it is to keep it, when I have got it. And *this* is it which *you* are more especially obliged to take care of.

It cannot be denied that Christ hath been taught among us of this Church and Nation in the purest manner: and the Gospel hath been preached with wonderful Energy and Success. The Holy Doctrines of our Saviour and his Apostles have been delivered with great plainness and clearness, and have been received and embraced with as great Eagerness and Sincerity. I may on this occasion apply our Saviour's Words, Mat. 13. 17. *Many Prophets and Righteous Men have desired to see these things that ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things that ye have heard, and have not heard them.* Wherefore the greater is our fault that we have *not retained* these things, that we have *parted with* some of our Evangelical Truths, and that some among us *teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*

I beseech you, Brethren, seriously reflect upon these things: for Christ's sake lay them to Heart, and shew your Sense of Religion, and your affectionate Concern and Zeal for it by owning these Doctrines which are almost lost and sunk in this Age. You solemnly and publicly pray that \* God, who thro' the preaching of the Blessed Apostle St. Paul caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the World, would grant that you having his wonderful Conversion in remem-

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\* Collect for St. Paul's Day.

brance, may shew forth your Thankfulness unto him for the same, by your following the Holy Doctrine which he taught. See that you do not contradict this Prayer by opposing that Doctrine (as those that oppose the Doctrines of the Eternal Decrees, Original Sin, Justification by Faith alone, the Imputation of Christs Righteousness, Special Grace, certainly do); yea take it to be your Christian Office to recal and revive it where it is lost, and to bring it into Credit again.

To which purpose, reckon it to be low and sneaking, to be mean and servile to smother your Sentiments, and to suppress your real Convictions concerning these things. You see I have led you the way, I have been Free, and Open, and plain: for there is no Good to be effected without plain and free dealing. I saw it was high time to take these things into consideration, especially seeing no body else would undertake this Work. But I was convinced that there was a Necessity of it, when I found that those *Arminian* Doctrines were daily growing upon us, and getting ground, and that the Abettors of them, like those *Seducers* the Apostle speaks of, *wax worse and worse*. I most earnestly beg of you that you will not be offended at my Freedom, and that you will not be displeas'd that I have set you into the Right way. A credible Author tells us of a Person that was Distracted, and imagined himself a King: with which fancy he so pleased himself, that after he was Cured, he was extremely Angry with the Physician who reduced him to his right Mind. I will not so much as imagin any thing like this

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in You. I hope none of you are loth to be dispossest'd of your False Notions, or will be angry with me for discovering them to you, and endeavouring to rid you of them. I rather expect that you will be glad to see your Faults, and having seen them, that you will shew your dislike of them, and not of me. Be not asham'd to Amend and Reform: reckon it not a Point of Honour to maintain and defend your former Sentiments rather than to acknowledge your self to be in an Error.

I am abundantly satisfied, by my comparing and weighing Opinions and Perswasions with great deliberation on both sides, that I have pitched upon those which have these following things to commend to you, namely, the clear Testimony of the Holy Scripture, especially that of the Evangelists and Apostles; the Approbation of some of the most Antient and Pious Fathers of the Church, especially the *Latin* Church; the Suffrage of the Reformed Churches abroad; and the determination of our own at Home. Which last should be of great weight with Us who own the Church of *England* for our Mother, and who have subscribed to the *Nine and Thirty Articles*, all of which that respect these Points I have treated of, speak the Sense of *Calvin* rather than of *Armin*. This without doubt was the Judgment of all our Archbishops and Bishops, of our Universities, and of the whole Body of the Clergy at the Reformation, and after it a long time. These Doctrines were confirmed, sealed und ratified with the Sufferings of Confessors, and the Blood of Martyrs even in our own Nation.

And

And if these Doctrines were True then, they are so now, and we ought not to be ashamed of them: especially when we have seen that after the utmost Efforts of Reason against them, and after all the violent Shocks they have encounter'd with, they remain Impregnable and Invincible. For Truth is of that native Force and Vigour that it clears it self of Cavil and Falshood; like some active Spring or Fountain, which works off and casts out all filth and dirt that is thrown into it.

And now, *whether you will bear, or whether you will forbear*, I have discharged *my* Duty, and I have reminded you of *yours*. I have spoken the Words of Truth and Soberness, I have sincerely represented the matter which I have had before me, I have not designed to provoke and exasperate any Person, but plainly and impartially to remind my self and others of what is required of us. I chose rather to be blamed and censured by some for saying these things which my Office requires of me, than to purchase the Approbation of others by being silent. I had rather discharge my Duty, tho' accompanied with the Dislike of the former, than be guilty of the neglect of it, tho' attended with the Commendation and Applause of the latter. I have faithfully endeavoured to convince Men of their Errors and Mistakes; to prevail with them first to see them, and then to reform them. I have endeavoured to maintain the Esteem and Credit of our Religion, to retrieve Primitive Truth, to do our own Church Right, and to vindicate her Honour and Reputation. It would mightily raise the Idea and Character of Religion

gion and Religious Men, if they would resume their Original Principles, and endeavour the Restitution of the Antient Truths of the Gospel. And then with this happy Return of the Primitive Doctrines, there would be revived the true Spirit of Christianity in Mens Lives and Manners. This, this alone would make our Church the Bulwark of the Protestant Cause. This would render her the best and most flourishing Church in the Christian World. This would restore to her that Peace, Unity, and Tranquility which are so much desired by all Good Men. This would derive a lasting Blessing on the whole Kingdom and Nation: and (which is the highest thing we can wish for) this will advance the Glory and Honour of the Divine Majesty.

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T H E

H E A R E R.

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DISCOURSE

S H E W I N G

What are the Qualifications that are required in those who would receive Benefit and Advantage by Hearing the Word Preached.

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T H E

# H E A R E R.

**P***Reaching* supposes *Hearing*, and therefore as among the great Institutions and solemn Appointments of God under the Gospel this is one, that Divine and Evangelical Truths are to be preach'd, and applied to the Consciences of Men, so another is this, that Persons are obliged to attend to those Truths, and to hear the Word preached. Both these are contained in those Words of the Apostle, Rom. 10. 14. *How shall they hear without a Preacher?* The Pastors Office is Preaching: and that which is required of the Flock is hearing. The natural Order is first to discourse of the former, and then of the latter. Accordingly, having amply insisted on the *Preachers* Duty, I proceed now to treat of the *Hearer's*. And the Foundation of what I intend to offer is that necessary Caveat of our Saviour, Luke 8. 18. *Take heed how you hear.* Where it is supposed that we ought to *Hear*, and that it is a Divine Institution and Ordinance: but the *Manner of hearing* is the main thing remarkable in these Words.

And indeed the chief Reason why there is so little Hearing to any purpose, is because Men fail as to This. They hear not as they ought, and thence it is that they receive so little Profit and Advantage by Hearing. I have said, and proved it before that every *Preaching* will not serve in order to Conversion and Salvation: it is as true that every *Hearing* will not be available and serviceable to that end. *Take heed to thy Ministry*, said St. Paul, Col. 4. 17. *Take heed how you hear*, saith our Saviour. Not only the Preachers must take heed how they preach, but the People must take heed how they hear. They must not be bare Auditors, but their chief care must be about the *Manner* of performing this Duty: they ought to be solicitous that they discharge it *Aright*. For the mere *opus operatum* of hearing Sermons will avail them as little as that of hearing or saying unintelligible Prayers among the Papists. Here then I will distinctly shew, 1. What is required of you *before* hearing. 2. What *in the time* of Hearing. 3. What *afterwards*. I begin with the first, namely, to shew how you are to be disposed and prepared *before* you come to hear.

I. Lay aside Curiosity: be not Nice and Overdelicate. By which Direction I mean, first that you ought not to delight in *Novelties*, and to hanker after them, when you come to hear the Word of God preached. This Vanity of Spirit is partly discovered at the hearing of *Funeral Sermons*: when the Dead is praised, the Auditors are more Attentive to What is then  
said,

said, than to all the Sermon besides. For now they think they shall hear something which is not common, something which they never heard before. And so at other times this vain Affectation shews it self in desiring to hear Strange and Uncommon Doctrines from the Pulpit: whence the true Spiritual *Manna* is disrelisht, and even loath'd because of its Commonness. These Men are of the *Athenian* Temper, they are desirous of *bearing some new thing*: they would have every Sermon to be of what they knew not before. For say they, are we of so dull Capacities as not to understand the Preacher at his once telling us what he hath to say on any subject? Why doth he disparage our Intellects by his empty Repetitions of the same thing? Therefore they think it not worth their Pains to step abroad to hear the same Truths over and over again. They express their dislike of such or such a Minister because he tells them no more than what they know already; nay, he saith no more than what they could have said themselves. Why should a Man go to hear that which he hath been often told? And accordingly they seek out for one that will tell them some new thing from the Pulpit, one that will not grate their Ears with Old Obsolete Doctrines. These are those sheep that can't feed unless they Wander and stray up and down, and change their Pasture. These squeamish Stomachs long most after Rarities. What is common and trite will not go down with them. Of such Persons the Apostle speaks in 2 Tim. 4. 3. *They heape to themselves Teachers,*

*having itching Ears*, that is, they are inflamed with a greedy desire of hearing New Doctrines, and thence it is that they look out for New Preachers, to gratify their Curiosity.

But this sort of Hearers are to be told that that the Inculcating of the same Truths and Precepts, as it is no disparagement to their *Capacities* (which we may perceive they value themselves much upon) so neither should it be unacceptable to them, and make them uneasy. For they ought to know that the preaching of the Word was instituted not only to instruct Men in the Truths of the Gospel, and to inform them of their Duty, but to *remind* them of both these, and to *confirm* them in their Knowledge and Practise. When the Evangelical Doctrines and the Divine Commands have been imparted to us by the Preaching of the Word, we should think it necessary that we be *further established* in the same sacred Matters, and that we have the Duties, which we know already, continually brought to our Mind, and enforced upon us by fresh Arguments and Motives. But he is not a true Gospel Hearer who hears with an Itching Ear, and would fain have it scratched with the Tidings of some New Doctrine.

I mean likewise that you be not *Delicate* and *Wanton* in affecting Flashy Notions and Fancies, in being pleased chiefly with the pretty passages, fine Similitudes, Historical Applications, Cadences of Words or what looks like Jingle in some Sermons; in prizing no Discourses but such as are Gaudy in their Stile, and have superfetation of Wit and Eloquence; in judging the

the goodness of a Sermon by the Quaintness of it. If you come with such a Disposition as this, you evacuate the design of Preaching, which is not to gratify Mens Imaginations, but to save their Souls. \* A Sick Man, saith *Seneca*, looks not out for a Physician that is Eloquent, but one that is able to Cure him of his Distemper. This may fitly be applied to the present Case, Hearers must value a Preacher not for the Elegancy and Politeness of his Discourses, but for his ability to work a Cure upon their distempered Consciences and their disorder'd Lives.

I mean also this, that you must not shew your Curiosity and Niceness in *condemning* and *finding fault* with him whom you come to hear. I have represented the Character of a *Preacher* to a great Exactness, because I would invite those of that Office in the Church to aspire to Eminency, and not to sit down with mean Acquisitions. He that takes his aim at a Star, will shoot higher than he that levels his Shot at a Shrub. But you must not expect that every one should come up to that height which hath been proposed: and therefore if you find your Pastour come short of it in some things, let not this prejudice you against his Ministry. If his Doctrine be Sound, and his Life Regular, and if he cloaths his Matter in Words that are plain and intelligible, be not exact and severe with him for the Failures of his Memory, or

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\* Non quærit æger medicum Eloquentem sed sanantem.  
Epist. 75.

Stile, or Delivery. If you like the Food he provides for you, and know it to be Good and Wholesome, be not so over-curious as to discover any discontent because it is not Dressed as you would have it.

But especially, shew not your ill-natured Curiosity in carping at the Ministers Person. If he be qualified as before mentioned, I advise you by all means to pass by and over-look his Failings, whensoever you espie them. Never insist upon his Infirmities, Imprudences and Indecencies: give no ear to the little Scruples and Objections raised against him. God did not send you an Angel from Heaven, but a Preacher from among your selves, who is *a Man of like Passions with you*, Acts 14. 15. Jam. 5. 17. that is, obnoxious to the same Frailties and Weaknesses. *We have this Treasure*, namely of the Ministry, *in Earthen Vessels*, 2 Cor. 4. 17. and we must expect that the Liquor (tho' never so rich and generous) will have a Tincture of the Vehicle it comes from. Waters taste of the Minerals thro' which they run: and it can't be otherwise. Wherefore when you discern any Infirmities and Defects, be not Censorious and Critical. Study not to find fault with your Pastor, for this one Reason that I shall give you, namely, lest thereby you should entertain a Prejudice against his Preaching, against the Wholesome Doctrines which he delivers to you from the Pulpit.

II. The next Direction is, Divest your selves of Worldly Cares before you come to hear. The World is very Noisy and Clamorous, and will

will not suffer us to give Ear to any Voice but its own. Which shews how necessary it is that you check your inordinate Desires and love of the World, if you really intend to listen to the Word of the most High. You read in the Parable of the *Sower* that the third Ground there spoken of by our Saviour is the Wordly minded Hearer. *The Cares of the World* are the *Thorns* that *choak the Seed of the Word*, Mat. 13. 22. And they are fitly resembled to *Thorns*, because they pierce and wound the Soul, they do it a great deal of Mischief by alienating the Mind from God and Goodness, by diverting it from its Great and Necessary Employment, by darkening and even extinguishing the Candle of the Lord, by shadowing and overtopping those Principles in the Soul which should rule and sway it, and have the entire Ascendant over it. It can't be imagined that those who are immoderate and excessive in their pursuit of the World, and are continually making Provision for the Flesh to fulfil it in the Lusts thereof, are rightly disposed for hearing that Word which strictly enjoyns us other Thoughts and Cares, and bids us provide for another World, and seek first the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof.

You see then what is your Duty, and what must be done that you may profitably and successfully hear the Word preached. The *Seed* and the *Thorns* can't thrive together in the same Soil. *These* therefore must be plucked up, that *that* may prosper. That you may be fit Auditors when you enter into the House of Wisdom, forget not to abandon your Secular Thoughts

Thoughts and Studies. Leave the Ass at the Foot of the Mountain, when you are designing to ascend in your Contemplations, and to worship the most High in your serious Attendance on his Word.

And here, under this Head, I will take notice of the Common Behaviour of those who are invited to celebrate the *Funerals* of their Friends. When they are met together in the House of Mourning, they talk of any Wordly Matters as freely as at any other time. Yea, how often have I seen Men at such a time Light and Vain, and indulging Mirth and Laughter and shewing no Concernedness at all for the Occasion? And thereby they wholly unfit themselves for the peculiar Service and Worship which by the Church is appointed for that Season, and for the Preachers Solemn Discourse which is usual in Cities and great Towns at the Burial of Relations, Friends, or Neighbours. Can they who are so Merry at Funerals, take notice, as they ought, of the present Dispensation and Providence, and make such a due and suitable Improvement of it as is most serviceable to their Spiritual Good and Welfare? Do they come rightly disposed to make seasonable Reflections on the frail Condition of Humane Nature, and on their own liableness in particular to Death and Dissolution? Are they now capable of considering of their Mortal State, and of making the best use of the Mournful Occasion? Let me ask them, what are these Spectacles of Mortality exposed thus in Publick for, unless we can gain some Ghostly Advantage by them?



them? Why do they attend the Corps, why do they wait on the Heise of the Deceased, unless ( besides the Respect they shew them ) they can mend their own Lives by it ? ( for it is certain they can do the dead no Good ) Why do they solemnly appear hear, if they are not resolved to go Home and fit themselves for their Latter End, and by this Spectacle of Humane Frailty to prepare themselves for Death and Judgment? To what purpose do they joyn with the Publick Devotions, and listen to a Funeral Discourse, if they do not intend and endeavour to be made better thereby? And do they think they prepare themselves for such a Sermon by their Indecent Behaviour before hand? Are they fit to receive due Impressions from that Solemn Advice from the Pulpit, immediately after their Thoughts and Words have been so vain and idle? Certainly if they cannot Refrain at such a time, it is too palpable a Sign that they are immersed in the World, and that their Minds are set upon it. And this, I assure you, is no good Preparative for hearing the Word of God.

III. The next thing required of you is that you come with Expectations and Desires of receiving Benefit by your Hearing. I remember it is one of the Notes whereby *Plato* judges a Person to be Capable of Knowledge, and to be a profitable Hearer and Learner, that he is \* *one that loves to hear.* Undoubtedly this is the ne-

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\* φιλόκοσ.

cessary Qualification of the Person I'm speaking of, he must be (as the Apostle St. *James* saith) \* *swift to hear*, very desirous and willing to inform himself by attending to the Ministration of the Word, by resorting to those Places where the Holy Scriptures are open'd and applied. These are the true Schools of Learning, these are the great Marts of Knowledge. Here you may be acquainted with the Evangelical Truths and Doctrines, here you may have an insight into the Mysteries of the Christian Religion. Here the God of Truth hath promised his Gracious Presence and Assistance: Here the Embassadors of Truth deliver the Will of God, and discharge their Divine Message with Faithfulness and Integrity. Here the Spirit of Truth is ready to influence upon you in the Dispensation of the Word. You must be really perswaded of this: and you must look upon Hearing as no *Indifferent* thing, but as *Necessary* in order to the building you up in your most Holy Faith. It is God's Ordinance and Institution: and a particular Order and Rank of Persons is set apart on purpose for it, in Conjunction with other Exercises of the Function.

But may we not stay at Home, and edify as well by reading the Bible, or by reading a Sermon, as by Hearing one? I answer, I doubt not but God hath blessed *Reading* for the enlightning Mens Minds, as we see in that In-

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\* Jam. 1. 19.

stance of the *Eunuch*, who read the *Prophet Esaias*, Acts 8. 30. And *St. Augustine's* Conversion had its beginning from *Reading*. But we nowhere find that any Persons Conversion was throughly wrought and effected by this means. The *Eunuch's* reading that place in the Evangelical Prophet had been to little purpose, if *Philip* had not opened his Mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him *Jesus*, v. 35. So *Augustine's* Conversion, tho' it commenced with reading, yet it was carried on and finished by other ways which we read of in his Life, and *St. Ambrose's* Preaching contributed much towards it.

And truly if we be perswaded of what I just now said, that hearing is of Divine Institution, and is an Appointment of the Gospel, we must needs be convinced that the Reading of the Scriptures, or of the best Sermons that are extant, will not excuse us from hearing the *Word Preached*. This is the usual Standing Method, this is the Ordinary and Settled Means for obtaining Divine Knowledge. Therefore it is the Observation of an \* Eminent Writer, that we have Examples of Holy Men in the History of the Old and New Testament whom God punished with *Blindness*, as *Abijah* the Prophet, or with *Dumbness*, as *Zachary* the Father of *John Baptist*: but we have no Example in Scripture of Pious Men who were struck *Deaf*, and were bereaved of that Sense whereby God's Word is received and convey'd to us. *Hearing* is that Sacred Ordinance which is appointed by God to

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\* P. Molinæus de cognitione Dei.

convey saving Truth to our Minds. *A Man learns and is improved from the Mouth of the Scribes (the Teachers) not from the Mouth of Books, say the Jewish Matters, and they express it very elegantly in their \* own Language, which I have set down in the Margin for the use of those Readers that are Learned. Their meaning is that Reading should be rather neglected than Hearing, this latter being so signally useful and necessary. If the Jewish People were to seek the Law at the Priests Mouth (as we are told in Mal. 2. 7. tho' they were bound to read the Law also) then certainly we are to seek the Evangelical Law, that is, the Truths of the Gospel not only in the reading of God's Word, but at the Mouth of the Gospel Ministers.*

Wherefore in order to your being edified by *Hearing*, it is necessary that you be perswaded of the great Usefulness and Advantage of this Christian Duty. For I look upon this as one main cause of the ill Success of mens hearing the Word preached that they are not fully perswaded of the *Benefit* which they shall reap by it. Wherefore, besides what hath been said already, let me request you to consider how unworthy it would be of our Great Master, Christ Jesus, to institute this Ordinance of Hearing, if there were no Vertue went along with it, if it were attended with no considerable Advantage, if there were not a Blessing to be looked and hoped for, and if this were not really bestowed on those that religiously wait

on the Preaching of the Word. You can't imagine that the Wise and Gracious Founder of our Religion would require the performance of this task, if it were not to excellent Ends and Purposes, if it were not accompanied with very desirable Effects.

Therefore let this be deeply rivited into your Minds that the Practise of this Duty will be blessed with Success, if it be not your own fault, for the Divine Author of Christianity hath not enjoyed this in vain and to no purpose, but design'd it for our greatest Good and Welfare. You must then be convinced of this, or else your appearing in the Publick Assemblies will be wholly useles and insignificant. I do not wonder that there are so many Hearers and so few Practisers, that there is so little of the Power of Godliness to be seen in Mens lives, that there are so mean Effects of the Preaching of the Gospel, I wonder not at it, I say, when I consider and plainly see that very few of those who are our Auditors come with Desires and Hopes of a Blessing from this Ordinance. I beseech you correct your selves as to this, and for the future approach to this Exercise with strong Expectations of receiving Advantage to your Souls: assure your selves that the Ministry was intended and appointed for the promoting of your Happiness. If you come thus prepared, your Hearing will be successful; and if *we* preach unto you with this firm perswasion, we shall be excited to discharge *our* part with faithfulness: and so both *your* undertaking and *ours* will be Prosperous.

IV. Another thing which must not be omitted is the preparing our selves by *Prayer*. And first, we are obliged to pray for him that is to dispense the Word to us. St. Paul in his Epistles is frequently begging the Prayers of those who were his Hearers and Flock. *Pray for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mystery of the Gospel*, Eph. 6. 19. And almost in the same Words he requests the *Colossians* to supplicate the Divine Assistance in his behalf *Col. 4. 3, 4.* So to the *Thessalonians* his request is, *Brethren, pray for us*, 1 Thes. 5. 25. and more particularly in *Epist. 2.* last Chapter and first Verse, *Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, that it may prosper wheresoever it is preached.*

Whence we may gather that it is the Peoples Duty to pray for their Pastor, that his Ministry may be successful, that God would direct and assist him in his Labours and Endeavours for the Good of Mens Souls; that he may feel the efficacy of Divine Grace on his own Heart, whereby he may the more Experimentally promote it in others; that he may divide the Word of God aright, and distribute to every one their proper Portion; that he may speak plainly and distinctly to their particular Cases; that without Fear or Flattery he may address himself to every Man's Condition; and in a Word, that he may deliver the whole Council of God. This hath been the Practice of the faithful towards their Teachers, and I request you to imitate it: remembering that *neither is he that planteth any thing,*

thing, nor he that watereth, but God that gives the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 7. and the excellency of this Power, which belongeth to the Ministry, is of God, and not of Man, 2 Cor. 4. 7. Here then is your task; before you enter the solemn Assemblies, repair unto the Throne of Grace, and pray for the Preacher, that God would vouchsafe to be with him and assist him, and pardon his defects, and bless his Endeavours, and crown them with success. This is the proper Means to be used in order to make the Preaching of the Word profitable: but I fear it is much neglected by our Hearers at this Day, and that is the Reason why I endeavour to revive it.

And as you ought to pray for the *Dispenser of the Word*, so you must put up your Petitions for *your selves*; tho' this latter hath partly been included in the former. You must, at your approaching to the Sacred Oracles of the Pulpit, most ardently beseech God to open your Eyes, that you may see the Excellencies of Religion. You must beg an hearing Ear, a discerning Mind, and an unprejudiced Understanding. You must pray that *the Lord would open your Hearts* as he did that of *Lydia*, that you may attend unto the things that are spoken, and that you may receive and imbrace them. It is a great and prevailing Fault that Men come to Hear, but do not, before that, employ the Divine Blessing. I question whether there be one in a Hundred that retires into his Closet, and performs this necessary Office. And I think *WE* are faulty in neglecting to remind our Auditors of it. The true Reason of which is, be-  
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cause some of us have but mean Thoughts of *Preaching*, and consequently of *Hearing*, and there are those among us that have such an extraordinary Value for the Publick Liturgy, that they are willing it should exclude *Preaching*. Whereas, *Praying* and *Preaching* ought to go together: thus the *Lord's Prayer* was taught in a *Sermon*. But some of our Churchmen look upon this latter as a thing by the bye only, something that is tackt to the Prayers, but they had rather be without it.

Among our Dissenting Brethren there is a different Apprehension of this Matter, and therefore a different Practise, for they are perswaded that *Preaching* is the great Instrument of Conversion, and therefore they are earnest with God for a blessing on the Word that is to be preached to them. I call upon you to learn of them, and to correct that Fault which is so common among you. And this you must do, as ever you hope to receive any Advantage by the Ministry of the Word. You must know that *it is the Lord only that can give you a Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear*, Deut. 29. 4. you must consider that *it is he that opens the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instruction*, Job 33. 16. It is a Supernatural Work, and therefore it must be sought by Prayer.

V. Come with Sincere Hearts and Upright Designs. This is a very necessary Direction, for many Hearers receive no good by the Publick Ministry of the Gospel, because they fail as to this one thing. Some are childish and touchy in the Ends which they propound to them-



themselves in hearing: the Spring of this Religious Exercise is mere Fashion and Formality. Others listen to the Preacher, only that they may improve their Notions, and thereby be more able to make a Profession of Religion, and to talk and dispute about it. A third sort come to have their Ears tickled, and their Fancies pleased. And a fourth (which is the worst of all) come to suck Poison out of the sweetest Flowers, to pervert the Minister's meaning, and to take every thing he saith by the wrong handle. All this is comprehended under the *Second Ground* in the *Parable* of the *Sower*, which represents to us the Hearers that *have no root*, Luke 8. 13. no sincerity, no bottom, no soundness: and therefore it can't be expected that these should profit by what they hear. Places that are *Hollow* turn back the Voice and the Words which are spoken to the Speaker again. Mens Hearts that resemble them in the like Quality, hear not God's Word, but return it to him void.

Be not of the number of these false and hollow-hearted Hearers, but come to hear out of a Principle of Sincerity and Integrity. Bring with you *an honest and good heart* (as 'tis called in the foresaid Parable, *Luke 8. 15.*) a heart sincerely desirous to be acquainted with the Will of God in order to obeying it. Come to have your Sins called to remembrance, especially those which you know you have been most addicted to, and which you have had the greatest Kindness for, and which you hug'd and embraced with the greatest earnestness and Passion. Come to have your guilt and danger

discovered to you, and to be made very apprehensive of both. Come to the light (so the Word is called) that your Deeds may be made manifest. Come to know the worst of your selves and of your Condition, and to have your Consciences enlightned and purged. Come with Intentions of abandoning your Sins, of *laying a-part all filthiness and Superfluity of Naughtiness, that so you may receive that Word which is able to save your Souls*, Jam. 1. 21. The Apostle makes one to be a necessary Preparatory to the other. To be brief, Come with firm purposes of Living according to the Discoveries that shall be made to you; come with full resolves of Practising what you hear.

Before I proceed any further, let us reflect upon what hath been said. It is evident that *Preparation* is requisite to *Hearing*, as it is indeed to all other Exercises of Religion. The *Jews* were enjoyn'd by God himself to Sanctify and Purify themselves before they received the Law, *Exod. 19*. The *Pagans* had a sense of this, for before Praying or Sacrificing they constantly \* washed their Hands and Feet. Much more are we taught by the *Christian* Laws to fit and prepare our selves for every Solemn Act of Religion, and particularly that of hearing God's Word, as I have shew'd in the foregoing Particulars. If every one of these Qualifications be not *actually* exerted every time we are to hear, yet we must be sure to bring our selves to

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\* Nunc lavabo, ut rem divinam faciam. Plaut.

such a Religious Frame that we may be always *Habitually* qualified for this Duty. This is absolutely required of us, and we can't otherwise expect that the Hearing of the Word should be the happy Instrument of our Conversion and Salvation. Thus much for the *Preparatory* part in order to Hearing.

I am in the next place to shew you how you are to behave your selves *in the time of hearing*. To which purpose I offer these following Directions,

I. Hear with Reverence, and a Pious Awe and Dread. Which will be effected by considering first *the Speaker*, and secondly, *what is spoken*. First, To create an Awe and Reverence in your Minds, whilst you are Hearing, think of this that GOD himself speaks to you. This is little thought of by the generality of Hearers, and yet is a very great and important Truth: wherefore I will confirm and establish it. It is most evident from sundry Passages in Scripture, that what God's Ministers and Messengers speak or act, according to the Tenour of their Office, and by vertue of it, is to be esteemed as spoken or done by God himself. The ordinary Preface to the Sermons of the Prophets is, *Thus saith the Lord*. We find that what Christ's Officers did in his Name and by his Authority, is reckon'd as done by him. Thus it is said, *Jesus baptized*, John 3. 22, 26. *and yet Jesus himself baptized not*, Chap. 4. v. 2. which cannot be reconciled but by saying that what Christ's Ministers and Deputies did, he is said to do. *Christ came, and preached Peace to them that*

were afar off, Eph. 2. 17. that is, he preached to them by his Apostles and Ministers. *He went and preached unto the Spirits in Prison*, 1 Pet. 3. 19. that is, by his Spirit communicated to his Apostles he preached the Gospel to the unbelieving *Gentiles*, who were as 'twere Imprisoned, and bound with the Chain of their Sins, and therein were like to the Sinners *in the days of Noah*, as it is said, v. 20. What Christ doth by his Apostles, he is truly said to do himself. The preaching of the Ministers of Jesus is the preaching of Jesus himself.

This is further evident from these remarkable Words of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 20. *We are Embassadors for Christ, as tho' God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* Observe it, God the Father and Christ Jesus his Son condescend to pray and beseech you, as often as the *Preacher* doth so, for he is an *Embassador* sent from them to you. This is built on that known Maxim, That what is publickly delivered and acted by an Embassador from any Prince, is as if it were said and done by the Prince himself from whom he comes. All Ministers therefore of the Gospel, rightly set apart for that Work, being God's *Embassadors*, and having their Commission and Instructions from him, what they deliver is to be looked upon as what God himself delivers. *I have received of the Lord that which I deliver unto you*, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11. 23. referring to the primitive Institution of the Sacrament. And the very same Words become the Mouths of all the Ministers of Christ, for they come not in their own Names, but in the Name of  
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their Master, and *deliver* nothing but what they *received* from him.

It being thus, I think I have proved what I designed, that is, that the Dispensers of the Gospel are to be listned to with great *Reverence*. A King is dishonoured and affronted when his *Embassadors* are slighted: and so when the Ministers of God's Word are disregarded, an Affront and Injury is done to God himself. When the Israelites *murmured against Moses and Aaron*, Exod. 16. 2. it is said that those *Murmurings were against the Lord*, v. 7, 8. to confirm us in this Truth, that to murmur against the Ministers and Messengers of the Almighty, is in effect to murmur against God himself. Which perhaps was the Foundation of that Saying of the *Rabbies*, that *he who disagrees with his Teacher and Pastor is as he that Disagrees with the Holy Spirit*. Our lawful Guides and Spiritual Instructors represent and personate God himself, and therefore the disrespect shew'd to them redounds to the Divine Majesty. *He that beareth you, beareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me*, Luke 10. 16. And this latter Clause is supposed, tho' not particularly expressed in those other Sayings of our Lord, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*, Mat. 10. 40. *He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me*, John 13. 20. And it is expressly and fully delivered in *1 Thes* 4. 8. where after the Apostle had said, *ye know what Commandments we gave you*, v. 2. it is added, *He therefore that despiseth* (namely, my Apostolical Commands) *despiseth not Man, but God, who hath sent me, and whose Messige I deliver*. Thus I have

abundantly proved that we ought reverently to hear the godly Instructions which are given us from the Pulpit, because God himself speaks to us from thence, and the despising of the Preacher is interpreted to be a despising of God; for the Word preached, as it ought to be, is the Word of God.

This is opposed by those Enthusiastick Spirits who boast of *Light within them*, which they tell us is the True and Proper *Word of God*: but Preaching cannot lay claim to that Title, it being only a Humane Invention. Because this is insisted upon in the Writings of some of that Party, I crave leave to enlarge here a little, and shew how groundless an Assertion is maintained by these Men. It is true, I grant that some Mens Sermons are far from being the *Word of God*, and if they particularly mean what they say of their own Preaching, I will not contend with them. But if they speak in General, and mean that no Preaching is to be stiled *Gods Word*, I think I can easily confute them. For I can prove that Preaching, if it be according to the Holy Scripture, and be the Declaration of the Will of God, and faithfully sets forth the Divine Pleasure to Mankind (and if it doth not this, I shall never call it the *Word of God*) I say, if Preaching be according to this Description, it may deservedly be called the *Word of God*.

To make this clear, I must desire you to observe how the *Word of God* is understood and taken in the Bible, which is the Original Word of God. Sometimes by these Terms are meant Divine Revelations, Visions and Oracles: thus

in 1 Sam. 3. 1. 'tis said, *The Word of the Lord was precious in those days* : and the next words explain it, *There was no open Vision*. And these visible and open Discoveries are frequently called the *Word of God* in other places of the Old Testament. Again, the Law of God, which contains in it *Instructions, Precepts, Threatnings and Promises*, is often stiled *the Word of God*, and more particularly by *David* in his *Psalms*. Likewise, the Cause of God and of Religion is sometimes expressed by this Name, as in *Rev. 1. 9.* 'tis said that *St. John was in the Isle of Patmos for the Word of God* : and so in *Rev. 6. 9.* we read of *the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God*, i. e. the Cause of God and of his Gospel.

Moreover, the Command, Order and Appointment of the most High, are called *the Word of God*, as in *Heb. 11. 3.* *The words were framed by the word of God*, and in *2 Pet. 3. 5.* *By the word of God the Heavens were of old*, i. e. they were created by the Command and appointment of God. We may observe also that the Grace of God is stiled the *Word of God*, as in *Heb. 6. 5.* *those who have tasted the good Word of God*, that is, those who had some sense and feeling of the Divine Grace, which is explained by what is said in the same place, *they tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost*.

Lastly, To come close to the Business which is before us, the *Preaching of the Gospel* is very usually called the *Word of God* : as in *Acts 6. 2.* *It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve Tables*, that is, it is not reason-  
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able and fitting, that we should at this time neglect Preaching, to take care of the Poor. So in *Acts* 13. 44. we read that *There came almost the whole City together to hear the Word of God, to hear the Word preached. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,* saith the Apostle in *Rom.* 10. 17. but we know what he had said before, *v.* 14. *How can they hear without a Preacher?* whence it is plain that the *Word of God* is the Word preached. And the Apostle takes notice of it, with *thanks to God,* that when the *Thessalonians received the Word of God which they heard of him, they received it not as the Word of Men, but, as it is in Truth, the Word of God.* 1 *Thef.* 2. 13. And what can be clearer than what we meet with in *Heb.* 13. 7. *Remember them which had the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God,* that is, who faithfully preached the Gospel to you. I will mention only one Text more, and it is that in 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. *Being born again not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.* And this he repeats in the next Verse but one, *The word of the Lord endureth for ever:* and then he adds, *This is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.* This Word, which is so lively and so lasting, is the Word Preached, and effectually applied to the Consciences of Men.

From the whole then it appears that Faithful Preaching is the *Word of God*, that the Minister's Voice is the Voice of God, and what is delivered by the one is supposed to be spoken by the latter: for he sends him on purpose to deliver



liver his Mind and Will to the People. Wherefore *Luther* was in the right when he said, \* “ The Minister who discharges his Duty aright, and with a good Conscience may justly boast and say, Here I stand and preach, call’d thereunto of God, who hath ordained and sent me. In like manner the Hearers of such a one may surely believe, and say, Here I sit, and I hear not a Humane Creature speak, but God himself. There are some Preachers that have not a Sense of this, they are of Mr. *Thorndike’s* Mind that † *Preaching is not Gods Word, nor the Means of Salvation.* Wherein he perfectly agrees with those *Enthusiasts*, whom at other times he so much inveighs against. There are also but few Hearers that are sensible of this, and therefore it is no wonder that there is so little advantage gained by all their Hearing. They consider not how great a Person the *Preacher* is, even the Deputy and Representative of the most High; and thence they fail in those Qualifications of Hearing which I have been recommending.

And truly our Clergy themselves are in fault here: many of them do not know or consider their own Worth and Dignity. Tho’ they are God’s Messengers to the People, and appear in his stead, yet they seldom make use of this as a Motive to conciliate *Reverence* to the Word which they preach. It is true, they value them-

\* Colloq. Mensal. Chap. 41.

† Epilog. B. 3. Ch. 24.

selves upon being *Priests*, but that Word in its proper Denotation signifies no other than *Presbyters*, for I hope they do not reckon themselves as *Sacrificing Priests*, which hath been another acceptation of that Word. And they magnify their Office because they are *Intercessors* for the People, but that is short of their being *Preachers*, for as *such* they personate the Almighty God, and speak in his Name. When they Intercede for the People, they speak *to God* in their behalf: but when they Preach, they speak *from God* to them, and are his Mouth. This is a High Prerogative, and yet 'tis observable they insist not on it, and very rarely claim it. Thus we debase and degrade our selves, and take little notice of the chief Honour that is due to us. So generally the Pople's esteem of their Preacher is upon a wrong Foot: they applaud him for telling his Story well, as they Phrase it; they value him as an Orator or Declamer: But they should look upon him as a Messenger of God, as an Envoy from Heaven. And thus, Modestly speaking, the *Preachers* Office is the Highest and Noblest: the Title and the Employment are the most Honourable, for to be God's Embassadors, and to come and speak in his Name, must be confess'd to be such.

This is it that procures such a Respect to the Dissenting Ministers from their Flock; who are fully perswaded that their Pastors are in the place of God to them, and that they are to receive what *they* say to them, as spoken by *Him*. This makes them attend with the utmost Reverence to their Preaching, and this pushes them  
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on to maintain and reward them, tho' they have no ties of Law upon them to do it. It is *for their Works sake*, and on the account of *Him* who speaks by them, that they listen with such religious awe to their Discourses from the Pulpit. I would have *our* Auditors imitate them in this, as they are desirous to profit by what they hear. But I have perhaps been too copious on this Subject. I will make amends by contracting my self in the next Particular.

*Secondly*, You will acknowledge it most reasonable to hear the Word with *Reverence*, if you consider not only the *Speaker*, but *what is spoken*. The admirable and sublime Nature of the *Matter* which the Preacher of the Gospel handles, calls for an Awful and Reverential Ear. Here is nothing Common and Vulgar treated of: every thing is great and worthy and momentous: all is Divine and Heavenly. In the preaching of the Gospel there is a lively Representation of Christ Jesus and his Transcendent Excellencies: here is display'd the Mystery of our Redemption by his Death and Merits: here is set forth the whole Method of Man's Salvation. Here are laid open the Rolls of the Eternal Decrees, and the Secrets of the Divine Will and Counsel. Here the seeming Powers of Nature are depressed, and the All-sufficiency of Divine Grace is magnified. Here is divulged the Placart of Divine Truths: Here the Laws and Rules of Evangelical Holiness, which Christ and his Apostles have left us for the Conduct of our Lives now, and for bringing us to endless Happiness hereafter, are fully de-

delivered. Here not only the Duties and Offices of the Christian Religion, but the Privileges and Immunities that attend it are particularly discovered. Here are set open the Gates of Heaven to all the faithful, and the endless Torments of Hell are set before the Wicked. These and innumerable other Doctrines of the highest Nature are the Contents of the Evangelical Preaching: and I appeal to you whether it becomes you to entertain any of these with the least *Irreverence*.

And I will further add this, that you shall hereafter be *Judged* by this Word which is now preached to you. *The Word that I have spoken, saith our Saviour, the same shall judge him* (him that heareth it, but *rejecteth* it, as we read in the same Verse) *in the last day*, John 12. 48. And it is as true that the Word which is delivered by the faithful Dispensers of the Gospel in all Ages, shall judge those that heard it. This Consideration may excite in you an Awful Reverence to the Good Word of God, and the Sacred Ministry of it in the Church of Christ. That Word which now Instructs, Admonishes, and reproveth you, shall one day judge you. Think of this when you are Hearing, and you will certainly take heed *how* you hear; and particularly you will conclude it reasonable to do it with a Reverential Fear and Dread.

II. Hear with Diligence and Attention, with serious Study and Application of Mind. Thus *St. Philip's Auditors at Samaria gave heed unto those*

*those things which he spake*, Acts 8. 16. And the same Expression (tho' not observed in our *English Translation*) is used concerning *Lydia*, Acts 16. 14. *She attended to the Things that were spoken by Paul*. And this diligent Attending or taking heed is thus set forth by our Saviour, *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*, Mat. 11. 15. Which is a Sentence that he closes many of his Discourses and Excellent Sermons with, to acquaint us that our Ears can't be better employ'd than in hearing the words of Wisdom. But there is something more contained in those Words, for they refer to the Attention of the Mind, as well as of the Ear: as if our Saviour had said, Let him whose Understanding is enlightned, mark and observe with great care and industry what I say to him. So in the Conclusion of the Epistles to the *Asian Churches* there is added this Admonition, to hearken diligently to the things said, *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*, Rev. 2. 7. The frequent repetition and inculcating of which, and of the former Admonition shews how inclinable Men are to be dull and negligent in their Hearing, and in their attending to Divine and Spiritual Matters, and particularly in their attending to the Instructions of the Preachers of the Gospel.

Now, it may be observed that this Attention is hindred *these three ways*: in some by *Wandering and Roving Thoughts*: in others by a *Wandering Eye*: and in a third sort by *Sleep and Drowsiness*. First, I say, Attention to the Preaching of the Word is hindred by giving leave to our Thoughts to wander and stray.

Which

Which is a Fault that God by the Prophet *Isaiah* complained of in the Jewish Worshippers; *they removed their Heart from him*, *Isai. 29. 13.* But more fully this is represented in *Ezek. 33. 30, 31.* *Every one to his Brother saith, Come, I pray you, and bear what is the Word that cometh forth from the Lord. And they come unto thee as the People cometh, and they sit before me as my People, and they bear thy Words, — but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.* Tho' they are such demure and formal Hearers of the Word, and make a shew of being very Attentive, yet they receive no good by it, because all the time they are hearing, the Thoughts of their Hearts are employed about their Wordly Business. And this is the common Fault of many Hearers at this very day, their Minds are set upon their Secular Affairs, either Profits or Pleasures; and they may be said to be in their Shops, or in their Counting-houses, in the Tavern or in the Theater, whilst they are in their Pews at Church.

It is no wonder then that Preaching hath so little effect upon such Persons. The Minister hath only their Bodies, not their Minds and Thoughts: and how then can it be expected that he should do any Good upon them? Wherefore I beseech you take care to bring your Souls as well as your outward Man with you, employ your Thoughts about what you hear, and not about your Wordly Gain or bodily Delights. Cast out of the Temple all Buyers and Sellers. Think not of your Secular Matters at Church. Mix not Earth and Heaven, the World and God's Word together. And in  
 brief,

brief, let not your Thoughts and Imaginations be terminated on any thing that is impertinent, and foreign to the Work that you are about.

*Secondly*, This Attention which I am speaking of, is hindred by a Wandring and Gazing Eye. This is no uncommon thing in our Congregations, and proves very hurtful to many Hearers. For the Attention is taken off and rebated not only by something within ( the vain and rambling Thoughts before mentioned ) but by Objects without. Too many of our Auditors indulge themselves in this Folly, and thereby mar the whole end and design of Preaching : and instead of receiving Advantage by coming into the Publick Assemblies, they do themselves much Harm. Wherefore look not about, to feed your Eyes. Remember that your Ear is the Sense that is now to be employed. Therefore heedfully attend to what is said by the Man of God. Be not diverted by any thing that is to be seen in the place of Hearing. Let no Spectacle hinder and interrupt your serious and devout Attention.

*Thirdly*, This is not only hindred, but wholly obstructed by *Sleep and Drowsiness*. There are some that are very lively and active out of the Church, but they suddenly change their Nature when they come into it, or when they have been there some time. As if some Narcotick Quality were infused into them upon naming the Text, they presently grow heavy and drowsy, and prepare themselves for Sleep, and bid the Preacher good Night. This looks as if

it had a relish of the Old Usage of some *Pagans*, who were wont to come into their *Temples* to Lodge there, and accordingly those places were furnished with Beds and Couches for that purpose; for they were persuaded that it was very Healthful to Sleep and Dream in the Temples of their Gods. We have some among us that seem to have as good an Opinion of their taking a Nap at *Church*: and that time which they should spend in hearing, they throw away in Sleeping.

This miscarriage is particularly taken notice of in a Young Man whose Name was *Eutychus*, *Acts* 20. 9. who as he sat to hear *St. Paul* preach, grew careless and neglectful of his Doctrine, and fell into a deep Sleep. There seems to be some Excuse for his being thus overtaken, because *St. Paul continued his Speech until Midnight*; but our Auditors are not troubled with Sermons of that length, and yet they sleep away a great part of them. I advise them to remember *Eutychus's* Fall, which proved fatal to him, and had continued so if *St. Paul* had not restored him to Life. If they by wilful Sloth and Drowsiness hinder their Attention to the Sermons which are preached to them, they may justly fear that their fall will be Lower, and much more Dangerous. For certainly such an Affront done to the Ministers of the Gospel itself, will be avenged by Heaven. When you come to hear, you hear for your Lives: the Salvation of your Souls is at stake: how unpardonable is it then to be Negligent and Careless? Did you ever see a Prisoner sleep at the Bar? It is as unaccountable to sleep at a Sermon,



mon, for I have said before that the Word is our Judge.

We are told that *Nero* took it very ill of *Vespasian* that he slept while he, (the Emperor) was playing on his Instrument. It should be esteemed by Wise Men a much greater Affront to a faithful Preacher that his Auditors (if I may now call them *Auditors*) are drowsy whilst he is about a Work of no lesser Importance than the Salvation of their Souls, whilst he is fitting them by his Heavenly Musick for the Hallelujahs of the Blessed. And yet this is too frequent among us: the Church is the place some choose for Sleep, especially after the Prayers are concluded. For we may observe that generally our Sleepers at Sermons are those that pretend to a great Regard to the Devotions of the Church: and if they hold their Eyes open in the Prayer-time, they think they may be allow'd to shut them when the Sermon comes on.

Besides, A Nap or two at Sermon is not inconvenient to shew the difference between Common Prayer and Preaching. If they did not made this Distinction between these two, some would be apt to idolize the latter as much as these do the former. Accordingly, to keep up the Distinction, these Men set themselves to sleep as soon as the Pulpit-work begins: and thereby they render the Time useless and unprofitable to themselves, and sometimes uneasy to others.

I cannot but take notice of this disorder in our Churches, and call upon the Offenders to prevent it for the future, by a resolute set-

ting themselves against it, and by a serious weighing the Sinfulness of it. And it may be useful towards the preventing it to be more Moderate in eating and drinking on a Hearing day, than on another. Or, if they cannot otherwise conquer their Drowsiness, they may take a short Nap before they come to Church. And when they are there, they may rouse themselves by changing their Posture of Sitting into that of Standing: for this may be serviceable to promote Attention, and therefore we \* read that in the Antient Churches both Postures were used at Sermons. And I will add this, We of the Ministry should so *concernedly* and *affectionately* deliver the Word of God, that none that hear us may be tempted to indulge their drowsy Genius. Oftentimes it is a Sleepy and Heavy Preacher that makes the Hearer such. Therefore let us take care to do our part, in order to keep our Auditors wakeful and vigilant. Whilst we blame their sleeping at Sermons, let us not contribute towards it.

And now, having shew'd what are the usual Impediments of that *Attention* which is required of all Hearers, I will mention some Considerations and Motives, which will be proper to be made use of, to conciliate the Attention. And the main thing to be thought of and well weigh'd is this, namely, the Necessity and Excellency of those things which you are required to hear. They most nearly concern your Im-

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\* Augustin. de Catechizat. rud. cap. 23.

mortal Souls, they belong to your Everlasting Welfare. Yea the Eternal Felicity both of your Bodies and Souls depends upon your being acquainted with these things: which sufficiently demonstrates the absolute Necessity of your Attending to them. These are the Matters that are worthy of being instilled into your Ears, and therefore I hope you will freely admit of them: tho' it is too evident that some Auditors are too like those of *Demosthenes*, who flugg'd and grew dull when that Orator was discoursing on a Serious Point, but prickt up their Ears when they heard him talk of the Shadow of an Ass.

There is a farther Argument to enforce this *Attention*, and that is the Consideration of the Presence of the Glorious Angels in the Assemblies of the Faithful. The *Jewish* Writers tell us that not only a Good but an Evil Angel stands before their *Synagogues*, observing who hear (as well as who pray) most diligently. But when we find in *a more sure Word* that Persons are exhorted to a comely Behaviour in the Congregations *because of the Angels*, 1 Cor. 11. 10. we are more ascertain'd of this Truth that the Angelical Messengers are present in the Solemn Meetings of the Religious, and there take notice how they demean themselves, and particularly *how they Hear*.

But then, if we consider that GOD himself is the Omniscient Spectator and observer of every thing we do, we have yet a more forcible Inducement to the Performance of this Duty of Solemn Attention, which I am treating of. If he takes notice of our Demeanour in the Publick

Worshipping of him, we are obliged to be very careful how we carry our selves. The very Heathens had a Sense of this, and accordingly at their Sacrifices and other solemn Acts of Worship they were roused with a *Hoc age*, that is, Heedfully Mind what you are about. God, who appoints our Worship, observes how we celebrate it: and particularly he commanding us to hear his Word, takes notice whether we be *Careless* or *Attentive* Hearers.

And this I will superadd in the last place, that we are to attend to the Messige of God's Embassadors with all care, sedulity and seriousness, because we know not how soon we may be deprived of such Opportunities as these. If they be not taken away from us by a sudden Invasion of Popish Tyranny, from the Fears of which we are not altogether free, we may be taken from them by Sicknes or Death. The Thoughts of this ought to rouse us, and to make us throw away our Opiates, and effectually to raise our Attention to the Pious Instructions and Exhortations of our Teachers.

III. Hear with Understanding and Judgment. For we are told that *the Ear trieth Words as the Mouth tasteth Meat*, Job 34. 3. And therefore this Organ of Sense hath been stiled by some of the Antients *the Mouth of the Soul*, whereby she takes in that Rational Nourishment which is peculiar and proper to her. And as a Man must not eat every sort of Meat that is offer'd to him, but discern whether it be fitting Food, so a *Hearer* ought to examine his Spiritual Food. As he must take heed *how he hears,*

bears, so likewise *what he hears*, Mark 4. 24. He must enquire into the Doctrines themselves, and bring them to the Standard; as we read the *Bereans* were wont to do, *they received the Word, and search'd the Scriptures whether those things which were preached by Paul, were so*, that is, whether they were agreeable to the Scriptures, Acts 17. 11. In the Parable of the Sower we find that *he who receiveth Seed into the good Ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it*, Mat. 13. 23. He exercises his Judgment concerning it, and endeavours to apprehend the true Nature of it.

And this (as I have intimated before) is included in those Words in the Second and Third Chapter of the *Revelation*, *He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear*; let him understand and comprehend what I say. This is called *the hearing Ear*, Prov. 20. 12. such an Ear as is enabled by the Spirit of God to hear with understanding and Judgment, to distinguish between true and false Doctrine *to discern things that differ*, Phil. 1. 10.

To which end St. *John's* Advice is seasonable, 1 *Ep. Chap. 4. v. 1. Believe not every Spirit*, every Teacher or Doctrine that pretends to the Spirit, *but try the Spirits whether they are of God*, and have the Signature of Truth upon them. Take not things on trust, but hear and judge, and rightly distinguish. In order to which you must carefully abandon all Prejudice, and dispossess your selves of all Wrong Conceptions and False Notions that you have heretofore entertained. You must take care that you be not ruffled with Passion, or disorder'd

dered with any Vicious Appetites and Inclinations: for these will certainly corrupt your Judgment. To which purpose are those Remarkable Words of our Saviour, *John 8. 43. Why do you not understand my Speech? even because ye cannot bear my Word.* You cannot hear it so as rightly to understand it, and to close with it and embrace it, because you have brought your selves to an Impossibility of doing this by your indulging your Lusts and Wicked Desires, as it follows there, *The Lusts of your Father you will do.* Your inordinate Affections make you incapable of apprehending and receiving the Truths which I deliver to you. A late Writer hath a wild Notion ( and he hath many of that sort ) that we understand with the Faculty of our Wills: but this is too true in the Sense that I am now discoursing of: many of our Auditors understand and judge with their Wills and Affections rather than with their Judgment. Passion usurps the room of the Intellect: and then it can't be expected that Persons should judge aright. We must therefore clear our Minds of Evil Affections and undue Prepossessions, and let the Ballance turn on that side where there is the most Weight. We must freely and impartially receive the Truth, for the Truths sake: and we must make the Holy Scriptures our Rule, our Guide, our Oracle. But of these Particulars I have spoken in the foregoing Discourse of the *Preacher*, and therefore shall not insist on them here. Only, let me request you to put them in Practise: and thus you will be *Understanding and Judicious Hearers.*

IV. Hear the Word with *Faith*. This is one of the chiefest Directions that can be given on this Subject : because, as the Gospel was *written*, so it is *preached*, that we may believe, John 20. 31. and consequently you frustrate the great Design of the preaching of the Gospel, if you be *Unbelieving Hearers*. It is appointed that the Gospel shall be *the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth*, Rom. 1. 16. and therefore Faith is absolutely requisite in order to rendering the Preaching of the Word Effectual to Salvation.

But on the other hand, Unbelief hinders the Efficacy of it. Which the Apostle illustrates by instancing in those Jews of Old who had no Benefit of God's Promise to them of their entering into the Land of *Canaan*, because they made it void by their disbelieving it. *The Word thus preached did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it*, Heb. 4. 2. The Apostle applies it to the Preaching of the Gospel in the times of Christianity, and lets us know that there must be this happy *Mixture and Composition*, or else all our Preaching is in vain.

And truly we see this every day, it is the cursed *Unbelief* of Mens Hearts that hinders the Success of the Word, that causes Men to neglect and despise the Salvation which is offered unto them by the Ministers of the Gospel, and makes them set at nought so great a Blessing, and run away from their Happiness, and make haste to be ruined. It is from their *Unbelief* that they are so sottish as to affect Eternal Mi-  
sery

fery and Slavery, to be enamour'd with Fetters and Chains, even the Chains of Darkneſs and Hell. If the World courts them, they are immediately at its devoir, and proclaim their Willingneſs and Ambition to ſerve it. If it holds up its Gains and Goodly Poſſeſſions, they flie to them with all ſpeed and eagerneſs: if it propoſes its Pleaſures and Delights, they catch at them with a ſtrong Emotion of Joy and Complacency, and they ſeem to be even charmed and bewitched by them. If it blows fair upon them with a gale of Honour and Preferment, they ſet up Sail, and make towards them with all ſpeed imaginable.

But when the Word of God is preached to them, and Spiritual and Heavenly Bleſſings are propounded to them, we have ground to complain in the Prophets Words, *Who hath believed our report?* They will not ſo much as *give Credit* to what we ſay: and thence it is that our Offers are deſpiſed, our Exhortations are ſlighted, and the Everlaſting Happineſs which we make a Tender of, is neglected and reſuſed. This muſt be imputed to their *Inſidelity*. Which the Malicious Tempter knows very well, and therefore (as we read in the Parable of the Sower) *he cometh and taketh away the Word out of Mens Hearts, leſt they ſhould believe*, Luke 8. 12. If he can prevent this, he compaſſes his main Deſign, becauſe without *Faith* there is no profiting by the Word.

We ought therefore to be the more careful to baffle his Deſign: and when we come to hear the Word of the Kingdom, we muſt remember to ſet our *Faith* on work, and to exert all the  
Parts



Parts and Powers of it with the greatest vigour. We must yield a firm Assent to those Evangelical Doctrines which are discovered to us, we must believe them to be founded on the most pregnant Reasons, we must be fully perswaded of the Truth and Certainty of them. We must with an unshaken Confidence and Affiance rest on the Crucified Jesus who is preached to us: for thus *the Gospel comes to us not in word only, but in much assurance*, 1 Thes. 1. 5. And we must be very solicitous to make it evident to our selves and others that our Belief is an Effectual Principle of Obedience and Godly Life. This is true Evangelical Faith, and it must always accompany our Hearing of the Word.

V. Hear with *humble and meek* Minds. For we are assured that these fit us for the Divine Teaching. *The meek will be guide in judgment, and the meek will be teach his way*, Psal. 25. 9. *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word*, Isa. 66. 2. Where the qualification of Hearing which I first mentioned under this Second General Head, namely, *Reverence and Godly Fear*, is expressed by *trembling at God's Word*: and that which I'm now insisting upon, to wit, *Humility*, is stiled here *a Poor and contrite Spirit*; which is a necessary disposition in a Worthy Hearer. And therefore St. James hath left us this as a particular Rule and Direction for Hearing. *Receive with Meekness the ingrafted Word*, Jam. 1. 21. receive it with a Humble . Meek and submissive Mind.

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But the Word *ingrafted* which is used here is a very Remarkable and Choice Expression, and therefore I cannot but take particular notice of it, and the rather because I have not met with any Expositors, that have given the full import of it. *Grafting* is of that which is Planted, and is not *Natural*, but is done by *Art* and *Skill*. The shoot or ciens that is engrafted, is not of the *proper* growth, but is taken from *another* tree. And the practise of the Art of Grafting is to inoculate a *Good* Ciens into a *Bad* stock, which Ciens changes the ill juice of the stock into its own Good Nature. It sweetens the Sap which it receives from the Stock, and makes it Better. In like manner, the *Doctrine of the Gospel* is as it were a *Graff* of a sweet kindly Fruit planted in the stock of our sour and corrupt Nature. For we of our selves are *Evil* and *Barren* and *Unfruitful* Trees, but the *Evangelical Doctrine* being ingrafted into us, changes our Nature, and makes us *Good* and *Fruitful*. And besides, The Word of the Gospel is not *Natural* and *Proper* to us, and thence we are Averse to it, we are backward to receive it. Our Evil Depraved Nature, which is the stock into which the Word is planted, makes us inclinable to reject it, because it agrees not with our corrupt Principles : yea, it is contradictory to our Natural and Carnal Reason. Therefore here is seen the Elegancy and Fitness of the Apostles *Similitude*, and we see the true ground and Reason of this his Exhortation, *Receive with Meekness the ingrafted Word*, because it cannot be otherwise received. Unless we be *Meek* and *Humble*, we cannot submit

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our Reason to the Faith of the Gospel. But if we be thus disposed, we shall be fit Auditors of the Sacred Oracles.

What *Cornelius* said in behalf of himself and his Company, our Christian Hearers should say when they come to hear the Word from the Mouth of God's Embassador, *Now are we all here present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God, Acts 10. 33.* We are here ready to submit to the simplicity of the Gospel, and to entertain whatever is the Will of God. He that comes not to hear with this Humble Spirit will no further like what is delivered than it complies with his shallow Reasoning, or suits his particular Humour, and suits with his private Opinion. He that is not of a Meek and pliant Frame of Mind will never close with the profound Doctrines and Mysteries of the Gospel, from which Men naturally have a great Aversion. Pride and Conceit will not suffer these to be received: Wherefore you must extirpate those, that you may entertain these.

VI. Hear with *Patience* the Sharpest Messages from the Pulpit. Take it not ill if some things arrive at your Ears from thence which please you not. Be not offended if you are represented to your selves in a very Ill State and Posture. The Limner is not to be blamed, tho' his Picture be ill favoured, if his Pattern were so. Be not angry with the Preacher for his giving you a True Account of your selves, tho' it be not so Grateful as you desire. Be not incensed at the bitterness and Severity of his Re-  
proofs,

proofs, but look into your own Lives, and see there the Cause of this Sharpness. We \* read that one *Roman* designed to endite another in open Court for not receiving his Enemy's Weapon, which he had run into his Body, far enough. We may impeach, but with much more reason and justice, the greatest part of our Hearers, for the like fault. They put by the Sword of the Spirit: or if it enter into them, they will by no means suffer it to go far enough, not so far as it may do Execution to purpose, that is, slay and destroy their Sins. Whereas they should rather further those Wounds which the Ministers of the Gospel make; they should permit them to go deep, to search them to the bottom, and to lay open the whole Distemper.

See how Partial Men are! At a *Play-house* you shall have all Degrees and Ranks of Persons Exposed: their Follies are represented and aggravated by the Comedian, and yet they sit patiently, and hear themselves scoffed at and ridiculed, and pay for it too. But this which is tamely endured on the *Stage*, will not be allowed of in the *Pulpit*. If the Preacher strikes at their particular Miscarriages, his Discourse is presently disrelished. The Church is a Priviledged place they think: no Arrests and no Batteries must be there. They hope to be quiet in their Pews: they do not think 'tis Civil to Attack them in those places. They wish rather

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\* Valer. Max. l. 9. c. 11.

to be Wheedled than Scared. They would have the Minister *ſpeak to them ſmooth things*, or hold his Peace.

But if they would conſider how *Dangerous* this is, they would revoke ſuch a Thought and Wiſh as this. I cannot more advantageouſly repreſent this than in that dreadful Commination, *Ezek. 3. 26. I will make thy Tongue cleave to the roof of thy Mouth, that thou ſhalt be dumb, and ſhall not be to them a Reprover, for they are a rebellious Houſe.* It is a great Miſery to Sin, and next to that to want a *Reprover*, and therefore here it is threatned as a Judgment to be without one. *Reproof* is the Souls Surgery, the Souls Phyſick: but thoſe Perſons are in great danger who will not endure the diſtempered Parts to be ſearched and narrowly enquired into, who will not undergo ſome Pain, that they may be ſet Right again (for Sin is the Diſtortion and Diſlocation of the Soul of Man); they will not ſubmit to thoſe Medicines which are bitter and diſtaſtful, tho' they are abſolutely requiſite in order to their Health.

This is the caſe of many Perſons, but let it not be ours: let us ſubmit to the Preſcriptions of our Spiritual Phyſicians, and conſider that it is impoſſible they \* ſhould wholly pleaſe their Patients, and oppoſe the Diſeaſe at the ſame time. Let us patiently take Reproof from our Inſtructors and Guides. Let us open our Breſts

\* Καὶ ὃ ἱατρῶν εὐλαβοῦνται, λυποῦνται.  
 Max. Tyr. Diſſertat. 4.

to receive their kind Wounds: let us not endeavour to ward off those Blows which we know will be Healing to us. There are few such Examples as that of *Augustus Cesar*, \* who being reproved by *Athenadorus* for his Vices, especially those which relate to Women, openly thank'd him in the Senate House, and acknowledged his Faults there to him. A Rare Pattern! But if we would come up but to some part of it, that is, if we would but with *Patience listen to the Publick Reprover*, and receive his Rebukes, we should thereby receive great Advantage when we hear the Word:

Under this Head, I commend to you the serious *Application* of what you hear, whether it be in the way of Rebuke, or any other manner of Address to you. You hear for your selves and your own Souls, therefore be not so foolish and impertinent as to say, This part of the Sermon which I'm now hearing concerns others, that Point touches my Neighbour Home, this Doctrine is a good Lesson for such or such a Person. But let me prevail with you to alter the Language, and say, This Discourse touches me, this Doctrine, this Reproof, this Exhortation concerns me, and I will make use of it for my own purpose. Thus Apply what you hear, and do it while you are hearing. And remember this that the Preachers *Applications* will not be successful unless you make *Application* to your selves. For this is a certain

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\* Cedren. Hist. Compend.

Truth, that the People make bad Sermons by not applying to their Consciences the Discourses which they hear from their Pastors.

VII. Hear with *Affection* and *Delight*. This is of as great use as any of the former Directions: yea, without this all the others are imperfect. For we must entertain Divine Truths with a warm Affection, and a kindly flame of Love. *Did not our Heart burn within us,* said the Disciples, *while he talked with us by the way, and open'd to us the Scriptures?* Luke 24. 32. Did we not find our Selves in a wonderful manner transported with the love of those excellent Doctrines? Were we not extremely taken and delighted, were we not charmed and ravished with those Divine Mysteries which he preached to us? We read that *St. Peter's Auditors gladly received his Word,* Acts 2. 41. and that the *Bereans received the Word with all readiness of Mind,* Acts 17. 11. with an eager desire and willingness to have such heavenly Truths imparted to them. And it must needs be so, because the Word is our Food, our Repast, our necessary Viands, and therefore it is supposed we take delight in it, and are refreshed by it. Which is implied in those Words of the Apostle *St. Peter, Epist. 1. chap. 2. v. 2.* wherein he exhorts them *to desire the sincere Milk of the Word, as new-born Babes.*

Which Words have a mighty Weight in them, more than Interpreters have taken notice of. For there is not only here a bare Similitude taken from Infants who long for the Mo-

thers Breast, that they may be sustained and nourished thereby: but the Emphasis lies, as I conceive, in that Expressive Word *ἀγεννησία* *new born*, and signifies to us that the *New Birth* is ever attended with this *Desire* and *Longing after* the sincere Milk of the Word, that is, the Preaching of the true Evangelical Doctrines. If you are *New-born*, saith the Apostle, if the Spiritual Regeneration hath passed on you, you will *desire*, nay you will *earnestly desire* (for so the Greek word signifies) the preaching of Sound and Wholesome Doctrine, which is rightly compared to *Milk*, and appositely called so, because this is a Liquor that is in it self pure, simple and uncompounded; and 'tis fitly stiled *sincere* because here is meant that dispensing of the Word which is uncorrupted and unfalsified. And the Apostle here adds that they will not fail to desire this sincere Milk of the Word, which yields solid and proper Nourishment for their Souls, *if they have tasted that the Lord is gracious*, that is, they having had an Experimental Knowledge of the tender Love of Christ to Sinners, namely to themselves, They having felt the particular Goodness and Grace of God in changing and renewing their Hearts, they cannot but passionately long for and breath after this Spiritual Food and Nourishment, and that in order to the Increasing the Graces of the Holy Spirit in them; which is the meaning of those Words, *that you may grow thereby*, that you may make Proficiency in Godliness.

If we had more Hearers that would come to our Sermons with such Intentions and Dispositions as these (which we ought to cherish in them)



them) we should see the blessed Effects of our Ministry, and there would be daily added to the Church such as shall be saved. And one great reason why there is so much Preaching to little purpose, is because this necessary frame of Mind is wanting. They do not *desire the sincere Milk of the Word*, they do not desire it as *New born Babes*, who by natural Instinct and Necessity repair forthwith to their Mothers Breasts, and snatch at the Dug, and lie at it with unspeakable Delight and Complacency. So should the Soul long for the Word, its true and genuine Nourishment, whilst it is in this State of Infancy and Minority: Come then with an Appetite to the Spiritual Food.

Yea, as your Years increase, so do you increase in your Desires after it, and in your Delight in it. We are told that the Good Emperor *Antonine*, was wont, even when he was advanced in Years, to repair to the Lodgings of *Sextius* the Philosopher, and he gave this Reason for it, *It is good (saith he) to be always Informing our selves, and even to grow Old in Learning*. It was very common with the best Moralists, when they had one Foot in the Grave, to set the other into some School of Philosophy. Let not then Infirmities or Age obstruct your increasing in that Knowledge which is much more Laudable, I mean Divine and Heavenly Wisdom. And esteem it as a good Evidence of your Proficiency in Godliness, that you feel in your selves very warm and affectionate Inclinations towards Hearing and Learning.

It is to be lamented that this is not the usual Frame and Disposition of the generality of Hearers. Discourses from the Pulpit are Troublesome, as the plain and Pathetick Sermons of the Antient *Prophets* are called *Burthens* in the Prophetick Stile, because they were thought to be Grievous and Heavy. Many think themselves in Prison while they are at Church: and they are in the Stocks all the time they are confined to their Pews. A plain and searching Sermon is a Torment to them, but especially if it be long. In the Church they sit upon Thorns: but in a Play-house they are upon Roses. A Comedy of three or four Hours (tho' Old and often seen before) passes off with Pleasure: but a Sermon of three quarters ruins their Patience. The reason is plain, because they fail as to this last Qualification of Hearing, they come not with Affection and Delight. So much in prosecution of the discharging our Duty aright *in the time of Hearing*.

In the third place I am to shew what is to be done *after Hearing*: for even this belongs to the Question, How we must hear. Many think that after they have been at Church, and have heard the Sermon, the whole Business is effected and finished. But this is a great and dangerous Mistake, and therefore I will particularly acquaint the Reader what is required of him *after* he hath been a Hearer.

I. He must be careful not to bury the Word in Forgetfulness, but he must Treasure it up in his Mind and Memory. It is the usual custom  
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of Hearers, as soon as the Sermon is done, to fall into worldly Discourse and Chat. Many of them stay not till they leave their Pews, but most Persons when they have got clear of the Church, reckon then that they have a License to talk freely of their Business or their Pleasures. This sort of Hearers is exactly described in the *Parable of the Sower*, which I have had occasion to quote more than once: *these are they who when they have heard, go forth, and are choaked with Cares and Riches, and Pleasures of this Life*, Luke 8. 14. Tho' one would think they should at least have so much Reverence for the Word, as not forthwith to mingle it with Secular Matters, and even with Trifles and Vanities. Certainly this is a great Fault, and I cannot but take notice of it, and reprehend those that are guilty of it, who are indeed the generality of Auditors. They must be reminded that a good Hearer *hides God's Word in his Heart*, Psal. 119. 11. that the Word must *abide in him*, 1 John 2. 14. They must consider what the Apostle saith to the *Corinthians*, that they are *saved if they keep in Memory what he preached to them*, 1 Cor. 15. 2. And they should be acquainted that *the forgetful Hearer* is condemned by St. James, Chap. 1. v. 25.

I advise you therefore to take some convenient time (a little after you have heard) to Recollect and call to mind what hath been discoursed to you from the Pulpit, and to fix it in your Memories against the time to come. For these must be faithful Repositories of Divine Truths, in order to your producing them upon Occasion, and when there is most need of them.

Of this we have Examples in *Mat.* 14. 72. *Luke* 24. 8. *John* 2. 22. And thence we may gather that a Sermon may not take effect till a considerable time after the hearing of it: nay, there may be a *very long* time before the Word preached hath its Success in some Persons. Wherefore having heard the Word, be careful to remember it: and use the best Methods to strengthen and support your Memory. For if other things, of a Secular and Worldly Nature, are set down by us with *Memorandums*, we ought much more to take care to relieve and preserve in us the Remembrance of those Things which are Celestial and Divine.

And here I advise, in order to the better remembering of Sermons, that you accustom your self to Holy *Conference* about what you have heard. For by this means there will be kept up a Stock of Knowledge, a Common Bank, a Publick Treasure to store and enrich your Minds. And this Converse and Communion will create a mutual striving among you to Excel in Spiritual Wisdom. And you should be mindful to improve your selves not only by Communion with Private Christians, but with your Pastors and Teachers: for they are to communicate Knowledge to their Flocks not only from the Pulpit, but in their nearer Converse with them, and you ought to make use of their Conversation to that end. You should lay open your Thoughts to them, and request them to clear such Points to you as you have lately been conversant in: you ought to propound your Scruples and Doubts to them, that you may receive Satisfaction. This certainly will prove an  
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Useful Expedient for the augmenting and establishing your Knowledge. I wish all that are desirous of Divine Wisdom to apply themselves to this Course. And I wish all Preachers were fit to be applied to. But it is Conference in the Family which I chiefly urge at present. When you come home from the publick Assemblies, be speaking concerning the things of God which you have been entertained with by the Preacher: that hereby you may fix them on your Minds and Memories, on your Hearts and Consciences, and consequently make them useful and beneficial to you in your whole life.

I further advise, in order to your better remembering of Sermons, and improving by them, that the *Repetition* of them be brought into frequent use among us. But to make way for what I intend to suggest under this Head, it is first necessary that Preachers apply themselves to the best Methods of *Edifying* their Hearers. That *Haranguing* and *Declamatory* way which is in fashion in our Pulpits among many Preachers, will never do any good. It is true, it shews that the Speaker hath taken some pains in wording and composing his Discourse, but it will never be serviceable to the Edification of the Common Auditors, who are the most in every Congregation. Those strong and starched Lines, and that continued and hasty way of delivering them, without giving the Hearers time to recollect their Thoughts, and to consider of what is said, is of no use to the great Designs of the Gospel. I cannot help other Mens thinking and judging, but for my own part I declare it to be my Opinion, that it would be much

better to be more Deliberate in our Sermons, and let our Hearers have time to *turn to the places of Scripture* which we quote, I mean those more Important and Remarkable Texts which do more signally illustrate and establish the Matter we are discoursing of.

And I shall run the risk of being thought a rank Fanatick when I add that it is beneficial to our Hearers not only to consult such Texts, but to *turn them down* in their Bibles: for hereby they will come acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and they will be able to refresh and help their Memories, and happily retrieve those Passages in the Preachers Discourse which otherwise would have been forgot and lost. For they will have leisure to look over these Texts, and call the main Heads of the Sermon to mind: and by this they may be able to communicate them to others, and so those may be edified who were Absent. Upon these and other Accounts, as namely the employing our Hearers Minds and fixing their Thoughts, and preserving both them and their sight from wandring, this practice is very useful, and therefore ought to be encouraged by our Clergy: especially if it be remembred that this is no *New* thing (and therefore they can't boggle at it on that account) but is an *Antient* usage: for from the *Fathers* Writings its evident that the People carried their Bibles with them to Church, and consulted the Texts. And this practice they had from the times of Christ and his Apostles (which further shews the *Antiquity* of it) for it is not to be doubted that when we so frequently read that our Saviour proved out of the Old Testament that

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he was the true Messias foretold in those Writings, and when we read that he *Expounded and opened the Scriptures*, Luke 24. 27. 34. 32. and that the Apostles in their Sermons *opened and alledged the Scriptures, and reasoned out of them*, Acts 17. 2, 3. and *shewed by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ*, Acts 18. 28. it is not to be doubted, I say, that their Auditors, when they found this to be their common practice, brought their Bibles with them, and consulted those particular Texts of Scripture which were alledged, and took special notice of them.

And further, I offer this to be considered that it would be very useful and edifying if some one Person in a Family *took Notes* of the Sermons that are preached, supposing them to be deliver'd in that deliberate manner which I before mentioned. If in *Westminster Hall* and other Courts of Judicature it is usual with those that study the Law to write down the principal Things at a Trial, to note what the Council and what the Judges say, I should think it is as laudible for some to be employed in taking Notes of what is said by the Preachers; unless you can prove that what they say is of less importance than what is said by the others.

Some are pleased to tell us that this is an *Upstart Practice*, and was never in use till the last civil Wars among us; but these Men discover themselves to be little conversant in *Antiquity*, tho' they pretend to be huge Admirers of it. There were *Short-hand Writers* that  
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took *Origen's* Sermon, as \* *Eusebius* relates. So *Cyril of Jerusalem's* Catechetical Discourses were taken by some of his Auditors in writing, as we learn from † *Gregory Nazianzen*. And this Author himself in the same place saith of his own Sermons that they were so taken. || *Socrates* and (a) *Nicephorus* acquaint us that *St. Chrysostom's* Sermons were committed to Writing by some ready and expert Men that heard them. That the Auditors used to write down the Sermons at Church, is manifest from several Passages in *St. Augustine's* Enarrations on the *Psalms*. And *Possidonius*, who wrote his Life, testifies that this Father's Discourses were penn'd by some as he spoke. (b) One of the Ecclesiastical Historians before named tells us, that it was one proof of the Unacceptableness of the Sermons of *Atticus*, the Patriarch of *Constantinople*, that no one writ them from his Mouth. Thus the writing the Heads of Sermons is no new thing : and with the *Reformation* it came to use more than before. Some in the Families of the most judicious and sober Christians were brought up to this Employment. Yea, we have a Royal Example for this, King *Edward* the Sixth took Notes of Sermons at Church, as *Mr. Fox* relates.

Now, this practise is in order to the *Repeating* of them afterwards, which is the thing that I before propounded, and which Preachers

\* Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 36. Niceph. l. 5. c. 19.

† Orat. 32.

|| Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 4.

(a) Lib. 13. c. 3.

(b) Socrat. lib. 7. cap. 2:



ought to commend as very useful and edifying, and greatly serviceable to the promoting of Godliness. I know that this, as well as Writing the *Preachers* Sermons, hath been looked upon by some as an *Innovation*: but I desire the Reader to observe that *these* Men are they that really were introducing practises of that sort themselves. And to wipe off this ignorant Cavil of *Novelty*, it is sufficient to alledge the *Apostolical Constitutions*, which tho' they are not so Old as is pretended, yet they are of considerable Antiquity, and (which is to our purpose) are looked upon as Authentick by the Persons that I'm speaking of. Here we find it mentioned how the Faithful used to read over again, recollect and discourse of what they had heard Read and Expounded by their Ministers in the Publick Assemblies. Here is good Antiquity for *Repetition of Sermons*. And I remember that Good and Pious Father *John Chrysoptom* hath these Words in one of his *Homilies* on the Gospel of St. *John*, " I would have you, saith he  
 " to his Auditors, persevere in that good and  
 " laudable custom which you have, namely,  
 " that the Husband and Wife, the Father and  
 " Son, the Master and Servant, when they  
 " come home, should confer about the things  
 " which they heard in the Congregation.

And this *Conference*, which supposes and goes along with *Repetition*, hath been always approved of by the most Pious Governours of Families, and duly observed by them. There was this Religious Usage in our Univerſity when I was first a Collegian: it was the constant practise of the Tutours to take an account  
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of their Charge every Lords day at Night, and to enquire of them what they had heard that day. But to wave Modern Examples, One would think that those who pay a great Respect and Reverence to *Antiquity*, should not now be ashamed of so antient a Performance. And certainly it cannot be denied that it is as *Needful* and *Useful* as it is *Old*; yea, in this Degenerate Age it is more *Needful* and *Requisite* than heretofore: tho' we see it so much neglected, and laid aside as a particular Exercise. But I hope, when the Life of Godliness shall be better understood, it will be in use again, and prove very successful for the edifying of all Families.

In order to this we should inform our flock that this Antient Custom of *Repeating Sermons* on the Lords Day is necessary to exclude *Impertinent Visits*, *Worldly Business*, and *Secular Pleasures and Pastimes* on that day, but chiefly to urge and settle upon their *Minds* and *Memories* the Grand Truths of the Gospel which they had so lately heard. This doth plainly appear from hence, that since this practise hath been left off, there hath been a visible decay in the Principles of Religion.

II. You are obliged not only to *Remember* what you hear, but to *Meditate* upon it. This is partly the meaning of *Deut. 6. 6. These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart*: thou shalt often Think and Meditate on God's Word, thou shalt Ponder it in thy mind, and seriously consider of it. It is one Ingredient in the Character of the Godly  
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and Blessed Man that *he meditates in God's Law day and night*, Pſal. 1. 2. It is recorded of the Virgin Mary that *ſhe kept the things which ſhe heard, and eſpecially the Sayings of Chriſt, and pondered them in her Heart*, Luke 2. 19, 15. She kept or preſerved them, which denotes her Remembring them, which was the thing I ſpoke of before : and ſhe ponder'd them in her Heart, which ſignifies her Meditating on them.

And by this I do not underſtand a dry and barren Contemplation of Divine and Spiritual things, but ſuch a revolving them in our Thoughts as is accompanied with a deliberate Enquiry and Search into them : for tho' I propounded this as your Duty to be praſtiſed even at the time of Hearing, yet the more exact Performance of it is required now, after you have heard the Word, for now you have leiſure to do it with more accuracy. Beſides, I mean ſuch a Contemplation as is attended with a great Love and Complacency (for you muſt know that the ſame Diſpoſitions of Mind are requiſite both *in* and *after* the hearing the Word, and therefore you muſt not wonder at my repeating them) We find theſe two joined together, *delighting in the law of the Lord, and meditating in it*, Pſal. 1. 2.

And let me tell you, this Meditation is abſolutely neceſſary in order to your profiting by the Word : and without this your Hearing is in vain, and grows Redundant and Superfluous.

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For there may be an Excess here, as in all things of this Nature. Some are apt to place most of their Religion in Hearing, and for want of *Meditation* the Religious Exercise becomes useles to them. Yea, the more they hear, the less Effect the Word hath upon them, and at last they may be said not to hear at all: as the People that dwell near the Cataracts of *Nile* are made Deaf by the noise of the constant falling of the Waters. Too much Hearing hath taken away that Sense. So it is in the present case, a continual frequenting of Sermons with a wilful neglect to consider and meditate on what we hear, doth sometimes produce the like effect. Much Hearing, like Physick by being too often taken, loses its Property. The Frequency takes away the Vertue, and one Sermon drives out another.

We should be very careful therefore to think and Ruminare on what we hear, and to observe that Prime Rule of Health, Not to take in more Food, till the former be Concocted. *Meditation* will be serviceable to this purpose, for by it we Digest what we have heard, and turn it into Nourishment. By this the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity become really useful to us. Hereby we cherish those Motions which by the preaching of the Word were stirred up in our Hearts: and therefore hereby we shall soon be *Proficients* in Heavenly and Divine Knowledge.

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This is exemplified and confirmed by *David's* practise, *Psal. 119. 97, 98. O how love I thy Law! It is my Meditation all the day: Thou thro' thy Commandments hast made me wiser than my Enemies, for they are ever with me,* that is, thy Commandments are always meditated upon by me, for so the words are explained in the Verse ensuing, *I have more understanding than all my Teachers, for thy Testimonies are my Meditation.* This was his way of gaining Knowledge, and it may be ours too. Wherefore I intreat you to put this Direction in practise: Meditate on that good Word of God which you hear: let your Thoughts be employed about the Truths of the Gospel which are preached to you.

III. To Meditation add *Prayer*. For this latter is requisite not only *before* (of which I have spoken) but *after* Hearing. As you must Pray and Hear, so you must Hear and Pray. First, you are to joyn with the Prayer which the Dispenser of the Word sends up to Heaven, for 'tis supposed that he prays for a Blessing on the Word not only before but after it is preached, and that he take some notice of the particular Subject which he had been treating of in his Sermon. For I hope I shall not give any Offence if I freely profess my Judgment in this matter, namely, that I approve of the practise of some of the Dissenting Ministers, who pray over some of the main Heads of their Sermons. I take it to be a very seasonable act of Devotion,

on, and much conducing to Edification. If the First Reformers of our Church were now alive, I doubt not but they would allow of this, and would not interpret it as a Contempt of the Standing Forms of Prayer prescribed by our Church.

For it is my persuasion that these and the Gift of Prayer are Consistent, and ought not to be separated from one another. And I must needs say I do not see why a rightly Ordained Minister may not be permitted to use his Liberty in Praying as well as in Preaching.

As to the common Objection that those who pray *Ex tempore* are guilty of many indecent Expressions, yea of talking Nonsense and Blasphemy, it is generally a groundless Slander and Reproach: and those who are wont to Object this, are highly prejudiced against the Persons and the thing it self, and accordingly study to misrepresent them. But supposing there were something of this true, and that some have expressed themselves unduly and irreverently in their conceived Prayers, yet this may be said of *Preaching*, (tho' it be premeditated and studied) as well as of *Praying*: and yet the Objectors will not thence infer that *Preaching* is to be laid aside, and that, because some of themselves deliver false Doctrine, therefore no Doctrine ought to be delivered from the Pulpit: Why then should all *Conceived Prayer* be laid aside, because of the abuse of it sometimes? Besides, there are sometimes Mistakes and Blunders

ders committed in reading the Prayers of the Church, but no one will presume to condemn the Prayers themselves on that account. It is as unreasonable therefore to condemn all conceived Prayers because of the mistaken Expressions and Failures of some that have used them. And further I might add, that these Objectors shew themselves mightily displeas'd at an unfit Word, or a less decent Expression in a Prayer: but they are not offended at all if a Man runs over the prescribed Prayers of the Church in a formal and superficial, a cold and lifeless manner, or if he prays not at all in his Family and in his closet: which shews that they are unrighteous Cavils that are rais'd by these Men,

Wherefore, Notwithstanding what these Men suggest, I conclude that Conceived Prayers in the Pulpit are useful sometimes, yet so as the Liturgy be not excluded before. But seeing there is no Liturgy compos'd that contains Forms of Prayer for every ones particular and individual Case, it were well if our Clergy would more frequently exercise the Gift of Prayer: that they might be able, when they visit their Flock, to recommend every ones Case to God in fit and proper Words; that they might have Ability and Skill to pray in time of sudden Danger and Calamity, on the arrival of some very Dreadful, or some very Joyful Tidings that concern the Publick, or the particular Congregation they preside over; on occasion of the Death of a Friend, or of some extraordinary

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dinary Undertaking, or the like. I appeal to any faithful Pastor of a Church, whether he hath not found that there are several such Emergent Occasions on which it is necessary to use that Gift. But this only by the way.

Besides the Minister's Addresses, your own private ones are requisite in the Case now before us. When you return Home from hearing the Word, you must earnestly beg of the Almighty to back it by his Holy Spirit: that thereby you may be enabled to understand those Passages of Holy Scripture which have been made use of, and those Divine Mysteries which have been delivered to you out of them. For this is certain that an internal Illumination from the Spirit is absolutely necessary for the right *understanding* of Divine Truths. But especially you ought to pray that you may be *Affected* with them, and that they may be efficacious and operative in your *Lives* and *Practises*. Humbly crave of the Divine Majesty that your Eyes may be opened to discern the Excellent and and Transcendent Verities of Christianity, and that your Hearers likewise may be opened to receive and embrace them, to approve of them in your Wills, and to conform your selves to them in your Actions and Manners. If you would back the Sermons you hear, with Petitions of this kind, the Success of those Discourses would every day be taken notice of and admired, and Christianity would  
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make a great and amazing Progress in the World.

IV. To Prayer add solemn *Thanksgiving*, Bless God that you were born where the Gospel is preached. For tho' it is true the mere Sound of it, and the bare Knowledge of Christianity will be of little Advantage to you, yet these are great Blessings in this respect that they do in some Measure make you capable of that Salvation which is tender'd in the Gospel. For the Apostle acquaints us that *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God* preached: wherefore it is an inestimable Mercy that you are born in that part of the World where Christ is preached, and consequently where Faith in him may be attained. There is no Faith, and consequently no Salvation but in the Christian Church, in an ordinary way. Here is God's Covenant of Salvation; and here are the Sacraments which are the Seals of that Covenant, and here are the only usual Means of Conversion and Salvation. Therefore Salvation is confined to the Church, because these are to be found no where but there. All that were excluded the *Ark* perished in the Deluge of old: which was an Emblem of the True Church, out of which whosoever is shut, is debarred of Salvation and Happiness.

This is a matter of very great concern that I am now speaking of, and much greater than is commonly imagined. For 'tis the general belief

belief of Men that one Religion is as good as another, and that a Man may be saved if he be of any. Nay, 'tis commonly said in a light manner, such a one is yet to choose his Religion. Alas! if *That* be to choose, the Man is in a deplorable condition, and is to be pitied, and prayed for, not to be the Object of Raillery. For no Man can be saved but by some Religion: and no Religion can save a Man but that which teaches him to believe on Christ. For we are assured that *there is no other Name under the Heaven given among Men whereby we must be saved*, Acts 4. 12. Therefore that every Man may be saved in his own Religion, whatever it be, is a most pernicious Proposition, because it hardens and confirms those that are in a False Perswasion, and hinders their correcting themselves, and so makes their Error utterly Incurable. Our Church therefore had reason to determine thus in her Eighteenth Article, *They are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every Man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he frame his Life according to that Law and the light of Nature.* Which may seem to some to be harsh Words, but they are founded on St. Paul's express Language, *If any Man preach any other Gospel, let him be accursed.* He fixes an *Anathema* on those that invent new ways of Salvation, and dream of a Gospel without the Knowledge of Christ Jesus the only Saviour.

Be thankful then for the Gospel of Jesus, and the Ministration of it: because it is This alone that discovers to you the Author of our Salvation. This and only this shews us the way of access to the *Father*, viz. by the *Son*, who is *the way, the truth and the life*. It is the Gospel that renders the Knowledge of Salvation to lost Sinners: it reveals the infinite Love and Mercy of God through the Blood of Jesus, it displays the great and precious Promises of Life and Salvation by this Blessed Redeemer. This, as the Apostle defines it very rightly, is *the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth*, Rom. 1. 16. Neither the *Pagans* with their light of Nature, nor the *Jews* with their Legal Ceremonies, nor the *Mahometans* with their vile Impollures know any thing of this Saving Power. It is the Evangelical Dispensation alone which Merits to be stiled *the Ministry of Reconciliation*, 2 Cor 5. 18. that is, the happy Instrument of applying the Grace and Favour of Reconciliation to lost Sinners.

You have good reason then to prize and highly value the Gospel, and to Bless God for it. If the Philosopher gratefully acknowledged it as a great Priviledge and Happiness that he was born a *Grecian*, and not a *Barbarian*, certainly you are much more obliged to express your Thankfulness to Divine Providence for your being born of *Christian* Parents, and early admitted into the *Church of Christ*, where

you have been acquainted with the Holy Gospel. You are to thank God for the Ministry of his Word, that Excellent Institution and Appointment of the Gospel, that inestimable Priviledge of Christianity. You ought to bless him for the Living Oracles, the Ministers and Dispensers of God's Holy Word, whom he hath set to watch over your Souls, to instruct and admonish you, to exhort and reprove you, and to conduct you to Eternal Happiness.

Some *Protestants* abroad, who are alarmed with the noise of War, and feel the direful Effects of it, and are forced to fly before the enraged Enemy, and hasten to abandon their Habitations, are able to tell you what a Deplorable thing it is to be deprived of the free and peaceable Enjoyment of the Preaching of the Gospel. And we our selves know not how long this Glorious Priviledge will be indulged to us. Let us therefore be sensible of the Mercy we are at present Possessors of, let us be deeply affected with this singular Instance of the Divine Favour to us.

And those of you have *Thanks* to return in a more signal manner, who have received real Benefit from the Preaching of the Gospel, and have enjoy'd the Ministry of such Guides of Souls as have been the happy Instruments of *opening your Eyes, and turning you from darkness to light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that you might receive forgiveness of Sins, and an inheritance among them that*  
*are*

*are sanctified by Faith that is in Christ.* It was the Divine and Special Grace of the Holy Spirit alone that could make the Preaching of the Word Effectual to you: wherefore unto that you ought humbly to ascribe the Praise of whatever Good hath been wrought in you by the Ministry of God's Embassadors. Bless God's Holy Name for those Discoveries of Divine Truth and Grace that have been imparted to you.

Think with your selves what a great part of the World is overspread with gross Ignorance and Blindness, and what great numbers of People, even among those whom you daily converse with, are unacquainted with the Matters which concern the Life of Godliness. What perverse Notions do several Men entertain? What strange Delusions and Errors possess their Minds? What wild Sects are there? What unaccountable Perswasions have taken hold of some Persons? How forward are Men to forsake the Paths of Truth, and to wander in By-ways? When you reflect on this, be mindful to Thank God that you are not seduced and perverted, that you are not carried about with every wind of Doctrine, that you have faithful and skilful Teachers to instruct you in the great Truths of Christianity, and that you still retain them, whilst so many abandon the form of Sound Words, and let go the Authentick Principles of Religion. Be apprehensive of the Goodness of God to you, and be truly Thankful for it. In a Word,

bless God for the Gospel, and for the Preaching of it: and remember to prize and value so Choice a Blessing, so Rich a Treasury, so Desirable a Mercy.

VI. *Lastly*, Set about the Practise of what you have heard. This is the main and principal thing, and therefore I will more Amply insist upon this than the foregoing Directions. St. James saith all in short, *Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only*, Jam. 1. 22. Where it is implied that we must be Hearers: and it is more than implied in what he had said before, *Let every Man be swift to hear*, v. 19. and in what he adds, v. 21. *Receive with meekness the engrafted Word*. By which it sufficiently appears that the Hearing of the Word is an Institution of the Gospel, and is our indispensable Duty. But then the same Inspired Writer acquaints us that this alone will not suffice: Practise and a Holy Life ought to be joyned with Hearing. *Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only*: be sure that you *Act* according to those Sacred Instructions which are offer'd to you. Hear that you may be Better. Do what is dictated to you by the Dispensers of God's Word. Walk in the light, and cast off all Works of Darknes. Tie your selves to a religious observance of the Will of God which is delivered to you by his Messengers. Or else, let me tell you, you cheat and delude your selves, which is one of the worst Cheats in the World. For so the Apostles Words run, *Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only*,  
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*deceiving your own Selves.* As much as to say, he that is a Hearer only, he that gives Ear to the Word preached, but doth not practise it, grossly imposes upon himself, and acts most Absurdly and Irrationally. Which I will demonstrate in these following Particulars.

*First,* He acts contrary to the *End of Hearing.* For nothing is more evident than that *Hearing* is immediately in order to Knowledge (and therefore it is called the Knowing and the Learned Sense) and Knowledge is in order to Practise, and consequently Hearing is ultimately in order to this. The *Hebrew* Masters in a Proverbial Way say well, *Whosoever hears and learns the Law, and doth not Act according to it, is like to a Man that sows, and doth not reap,* that is, he frustrates the End of Hearing and Learning; for as Sowing is in order to Reaping, so those are in order to Action and Practical Religion, How grossly then do they *deceive themselves* who neglect the Practising of what they hear? And how foolishly do they attempt to defeat the Design of Hearing?

*Secondly,* He that is a Hearer only, and not a Doer of the Word, acts directly against the Design not only of *Hearing*, but of the *Gospel it self.* *This is the Will of God,* saith the Apostle, *even your Sanctification,* 1 Thef. 4. 3. Purity of Life, and the Practise of Godliness are the chief End and Aim, next unto the Glory of God, of the Evangelical Institution, and of all the Overtures and Undertakings of  
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the Blessed Redeemer. *To this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil, that Sin and Impurity might be extirpated, and that Sanctity might possess the Hearts and Lives of Men.* Christ Jesus came to *purchase to himself a peculiar People, and those zealous of good Works.* Christianity is Active, and casts a real Influence on Mens Lives and Manners. It was designed to actuate all the Powers of the Soul and all the Members of the Body, and to give us ability to perform God's Will and keep his Commandments: that as we have an Ear to take in the Holy Principles and Doctrines of Christianity, and an Understanding to apprehend them, and a Tongue to discourse of them, so we might likewise find a Hand to act, that is, that our Behaviour may be according to what we hear, and what we know, and what we profess.

We cannot but be sensible that bare Hearing is a mean and ordinary thing, and no wise Christian can value himself upon it. I remember the Natural Historian tells us of a sort of People in some parts of the World who prodigiously and monstrously exceed in the largeness of their Ears, and (if you'll credit him) cover their whole Bodies with them. There may be such like Monsters in Christianity, People that are all Ear, who satisfy themselves with Hearing only, and it may be think to cover and hide the Vices of their Lives by it. But what can be more Ridiculous than this? What can be more shameful and absurd



to listen to the Doctrine of Christ's Ministers, and to Content themselves with this, and not be desirous to feel the Effect and Power of it in the transforming of their Lives? Justly may we lament that unhappy Divorce and Separation which is to be found between Hearing of the Word and the Conscientious Practise of it. Whereby we give too great an occasion to Atheistical Spirits to despise and laugh at Christianity, the design of which is to promote Godliness and the actual discharge of our Duty.

*Thirdly,* The Man who contents himself with bare Hearing, acts contrary to the plain Discovery of God's way of Accepting Persons. He never had regard to a mere outward and formal Performance, but on the contrary you find a severe Threatning denounced against those *who draw near to God with their Mouth, and with their Lips do honour him, but have removed their Heart far from him,* *Isai. 29. 13.* And the same People are upbraided for the like Miscarriage in *Ezek. 33. 31, 32. They hear thy Words, but they will not do them. — Thou art unto them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument: for they bear thy Words, but they do them not.* And this is the fault of *Christians* as well as *Jews*: they are moved and charmed with the Melody of the Preachers Voice, with the Pathetical Delivery of his Doctrine, with the serious and weighty Matters which he propounds, but alas they are not at all concerned

to Act and Live according to what they Hear. These Persons are to be reminded of that of the Apostle, *Rom. 2. 13. Not the bearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified.* Hearing, as it is separated from doing, is neither commendable and excellent in it self, nor acceptable to God.

Which is thus represented by St. James, Chap. 1. v. 23, 24. *If any Man be a bearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a Man beholding his natural Face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and strait way forgetteth what manner of Man he was.* The Sense of which Words is this, He that only hears the Directions which are given by the Preachers of the Gospel for a Good and Holy Life, and sets not himself in good earnest to live according to those Wholesome and Pious Instructions, and to confirm his ways to them, that Man may very well be resembled to one that looks his Face in a Glass, and observes his Spots and Blemishes, but having done this, he doth no more; he forgets what he saw, much less doth he wipe off those Blemishes which he discover'd, but rather is proud of his Deformity: so far is he from mending his Life, and making a thorough Change in his Conversation. But on the contrary, saith the Apostle, v. 25. *Who so looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty, that is, God's Word, and continueth therein, looking so long that he reforms his Life, he being not a forgetful Hearer, but a doer of the Work, this Man shall be blessed in his Deed,*  
that

that is, he that attends on the Word and Doctrine of Christ to good Purpose, he that sees his Faults and Offences, and lays them to Heart, and performs what the Gospel requires, he and he only shall receive a Blessing from God, and shall prosper in what he doth. It is the Doer of God's Word that is accepted of him.

I will conclude this Particular with a Passage which I met with in *Plutarch*, a very Grave Author : it is this, It happened that the Image of *Minerva*, the great Goddess of the *Athenians* was to be new made : and in a case which they esteemed to be of so great Moment, all care was taken to employ the most Able Workmen : whereupon every Artist, being desirous of both Honour and Profit, endeavoured to recommend himself to that Employment : but among the rest there appeared one that in a Long and Eloquent Speech magnified his own Skill and Ability in that kind, and drew all Mens Eyes and Ears to him, till at last another rose up, and spoke only these few Words, but with an Air of Gravity and Seriousness, *Whatever that Man hath said, I will perform.* The Word *performing* carried force with it, and took with them all, and this Man was entertained for the Work. My Brethren, if it be thus with Men, it is much more so with God. Assuredly, he that actually *Performs* what others talk of or make Pretences to, is the only Man that finds Acceptance with the Almighty : he shall be received and entertained when others are rejected. And then it is easy to gather

ther that *Hearing* will not do alone, no more than *Talking* and mere *Professing*; we must make a *Reform* in our *Lives*, and add to our hearing *Obedience*, and then (and not till then) we shall find favour with God, thro' the *Merits* of *Jesus Christ*.

*Fourthly*, They that Hear, and Practise not, shamefully deceive themselves, because they act contrary to the very Nature of the Christian Religion, and to the true Character of a Disciple of Christ. *Pure Religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World,* Jam. i. 27. that is, True Religion is known by Practise and an Exemplary Conversation. And the Apostle *St. Paul* gives us a Compendious, but Complete Definition of it, when he saith it is *the Truth which is after Godliness,* 1 Tit. i. The true Body of it is a Godly and Holy Life. This is the Shibboleth whereby we may distinguish the true Christians from the Nominal and Counterfeit ones. We see that things are best known by their Effects, as Fire by burning, Heavy things by tending downwards, and the like. The truest account we can have of the Nature of Beings is from their Operations. So it is as true, that Christians are best discovered by their Lives and Actions: their *Works* represent them most faithfully. It is the Physicians Rule, The Heart is known by the Pulse. In Religion there is the like Judgment to be made; the Heart and Life of it are to be known; and

and as 'twere felt by the outward Endeavours and Actions. If we be sincere in our Religion, our Conversations will soon tell it. This shews how poor and mean a thing, and how inconsistent with the Nature of Christianity it is to hear the Word, and not to direct our Lives according to it.

*Fifthly*, This likewise should be considered that Hearing without Practising will but further our Condemnation. To which purpose our Saviour's Words are observable, *Take heed, saith he, how you hear, for whosoever hath, (i. e. improves what he hears) to him shall be given: and whosoever hath not (i. e. neglects to practise according to what he hears) from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have, Luke 8. 18.* If you do not grow better by Hearing, your Condition will be much Worse. You will, according to that of *St. James*, aggravate your Guilt, *To him that knows to do good, and doth it not, to him it is a Sin, a Sin of a double Die, Ch. 4. v. 17.* And your Punishment will be according to your Guilt, for our Lord hath told us that *the Servant who knows his Lord's Will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke 12. 47.* 'Twere better for you that you were *Turks* or *Pagans*, it were better that you had been born in any *Barbarous* Country than in *England*, if you, being blessed with the Revelation of the Doctrine of Christ, Live sinful and ungodly Lives: for hereby you will inhance your Doom, and you will render your selves Inexcusable at the last day.

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And this reminds me of the *Sixth* and last Thing to be said under this Head, namely, if you satisfy your selves with Hearing, and neglect the Practise of your Duty, you run counter to the Laws and Proceedings of the Last Judgment, and to the Conditions and Terms of Happiness. Our Saviour acquaints us that this shall be the Plea of some Persons at the final Tribunal, *Lord, thou hast taught in our Streets*, Luke 13. 26. we have heard thee preach, we have frequently listned to the Voice of thy Ministers, and therefore we hope we shall find Mercy with thee. But mark the Answer, *I tell you I know you not whence you are : depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity*, v. 27. It is not then your hearing of Sermons that will be available to you, if you work Iniquity, if you resolve to persist in your sinful Ways. The Sentence shall pass at the Final Judgment according to what you have *Done*.

And it must needs be so, because Doing of the Word is the indispensable Condition of Eternal Blessedness. *If you know these things, Happy are you* (and not otherwise happy) *if you do them*, John 13. 17. Obedience and Godly-Living are the only Path to Salvation and Happiness. Formal Professors and Hypocrites, together with Persons of open Prophaneness have no reason to think, that whilst they continue such, they are in a capacity of being saved. These Mens Hopes and Pretences are irrational who cherish Envy and Malice  
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in their Hearts, and pollute their Tongues with Lying and Swearing, and spend their Lives in Debauchery and Luxury, and yet promise themselves Salvation, and perswade themselves they shall fare well in another World. Nay, a Negative Innocence is not sufficient, that is, although they abstain from the foresaid Vices, they have no ground of believing their Condition to be good : for the *Grace of God which bringeth Salvation teacheth Men not only to deny all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, but to live Soberly Righteously and Godly.* If we entertain solid Hopes of Future Happiness, this will enable us to act with great Vigour and Zeal in our Religion, and to shun no Duty be it never so hard and painful. For that of an Antient Writer of the Church is very true, \* God would not have us arrive to Immortal Blessedness in a way of Delicacy and Corporeal Pleasure. We must Strive and Labour, we must Deny our selves and take up our Cross, and we must Continue and Persevere in all our Holy Resolves and Indeavours : by these steps we are to ascend those Blessed Mansions above.

In short, it appears from those remarkable Words of our Saviour in *Mat. 7. 24, &c.* that it is not bare *Hearing*, but *Prattise* that will

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\* Noluit Deus hominem ad immortalem beatitudinem delicato itinere pervenire. Lactant. de Opific. cap. 20.

be your Security and Safety both here and hereafter. *Whoſever heareth theſe ſayings of mine* (contained in the Sermon which I have now preached to you on this Mount) *and doth them, I will liken him unto a Wiſe-man who built his Houſe upon a Rock; and the rain deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that Houſe, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a Rock.* Such a Man lays for himſelf a good Foundation, and he hath no reaſon to fear any Storms. He *Practiſes* according to what he *Hears*, and then he is Safe.

For the Conclusion of all, Examine your ſelves now whether your *Hearing* hath been of this Nature, that is, accompanied with *Practiſe*. Many Sermons have been preached to you, but are not you Unfruitful Hearers ſtill? Do you not ſtill live in your Sins, and continue in the Love and Practiſe of them? We read of great Changes that have been made in Men by the Moral Lectures of the Gentile Philoſophers. Both *Valerius Maximus* and *Laertius* report of one *Polemon*, a debauched and infamous Youth, that he came Drunk into *Xenocrates's* School, but hearing him there Diſcourſe of Temperance and the Excellency of it, he went Home, and threw off his Debaucheries, and became a Sober and Wiſe man, after the rate of that Wiſdom which mere Reaſon and the Light of Nature could furniſh him with. I might mention what happen'd to ſome of *Plato's* Scholars, who were ſo moved and affected with their Maſter's Diſcourſes of the Immortality of the Soul,



Soul, that they generously despised this World and all things in it, and impatiently long'd to go hence, to enjoy those Felicities which he so warmly and concernedly treated of. And several other Instances of the like sort might be produced to shew how Powerful and Operative the Discourses of some of the Pagan Instructors were.

And shall not those of the *Christian* Teachers and Pastors be much more so? Shall not their Admonitions and Exhortations, which they so often inculcate upon you, have a Powerful Effect on your Minds and Consciences, on your Lives and Manners? By the singular Providence of God you live in a Nation where there is Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Sermon upon Sermon. You have above a Hundred Sermons in a Year preached to you on the Lord's Day, besides some others which are Occasional and Extraordinary. Now, let me ask you, do you not think that you must answer one day for so much Preaching and so much Hearing? Ought not your Lives to be Good and Holy proportionably to these Excellent Vouchsafements? But do you really experience the Thing to be so? Have we not continual Experiments of the contrary? There be many that seem in the Church to be exceedingly Devout and Religious, and they hear the Preacher (as *Herod* did *John Baptist*) gladly; but alas when they have left the place of Worship, and are come into the Streets, and into their Houses, and come to converse with their Neighbours,

they are as worldly, as Vain, as Proud, as Passionate, and every Ways as disorderly as ever they were. They neither speak nor act for God, they neglect the Concern of their Souls, they are unmindful of Heaven, they do nothing becoming their Name and Profession.

But be not deceived: persuade not your selves that Hearing will be advantageous to you, unless you add to it Sanctity of Life. Wherefore in the close of all the Sermons that are preached to you, imagine that you hear those Words pronounced to you, *Be ye doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* It was the saying of One, that there are many Good Laws Extant, but there wants one more, *viz.* to bind Men to the keeping of all the rest. In a resembling manner, I have offered many Discourses and Sermons in several Auditories, but now I publish one from the Press, in order to the binding Men to the practise of all the others, whether preached by my self or my Brethren. I most earnestly beseech you then to mind This, which will help you to profit by all the rest. On which account I shall have reason to reckon it the Best Discourse I ever was Author of, since I have been employed in the Ministry of the Gospel.

Wherefore I say to you, as Christ to the Church of *Sardis*, *Remember how you have received, and heard, and hold fast.* Take  
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care that this and all other Instructions be copied out in your Lives and Practices. And so both you and I shall have the Comfort, and God the Glory of this our present undertaking. To that Great God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Praise now and ever. *Amen.*

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