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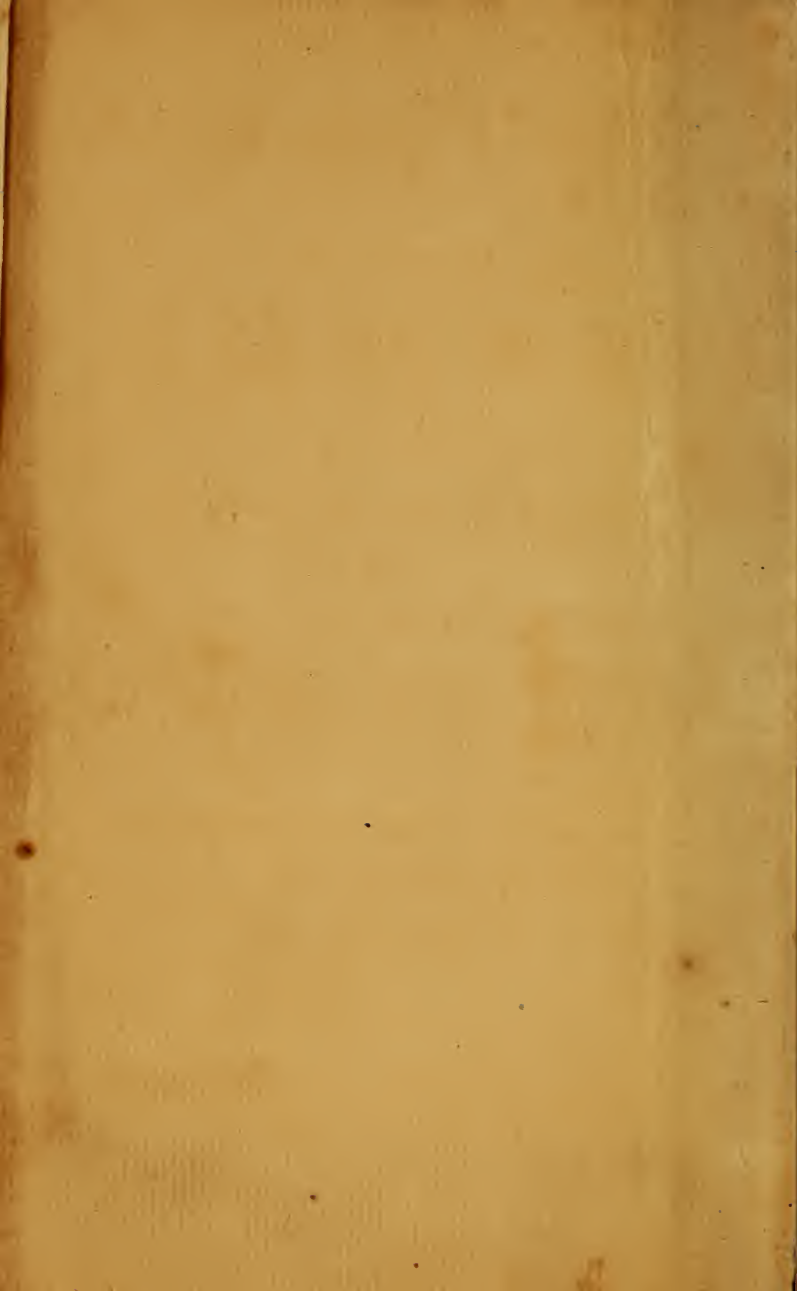
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Reformation Sermons  
at Salter's Hall by

Jac: Merrall . . .	June 27 . 1709 . . .	92 <sup>o</sup> . 1 . . .
Sam. <sup>to</sup> Wright . . .	June 27 . 1715 . . .	. . . 2 . . .
Sam. <sup>to</sup> Rosewell . . .	June 29 . 1719 . . .	. . . 3 . . .
Dan. <sup>to</sup> Mayo . . .	July . 1 . 1717 . . .	. . . 4 . . .
Moses Lowman . . .	June 27 . 1720 . . .	. . . 5 . . .
John Barker . . .	June 26 . 1721 . . .	. . . 6 . . .
Dan. <sup>to</sup> Neal . . .	June 25 . 1722 . . .	. . . 7 . . .
Jos. <sup>a</sup> Bayes . . .	July . 1 . 1723 . . .	. . . 8 . . .
Jos. <sup>h</sup> Denham . . .	June . 29 . 1724 . . .	. . . 9 . . .
Sam. <sup>to</sup> Price . . .	June . 28 . 1725 . . .	. . . 10 . . .
B A Atkinson . . .	June . 29 . 1726 . . .	. . . 11 . . .
George Smyth . . .	June . 26 . 1727 . . .	. . . 12 . . .
Ob: Hughes . . .	July . 1 . 1728 . . .	. . . 13 . . .
Tho: Leavesley . . .	June . 29 . 1730 . . .	. . . 14 . . .
John Partington . . .	July . 2 . 1733 . . .	. . . 15 . . .
John Guyse DD . . .	June 30 . 1735 . . .	. . . 16 . . .
David Jennings . . .	June 27 . 1737 . . .	. . . 17 . . .
Sam. <sup>to</sup> Chandler . . .	Sep <sup>r</sup> . 25 . 1738 . . .	. . . 18 . . .





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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

SOCIETIES

F O R

*Reformation of Manners,*

A T

SALTERS-HALL,

J U N E 27. 1715.

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By S. W R I G H T.

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Published at their Request.

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I PETER IV. 4.

*Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of you.*



WHEN Christianity first appear'd in the World, it was look'd upon as a very strange and unaccountable Thing. Its Doctrines, its Rules of Life, and especially its Professors, were every where spoken against. By

Men of reputed Learning and Wit, they were derided ; by Men of Grandeur and Wealth, they were despised ; by Men in Authority, persecuted ; and, as the natural Consequence of this, by the Bulk of Mankind they were villify'd and set at nought : Notwithstanding all which, this same Religion is now profess'dly glory'd in by the greatest Powers on Earth, and its Cause pleaded by Men of the most distinguish'd Wisdom and Learning : So that upon a present View of Things, it is hard to say, which is most wonderful, — the unparallell'd Opposition that was at first made to the Gospel, — or the amazing Success that has since attended it.

THIS I take to be a standing Encouragement to all proper Attempts for the Promoting of true Religion; that very small Beginnings may, in Time, rise to a very great Height: Where Men are *stedfast* in a good Cause, and GOD is *present* with them, tho' perhaps for two or three Ages, they may labour under Discouragements, yet finally their Cause shall prevail. The Reasoning of *Gamaliel* can never cease to be strong and conclusive, — *If any Counsel or Work [that sets up for a Religious one] be of Men, [contriv'd meerly by human Wisdom, and managed only by human Politics] it will, sooner or later, come to nought. But if such a Counsel or Work be of GOD, it cannot be overthrown;* for every one that raises Opposition against it, does notoriously manifest his Folly, and is sure to find his Weakness, *in Fighting against GOD.*

HOWEVER, this we are to expect, that such Contenders with GOD there will always be in the World. Tho' Christianity has conquer'd Kingdoms, it has yet a great deal to do in those very Kingdoms, to conquer Hearts, and to subdue the reigning Corruptions of Men: And indeed, wherever the Gospel has this Effect, it continues to be as strange a Thing as ever. The regular and holy Lives of the Primitive Christians, were not more a Wonder to the vicious World in *that Age*, than the Lives of those who live most strictly, according to the Rules of the Gospel, now are, to Men of Intemperance and Vice in our *own Age*. It is a common and easie thing to be Baptized, and from thence to be *called* Christians; but to make good the Meaning and Import of such a Name, (that is, *to depart from Iniquity,*) will make a Man observ'd, and wonder'd at, as much as ever.

WHAT therefore St. *Peter* here writes to the Professors of Christianity, as scattered abroad in the several Parts of the World, may very well be extended to those who live in the several *Ages* of it.

And thus, without more Words, your own Observation will put you upon applying the *Text* before you to your present Case and Treatment, as withdrawing from, and endeavouring to correct the Wickedness of the Times. Such as give up themselves to Irreligion, Intemperance, and Debauchery, think it strange that these Things are not as grateful to you as to them; and hereupon make it their Business to defame, and speak evil of you. It is for this Reason, no doubt, whatever else may be pretended, that a Design in which many of you are engaged, has been so much reviled amongst us. 'Tis owing to this, (I say) that your Attempts for *restraining the scandalous Immoralities, and reforming the Manners of the Age*, have been so studiously misrepresented by some, and so insolently opposed by others, and a vicious Rabble have been spirited up to a *Boldness* in their *Wickedness*, that will, amongst other Things, render the last *four or five Years* remarkable and infamous to future Ages. If I apprehend rightly the present State of the *Societies for Reformation, in this and the neighbouring City*, the Subject I have chosen to insist on, will be particularly seasonable.

What is necessary for a more distinct Explication of the Words will fall in under the following Heads, which may comprize all that I have to say on this Occasion:

- I. To restrain and subdue the Dictates of corrupt Nature, is accounted, by Men of vicious Lives, a strange Thing.
- II. Such Men as are Lovers of Excess and brutish Lusts, do not only wonder at the Sobriety of others, but revile 'em for it.
- III. That I may render these Considerations the more Serviceable to your Design, it will be proper

per to shew, that the Reproaches and ill Speeches of Riotous Men should not be look'd upon, either as Discrediting the Cause of Reformation, or Discouraging your Endeavours in the regular and prudent Managing of it.

AND if I may now be enabled to speak, as I could wish to speak, to these several Things; I am perswaded you will have no reason to complain of missing your End in this present Meeting together.

I. TO restrain and Act contrary to the *Dictates of corrupt Nature*, is accounted, by Men of vicious Lives, a *strange Thing*.

THE *Excess of Riot* here spoken of, includes all those Particulars mentioned in the foregoing Verse; *Lasciviousness, Lusts, Excess of Wine, Revellings, Banquetings, and abominable Idolatries*, (i. e.) something under the Name of Religion, which countenanced and encouraged Men in their Wickedness. The original Word rendred *Excess*, is designed to signify those abominable Lusts, (a) which, at the Time of Celebrating some of the Heathen Festivals, they were excited to, in a very high Degree. Their being said to *run into* these, intends the same Temper and Manner of Acting with what is elsewhere described, as a *Working all Uncleanness with Greediness*, Ephes. iv. 19. Such were the vicious Lives of the first Despisers and Opposers of Christianity.

They *thought* and spoke ill of the Behaviour of Christians, because they withdrew from them, and bore witness against their Abominations. The Word translated, [*they think it Strange*] generally signifies to wonder at a Thing *as New*. (b) So the  
Apostle

(a) Ἀναχύσις est confusio sexuum, &c. Et hac voce exprimitur fervor libidinis & intemperantiæ. *Pol. Syn.*

(b) ἄνευτοια.

Apostle speaking to those who *in the Time past of their Lives* had fall'n in with these Debaucheries of the Gentiles, he would here represent that Turn of Mind, which generally makes Men look upon those that leave their ill Company, and an ill Course of Life, with Wonder and Displeasure; taking occasion from thence to be very Satyirical in their Reflections upon them.

BUT we may also understand this Phrase in a more enlarged Sense, for that kind of Wonder which arises in our Minds upon meeting with any thing that seems to us *unaccountable*, or cross to our own Apprehensions and Sense of Things. And so according to the Reading of *Erasmus* it is, they count it *absurd* that you run not with them: They charge you with acting a Part that is unreasonable, and inconsistent with your Selves; by which you also contradict the common Sense and prevailing Customs of the World.

NOW, the Persons with whom you have to do in the *Work of Reformation*, I take to be just such, for their Riotings and Excesses, as are here described: Such as, with a brutish Eagerness and Unthoughtfulness, are continually acting over again (perhaps exceeding) those Abominations that were amongst the worst of Idolaters: And even the professed Enemies of GOD, and of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, could not treat those sacred and awful Names, with more open Prophaneness and daring Contempt, than these Criminals are wont to do.

YOUR opposing such Impieties and vicious Extravagancies, must therefore, beyond all doubt, draw upon you the same Wonder, Dislike and Enmity which the first Profession and Practice of Christianity drew upon those spoken of in our Text. 'Tis the Love of Piety and Regularity on the one Hand, and the Living in all manner of Immoralities on the other, that sets Men at a greater Distance, and creates greater Disgusts, than any outward

ward Professions of different Religions, or the being of different Persuasions in Religion, could ever have done. But if the Reasons of bad Mens Prejudices against the Good were seriously weigh'd, they might possibly afford Matter of Conviction to the Wicked, as I am sure they must always afford Encouragement to the Righteous in the Way of their Duty. I shall instance in a few Particulars.

1. *IT is Ignorance of Good Men, and the Principles upon which they act, that sets the vicious World so much against them.* Men that have no realizing, affecting Thoughts of a future Eternity, and a Judgment Day, and that have no fear of an Invisible GOD before their Eyes, are apt to ascribe every thing that is done for the Cause of GOD and Religion, to some worldly Motives or Principles: And these too they presently conclude are such as they find most prevailing upon themselves. The generality of Persons have neither Skill nor Patience; duly to weigh the Consequences of their Actions; and therefore renounce the Conversation and Counsels of those who would bring them to think of the Tendency and the Issue of their vicious Courses. They do not consider, that repeated evil Actions produce evil Habits, and that hereby Men are harden'd in their Sins to their own Destruction: They do not consider, that public and enormous Crimes, have brought public and National Judgments: And that all the Order and Comfort of Societies depends upon a Restraining the inordinate Affections and Corruptions of Men. These things, and many more that might be mentioned, the vicious Part of Mankind will not allow themselves Time to think of, and therefore have no Notion of the Force and Power of such Considerations where they are duly attended to.

BESIDES, they are really Strangers to the friendly Designs and Inclinations which the good Man



Man acts with ; they think him an Enemy to them, because they are conscious of being such to him. Having never felt the Ardors of a Christian Love and Charity to the Souls of Men, they suspect the whole Carriage of a good Man towards them, as only designed to reproach them, or to injure them in their most valuable and desirable Interests.

IN such a Case as this, were it possible to open the Breast of a truly pious Man, how must it affect the groveling brutish Sinner, to see the great, and generous, and kind, and compassionate Sentiments that dwell and reign there. But till this can be done, we find Words avail very little to gain the Credit and Belief of those who are drench'd in the Enjoyments of Sense and Sin. They are ignorant, wilfully and obstinately ignorant of the Principles and Tempers of good Men, and therefore they look with so much strangeness and Enmity upon them.

2. *Men of Vice and Excess, wonder at the orderly Behaviour of others, because they are strangers to the Pleasure and Comfort of a Regular Life.* As the faithful Followers and Imitators of CHRIST are hated by the World, because it *knows not their Persons and Principles* ; so they are also a Wonder to the World, because it knows not the Satisfaction and Comfort of their *Lives*. The vicious Man, that places his Happiness in gratifying and following his corrupt Affections and Inclinations, can form no just Notion of the Pleasure which there is in Conquering and Ruling such Inclinations ; and therefore it is that a regular orderly Way of Living appears so strange to him.

IT has been the Case of many, to be brought up in ignorance of the *main Duties of Life* : These are following their own Hearts Lusts and Inventions, without consulting the Obligations they are under, either toward GOD, or Man, or even their nearest Relatives ; this boorish Part of the World look up-

on every thing that is contrary to their own rude and unbroken Spirits, as an intolerable Grievance to them.

THERE are others that have known something of the *Duties*, who yet are perfect strangers to the *Decencies of Life*; and from hence arises a very strong Aversion to a good Oeconomy in their Families, or to any Rules of personal Conduct that are prescribed or enforced against their own Inclinations. This sort of Men using themselves to live at Random, and with as little Thought as possible, they reckon the Life of an orderly prudent Man a needless Task, and wonder that any should take such a Burden upon themselves.

BOTH these are uneasy at the Thoughts of a regular Life, because they *never try'd it*. And for this Reason undoubtedly it is, that Men every where set themselves so much against it; namely, their having never liv'd with such as might give them a true Notion of it.

AND yet it must be observed also, as too many in our Age, that notwithstanding a sober and orderly Education, they have afterwards chosen to lead their Lives with the profane and vicious Part of the World: But is it because they have known the Advantages of a regular Life, that they give the Preference to a Life of Intemperance and Lewdness? No, but because they had not Wisdom enough to make just Remarks upon the Conduct of them they liv'd with, nor Grace to make the Experiment of Living and Acting so themselves.

THOSE who out of good Families have become Vicious, are generally such as have been seduced by ill Company, and hurried away by headstrong Lusts, before they have arriv'd at those Years of Discretion which should enable them to form any Judgment of Things; and therefore may be accounted as great Strangers to the real  
Comfort

Comfort and Satisfaction of a regular Life, as those that never saw any Examples of it.

AND if there are some few who have spent the former part of their Lives (to all Appearance) orderly and well, who yet in their advanced Years have given the Reins to Vice and Wickedness, it will only prove, that Religion has Charms enow to make it aped and imitated, even by those who never sincerely lov'd, nor truly understood it. So that after all, the Disgusts and Estrangedness of vicious Men towards the Good, are owing to their being *unacquainted* with the Pleasure and Comfort of a *Godly, Righteous, and Sober Life*.

I have heard it confess'd by one that spent several Years as an *Actor* in the *Play-house*, and in a dissolute Way of Living, that he never could form any other *Notion of what was call'd a Virtuous Life, but only a dull insipid Way of spending ones Time*; till he was brought afterwards by a very extraordinary Providence to make the Experiment himself; and then he declared, *That he found the Ease and Satisfaction of Four and Twenty Hours spent in an orderly Family, was inexpressibly preferable to all the Years he had spent in Vanity, Riotings, and Excesses.*

3. *BAD Mens estrangedness and aversion to the Good, is sometimes occasion'd by their finding out some pretendedly Religious Plea for themselves.* In the *Verse* preceding that I am upon, you find *abominable Idolatries* immediately subjoin'd to the other Instances of Wickedness; meaning (as is generally thought) the Worshipping of *Bacchus*. And so whilst Men were resolv'd to gratifie every Lust, (c) they found out this Method of justifying themselves, to make and worship a GOD that would allow them to *do so*.

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NOT

(c) De Fœditate B. carnaliorum scribit. *Leviticus Lib. 39. Cap. 8.*

NOT much different is the Folly and Wickedness of those, who have contriv'd such *Ways* of Worshipping the true GOD, as shall encourage them in the worst of Vices: Only in one respect this Pretence to Religion amongst vicious and falsely called Christians, is much worse than that of the Heathens, as it really tends to make Men *more Wicked*: Hence it comes to pass that Immoralities, abhorr'd by *Rome Pagan*, have yet been dispens'd with, and encourag'd by *Rome Papal*: And he that shall at any time bear a Testimony against these pretended Engrossers of Religion, and endeavour to reclaim them, is sure to be treated worse, supposing him within their reach, than if he was amongst *Jews* or *Heathens*.

'Tis an Observation too obvious to be overlook'd, even amongst our Selves, that the nearer any Age has been approaching toward *Popery*, the more has all manner of Iniquity abounded in these Nations. And I believe, I shall not offend those of you that are in Communion with the Church establish'd, if I take notice, --- That since to cry up the Church has been thought a thing consistent with all manner of Profaneness, Lewdness, and Excesses, those that have maintain'd any thing of Piety and Strictness as to their Morals, have found the Strangeness and Contempt with which they have been treated, double to what was known before.

4. *BECAUSE* there are so many that run into the same Excess of Riot, therefore vicious Men think it strange that All do not take such a Course. The Number of the Wicked has always very much exceeded that of the Righteous; even so far exceeded, that to me it is one of the strongest Arguments of God's governing the World, that such Creatures have never been able so fully to understand one another, or so firmly to unite together, as to root out Goodness and good Men  
from

from the Face of this Earth. 'Tis what they have earnestly desired in all Ages; 'tis what they have too successfully attempted in some Places; but yet GOD has always had a Number of Witnesses for himself, in spite of the utmost Oppositions and Contrivances against them.

THIS however makes the truly Religious wondered at; namely, because they are so few: The vicious Multitude look upon them as acting contrary to humane Nature, when they refuse to do as the Generality do. These Men having no Sense of the Degeneracy of their Natures, nor of the Method of Recovery laid down in the Gospel, such a Singularity of Behaviour appears to them an *absurd* Thing: especially when they find that they have not only the greatest Numbers, but Men of the highest Condition and Fashion in the World, supporting and encouraging them, by living in the same Vices: Yea, that many of those also who are reputed for their Learning, and some whose Characters are held as Sacred too, become their Companions, or Advocates in their Excesses.

SUCH things as these are the common and obvious Reasons of that Contempt which is thrown upon Men of good Morals, by those that are Loose and Profligate. But I hope they are such as will rather excite the Resolution, than balk the Spirits and Endeavours, of them that are truly Good. I now proceed to the

II<sup>d</sup> General Head: *Such Men as are Lovers of Excess and brutish Lusts*, do not only wonder at, and despise the *Sobriety* of others, but they *Re-vile* them for it.

WHAT is said against the Cause of Piety in general, I shall not concern my self with at present: My Text rather leading me to take notice of those kind of Reflections and Defamations,

tions, that were levell'd more directly and immediately at the Persons professing this *Cause* in the World.

THE Word translated [*speaking Evil of you*] might be rendered more generally indeed (d) *Blaspheming*; and so might be applied to the Cause of Christianity, as well as the Professors of it: As to which, no Man that has look'd into any of the first Apologies for the Christian Religion, can be ignorant of the Methods taken by its Enemies to render it mean and hateful: Every where villifying and misrepresenting it; charging it with things, not only wretchedly Foolish, but horridly impious and inhuman. Of this I forbear to enlarge; and shall only consider the Blasphemy here spoken of, as it respected the sober and temperate Lives of Christians, and their Endeavours to reform the World.

WE frequently read in Scripture of *Blaspheming Men* as well as GOD. In the ivth to the *Ephesians* 3. *Let all Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Clamour, Blasphemy or Evil speaking, be put away*: And in *Coloss.* the iii. 8. the very Word is retained, *Put off all these, Anger, Wrath, Malice, Blasphemy*. In the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, iv. 12. the same Word is rendered *being Reviled*. And St. *Matthew* uses it in the same Sense, Chap. xv. ver. 19. *Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, False-witnesses, Blasphemies*. This Vice is a constant Attendant of the other Vices mention'd with it; and usually rises to the greatest Virulence, when it has for its Object the greatest Goodness.

It shews it self in the following Manner.

1. *VICIOUS Men are industrious to find out the Miscarriages of good Men, and to expose them as much as possibly they can.* This is admirably described

described by the Prophet *Jeremy*, Chap. xx. 10. *For I heard the Defaming of many: ——— Report, say they, and we will report it; all my Familiars watched for my Halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our Revenge on him.* This kind of Revenge is the highest Pleasure to wicked Men; who watch accordingly for the Slips, and are ready to aggravate the unavoidable Failings of the Righteous, and to spread the Report with all the Disadvantages imaginable from one to another.

2. *VICIOUS Men are apt to Censure those that are Good, as guilty of the same Crimes with themselves, without any just Reason or Foundation for it.* Hence it comes to pass, that innumerable false Reports have been spread of some of the best Men that ever liv'd in the World. The first Christians were reproached with indulging themselves in those very Immoralities in their own Assemblies, which they bore such a Testimony against, among the Heathen: And that for this only Reason, because their Enemies would not believe it could be otherwise. Those that love their Vices, will needs imagine the Inclinations of others as strong as their own; and that therefore such Vices cannot be abstained from, by any that are compounded of the same Flesh and Blood with themselves. And because good Men have sometimes fall'n into scandalous Sins, they conclude that all are alike guilty, tho' all may not be discovered.

Y E A, I verily believe, that many a reproachful, villifying Aspersion has been cast upon good Men, by such as have been in their Revels and Excesses, for which no other Reason can be assigned, but that it came into their Heads at such a Time. *David* has not stood alone in being made the *Song of the Drunkards*, when they had no cause to have reproach'd and despis'd him, *Psal. lxxix. 4, 12.*

3. WHERE vicious Men are not able to find, or forge any thing that is *ill*, so as to fasten it upon the Righteous, *they will then speak against them for their good Deeds.* Thus the Preaching and Propagating the Gospel was represented as a *turning the World upside down.* And in the best and wisest Attempts to Reform a Land, many have been treated as the Troublers of it: In such Language it was that *Abab* reproached *Elijah*, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel,* 1 Kings xviii. 17. when at the same time it was *Abab*, and his Fathers House, that were the Troublers of Israel, in that they had forsaken the Commandments of the Lord. Another good Man we find *hated*, for no other Reason, but his *telling of the Truth*, 2 Chron. xviii. 7, 15. In these and many more Instances that might be mention'd, we see, that where the Wicked cannot charge the Righteous with Vice, they will find fault even with their Virtue: And the more *steddy* they are in the Way of their Duty, the more they are accused of being Conceited, Obstinate, and Troublesome in their Tempers. There is nothing can more properly describe this malignity, than a prophane Saying utter'd not long ago in the Hearing of one in this Assembly, *That Virtue is a very good thing, but the Practice of it is the Devil;* meaning, I suppose, that by practice it became a *Tormentor* to him, and was not to be born, however excellent in the Theory it was allow'd to be.

4. ANOTHER Way of vicious Mens Reviling the Righteous is, by *Accusing them of some mean and base Ends, or Principles, in their good Actions.* If they have nothing to say against their outward Behaviour, then they pretend to look into their Hearts, and by invading the Prerogative of Almighty GOD, to determine what their very Thoughts and Designs are. The Devil's Insinuation against *Job*, his Instruments have ever been ready to urge against those of his Character, *Doth Job serve GOD*



for nought? Is it not some Gain or Advantage that such Men propose to themselves? And where this insinuation fails, have they not others at hand? that the Virtuous Man only gratifies a Desire of being Remarkable for something in the World, and getting a Name amongst a particular Set of Men? Or that he acts by the Instigation of an uneasie and splenetic Temper? Or that he is under the Direction and Influence of Others, who are guided by such Things? Thus the Wicked endeavour to rob the Righteous of that Part of their Character which is dearest to them, *their Sincerity*; and brand them with the odious Name of *Hypocrites*.

5. *VICIOUS Men have Ways of Blaspheming by their Actions, as well as their Words.* (e) Such is the Hellish Disposition of those, who do wicked things meerly to oppose the good Examples and Admonitions of the Righteous: Who set themselves to commit Iniquity with an intention to out-brave such as shew a Concern for Religion, and to render their Attempts for the Promoting of it as ineffectual as possibly they can. This is a Way of Blaspheming that has vexed the Souls of the Righteous from Age to Age, when Men are made *worse* by those very things that should make them *better*. Such as think it a sufficient Excitement to the greatest Acts of Wickedness, that they may provoke the sober and serious Part of their Acquaintance, and shew the World how much they desire that such should be confronted, are in a Way of running down good Men, that is much harder to be born than any thing before mentioned; and is much more powerful to the spreading of Vice and Prophaneness.

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(e) Βλασφημία refertur ad Actiones & denotat sceleratum facinus. *Vid. Suicer. Thes.* ubi extant exempla.

These are the several Ways by which Men that run into Excess of Riot, have ever sought to Defame and Revile those that have born a Testimony against them. And those of you that have been engaged in Attempts to *Reform* the Manners of the Age, I doubt not, have been able to produce Instances of your being thus treated all along as I have been speaking.

THERE is *one* Instance of such a Nature, and has been attended with such Consequences, that I think the most *public Remarks* ought to be made upon it. The Infamy was *public*; delivered in a Sermon before *Magistrates*; and preach'd on an *Occasion* that render'd it a highly aggravated Scandal: It was afterward *Printed* with a *Name* to it, that was sure to spread it amongst the most vicious and profligate throughout the Nation: And in such Language as this, that hot Head of a Party has fet himself and his Followers against you; (*f*) *Do not these* [the Injunctions of Charity, Religion, and Justice,] *as strictly command us not to thrust our Selves pragmatically into his* [our Brother's] *Business?* — *or under the sanctify'd Pretence of Reformation of Manners, to turn Informer, assume an odious and factious Office, arrogantly intrench upon others Christian Liberty and Innocence, and under the Shew of more Zeal and Purity, (the most infallible Token of a dexterous and refined Hypocrite and Knave,) turn the World upside down, and set all Mankind into Quarrels and Confusions.*

I wish the *Remarks* publish'd on this and some other Passages of the like Nature, in a *just and modest Defence of the Societies for Reformation of Manners*, could have carry'd the Antidote as far as the Poyson has spread: There would then be no further need to concern your Selves about it: But whilst it

is

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(*f*) Dr. Sacheverell's Sermon at the Assizes at Derby, Pag.

is otherwise, I would not have one Opportunity lost, that may any way contribute to a preventing the mischievous Effects of such *Railing Accusations*.

AND really, one would think, this Collection of Words, with some others in the same Sermon, were contriv'd to sum up, as far as possible, in a narrow Compass, all the several *Ways of Evil Speaking* that have been insisted on: Which have also had a very apparent Influence in Promoting the *last Way of Blaspheming*, by provoking Men to the most daring Wickedness in their Actions, and to the most insolent Behaviour in Opposition to you.

THIS furious Man reviles you, as being *no better* than those you Prosecute for their Vices, except in a *Shew* of more Zeal and Purity, which makes him reproach you as the *worst of Knaves*. But has he or any of his clamorous Crew been able to produce the so often desired *Proof* of such Disorders amongst you? Or is not this plainly the Product of that suspicious Temper before describ'd?

HOWEVER, if these unprov'd Suggestions as to things *really Evil*, should not be regarded, your *best Actions*, and what is *truly Good*, shall be blam'd and cry'd out against as unwarrantable and detestable. He says your Attempts to Reform the World, *is to turn it upside down*; the very *Stile* and Phrase of the first *Revilers* of Christianity. He says you assume an *odious Office*; which can only be so to them that *hate to be Reformed*: And a *Factionous Office*; although this is a Matter, in which those, that *differ* in other Things are agreed and *united*; nay, for this very Reason he elsewhere calls you a *Mungril Institution*, Reviling you for one of the best and most excellent Things in the Forming of your Societies, your *Charity*. He adds, that what you do is *arrogantly to intrench upon others Christian Liberty and Innocence*. I shall not here say any thing of the Word *Arrogant*, it may possibly turn upon himself

by and by: But as to the other Expressions, I must say, that this meddling Man was either wretchedly ignorant of the *Rules* upon which the *Societies for Reformation act*, or else he must be of a scandalously vicious Temper and Disposition. And I believe you will not charge me with rendring *Railing for Railing*, when I have a little farther explain'd my Self: The Crimes, which your *Societies are engag'd to suppress*, are such as nothing can bring Men to, but an *intolerable Contempt* of all the *Principles of Christianity*; namely, prophane Swearing and Cursing, Drunkenness, and the most shameful Lufts, and Prophanation of the Lord's-Day, and such high and open Enormities: Now, if the Convicting Men of these, and bringing them to Punishment, be an intrenching upon their *Christian Liberty*, let any one Judge what sort of a Christian he must be that can talk at this rate.

WITH all this, he farther goes on to revile you for what he judges the *Principles and Motives* of your Actions: He ascribes all your Endeavours to an *Idle, Encroaching, Impertinent, and Medling Curiosity*: Yea, to shew that he does not want Words, (whatever Skill he may want to use 'em,) he heaps more upon you, and says, what you do is the *base Product of Ill Nature, Spiritual Pride, Censoriousness, and Sanctify'd Spleen.*(g) These are Things, with which indeed, He must be allow'd to have a thorough Acquaintance; but at the same time he shews himself an utter Stranger both to you, and to all your Proceedings.

FOR as to that *Curiosity* which he makes the Foundation of your Reforming Attempts, we need only to repeat what was hinted before, that your Concern lies with the most *open and notorious*

*notorious Offenders*; and therefore his many *Epi-  
thets* to describe this *Curiosity*, serve only to fill  
up a Line, without Sense or Signification. The  
Charge of *Ill-nature* arises from a perfect Ignorance  
of the *kind* and generous Sentiments upon which  
you act. In Accusing you of *spiritual Pride*, he  
seems not at all appriz'd of that *Concealment* of  
your Selves, in those Proceedings that are most  
Useful and Honourable, which will not admit  
the *shewing* of your Pride, supposing it equal to  
his Representations: He knows not, or he will  
not know, how many Ways you take to *prevent*  
Reproach and *Censure*, instead of *Promoting* it,  
where the Persons Convicted by you are *not*  
*harden'd* in their Wickedness: And for the *san-  
ctified Spleen* of which he accuses you, the mi-  
stake of your Tempers, is plainly owing to an  
over-eager Attention to his own. There can be  
no such thing as *Spleen* in Words and Expressi-  
ons, if it is not in such a Sentence as this, *Whatever*  
*godly and fallacious Glosses such troublesome Wasps,*  
*that erect themselves into illegal Inquisitions, may cast*  
*upon their Actions, they are doubtless the unwarrant-  
able Effects of an idle, &c. Curiosity.* As for *Spleen*,  
here is enough of it; but to return him the  
Complement of Calling it *sanctified*, I dare not;  
for since I cannot do it in *Truth*, I shall not, I  
hope, be ever transported to make a By-Word, or  
a Jest of *Sanctification*.

Once more: I take the Height of his Revi-  
ling to be, the fixing upon you the Charge of  
*refined Hypocrisie*. And now, who is it that *arro-  
gantly assumes an Office*, when he sets up for a  
Judge in things that *only* belong to *GOD*? Have  
you any amongst you that are *apparently Wicked*  
*themselves*, whilst they go about the *Reforming of*  
*others*? If you have, no doubt but the World  
would hear of them at another rate: And if  
not, then your *Accuser* must put himself in the  
Place

Place of GOD, when he thus pretends to know the *Hearts* of Men, and to determine whether they are *true* or *false*.

WHAT has been the Consequence of this, as to the *Emboldening* Men in their Sins, - you are better able to tell, than I am. Only this I have observed, that Swearing and Cursing is *now*, more than ever, since I have known the World, grating our Ears in every Street; and Persons reeling to and fro under their Excesses continually to be met with; and sollicitations, or some kind of Provocations, to Lewdness and Uncleaness, almost every where occurring; and the Lord's Day very openly profan'd; and, in short, all manner of Enormities abounding, to the great Affliction and Grief of Good Men, and to the most insolent Blaspheming and Confronting of Religion. It must therefore be very proper, in such a State of Things, to offer something for your Relief and Encouragement, by shewing,

III. THAT the Revilings and Oppositions you may at present sustain, should not be look'd upon, either as *Discrediting the Cause of Reformation*, or *Discouraging your Endeavours* in the regular and prudent Managing of it. This general Head consists of *two* Parts, which I shall enlarge on distinctly.

1. THE *Revilings* of ill Men should not *discredit the Cause of Reformation*. The general Talk against the *Societies*, rather shews how *desirous* Men are to defame you, than that they are *able* to do it.

WHAT they alledge against you as *Facts*, are either such as have *never been at all*; or else have lain at the Door of *those* who have been *Prosecuted* by you; or, it may be, are charge-

chargeable upon some *Parish Officers unknown* to you; whose Power and Conduct are so far from rendring your Attempts unnecessary, that really they call for your greater Vigilance and Care.

WHAT is offer'd against you in a *Way of Reasoning*, a very little Knowledge of *every ones* Duty as a *Christian*, and a very little insight to the *settled Rules* by which you are engaged to act, as *Societies*, will enable an ordinary Understanding to confute, and vanquish.

AND truly what they attempt from the *Common-Place Ways of Slander*, has something in it self, and especially in the Management of it, that carries its own Confutation: I mean, where Men are not glad to say, and take up *any thing*, rather than *forbear to speak Evil* of you.

IT must indeed be allow'd, that the *Turn and Temper of the Times* in general, has run exceedingly against you. But shall the *Temper of the Times* be set up as a *Rule of Judging*, or as a *Standard of Action*, to any *Wise Man*? Does the *Humour* of the present Age appear so very *Judicious*, as that a Man can no farther be thought to have *any share of Wisdom*, than as he is ready to fall in with it? 'Tis so much the contrary, that nothing can more argue a want of *Judgment*, (as well as Religion) than a being carry'd away with the *common Cry*.

We may therefore hope, that Men, who are distinguish'd by the *Sword of Magistracy*, will rather think it their *Wisdom to bear up against*, than to *drive with the Stream*. Such Men ought to be very careful that they do not receive *false Impressions*, or take up *Prejudices* that should make them *Remiss*, when it is their Duty to act with *double Vigour*. I wish those, whose Preaching, the *Magistrates* (by a *late Act of Parliament*) are *confin'd* to attend upon, would be more earnest and careful in recommending the important

tant Truths of our holy Religion; that by these they might give force to our Laws against Immorality and Prophaneness, and so give Life to such a *Cause as yours*.

For my own Part, I look upon this to be more the *Business* of the *Magistrate*, than some others perhaps may do: For although without *your* Assistance, it is not possible *they* should do much in this Work; yet it must also be added, that till the *Spirit* of *Magistracy* returns, by which Great and Good Men were raised up in *former Times*, there is but little room to expect, that *former Piety* and Goodness should be reviv'd. Nor is this perhaps to be look'd for, till the *Ministers of Religion* are endued with more Skill, and Courage, and Zeal, to reason of *Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come*, before Governours and Great Men; even though like *Felix*, they are shock'd and tremble at the plain and awful Truths. Such an *Affize Sermon* as *St. Paul's*, would excite a Judge, and all the Officers that are generally spoke to on such an Occasion, to act *another Part* than can be expected from *Sermons like that* which has given you the Trouble of the foregoing Quotations.

BUT to resign the Men of Authority to others, let me particularly address my Self, in a few Words, to those of *reputed Wisdom* and *Good Morals in a lower Rank*. And I would hope that such also, will be very cautious, how they receive, or give into a *prevailing Cry*. *One Man* that is thought Prudent, and Discreet, and Sober, giving Way to the Reports of the Vicious, adds more to their Strength and Force, than can in a few Words be express'd. I will venture, with such, to put the Matter upon this issue, that *what is plainly inconsistent with the Rules of Morality, should not be comply'd with*:  
For



For thus undoubtedly it is, in the Case I am now upon, to side with common Fame. *Morality* obliges us not to receive any thing to the Disadvantage of another, especially if a good Man, or a reputed good Man, till what is reported is well attested and proved. And then farther, *Morality* will not allow the Repetition of a thing, or the Declaiming upon it, when it has been once confuted. Now these two Things being duly considered, I believe your Societies will desire no more in their Vindication.

YET after all, I verily think the *Temper* and *Run* of the *Times* being against you, may be improved to your Advantage, instead of Discrediting your Cause: For when such Numbers are continually shewing, how glad they would be to alledge any thing against you; notwithstanding which, the Malice, and Wit, and all the several Talents of Men that are at work, have been able to furnish out nothing worthy of a wise Man's regard; it must be concluded that your Cause is good, exceeding good, since it has had no more considerable Reasons produc'd for the decrying of it. From hence I may take occasion to add,

2. THAT the *Revilings* of ill Men, and their *Opposing* a *Work* of Reformation, should not discourage your Endeavours in the regular and prudent Management of it. What does not amount to a sufficient Reason for discrediting your Cause in the Esteem of others, will much less justify a being discourag'd in it your Selves. Taking care that you follow those Directions, which have once and again been laid before you, and which I had in my Eye when I spoke of a regular and prudent Management, you should rather be warm'd, than dispirited, by Opposition. And,

if I can now leave you in such a Temper of Mind, I shall gain the Satisfaction I have wish'd for in the Close of this Discourse: In order to which, I would farther recommend to you the following Considerations, and with these conclude.

(1.) YOU ought not to be discourag'd if you consider, *Who they are that carry it so ill toward you, and speak Evil of you.* In the Language of our *Text*, they are such as run into *Excess of Riot.* The Revilings you meet with, are generally no more than the thoughtless Transports of Spirits enflam'd by Intemperance; or the invidious Suggestions of Men heated with a Passion to signalize themselves, though it be by striking at every thing that is Useful and Commendable. No wonder if those, who have sought to overturn the very *Foundations of our Government*, have been eager to run down your *Societies*, which have so plain a Tendency to promote its Peace and Welfare: *For Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach*, and I may add, the surest Way to the Ruine of any *People.* Prov. xiv. 34.

T H E R E is *one Quarter* from which I have many a Time thought, the most considerable Opposition to your Design has risen; and which I do not know has ever been mention'd upon these Occasions; and that is from the *Multitude of Ale-Houses* which have of late Years been set up throughout this Kingdom. I have heard an *Acquaintance*, in the Neighbourhood of this City, say, that in *one Parish*, since his living there, these Houses have increas'd from the Number of *Four*, to *above Thirty*; and in some other Parishes that he has observ'd, the Increase to be proportionable. Now as these Places are the Nurseries of those Vices which you are concern'd

cern'd to suppress, they must, without doubt, make a very strong Party against you: And as they have very great Opportunities of Spreading their Scandal and Misrepresentations of you, so there are Multitudes corrupted and set against you, by the Conversation of such Houses.

HOW much the *late Tumults* have been owing to these, I should think worth Enquiring after; but how far they are *Advocates* for all manner of *Vice*, is too obvious to need Enquiry. So that whilst you endeavour to suppress *Drunkeness*, would it not be the most effectual Way to remove some of the *Temptations* to this Vice? Whilst you endeavour to reclaim those that are guilty of Uncleaness, and Blaspheming the Name of GOD, and profaning the LORD'S-DAY, does it not appear necessary, that the Places where all these Evils are encourag'd, should be reduc'd to a smaller Number, and put under some farther Regulations?

I am sensible that you are no way able to redress this Grievance, but by applying to those that are in *Commission of the Peace*, to prevent *Licenses* being granted, or to promote their being taken away, where thus abused. And as I am sensible that the *Revenue* brought into the *Excise Offices* by these Houses, is an appropriated thing; so to lessen their Number, or more effectually to stop their Increase, proper Applications should be made to the *Parliament* on this Head.

I mention it as a Matter that deserves to be seriously thought on; I shall at present content my Self only with adding, that the *Cause of Reformation of Manners* is greatly concerned in it. Here it is that you are treated in the worst and basest Manner: From hence it is, that your Labour will be continually increasing and grow-

ing upon your Hands: Here therefore, I conceive, some more than ordinary Endeavours should be used. I would hope the Difficulties in this Case will not appear unconquerable ones in the End; nor, in the mean Time, should they be look'd upon as very discouraging ones, considering the Characters of those who from hence become Enemies to you.

(2.) CONSIDER again, though you have many that Revile you; there are many also that approve and fall in with you. You are sure of the Approbation of *One*, that will be instead of all the World, and that is, Almighty GOD: 'Tis for Him that you stand up against evil Doers; and therefore, no doubt, but it shall be with his Presence and Favour.

THE great Captain of our Salvation, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is actually engaged also in the same Design; for He was manifested to destroy the Works of the Devil: In this Undertaking He endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself, and at last conquered; and now sits Triumphant in the highest Heavens. He therefore knows how to aid and succour you whilst you are exposed to the same Treatment that He was: And He knows how to conquer by you, as well as for you: And believe it, He is no unconcerned Spectator of what you do: This will keep you from being weary, or faint in your Minds.

AGAIN, The HOLY SPIRIT was sent into the World upon this very Errand, to turn Men from the Ways of Sin and Folly, to the Ways of Holiness and Wisdom, and from the Power of Satan unto GOD.

AND since the Angels and Spirits of just Men made perfect, are said to rejoice in the Conversion of a Sinner, they must certainly rejoice in all Endeavours that are proper to produce such a Change.

BUT

BUT beside the *Heavenly Inhabitants*, (that all look down with pleasure upon you) there are a *considerable Number* of such as concur with you *here on Earth*. Serious and good Men of *all Denominations*, are hearty Well-wishers to your Cause. Some strengthen your Interest by their *Purses*, and others by their *Prayers*; and some are willing to give you their *Time* and their best Endeavours. You have the concurrent Opinion of the most considerable, both *Divines* and *Lawyers*, on your side: You have many excellent *Statutes*, and *Acts of Parliament*; the *Proclamations* of Princes: (*b*) the solemn *Charges* of Judges, and the *Orders* of *Sessions*, in Courts of Judicature; and even *many* of them that Oppose you in their Words and Actions, yet have *Consciences* that secretly witness for you in their Breasts.

THESE are *not little Advantages*, nor should their Effect and Influence upon your Minds be little and inconsiderable. If any *one* of us was called to *stand alone* in Pleading the Cause of GOD against *Vice* and *Immorality*, it would be our Duty not to be ashamed or afraid of doing so; but when you have *so many* to take your Part, and to encourage your Attempts, and when a Number of you have such frequent Opportunities of conferring together for the Establishing and Exciting each other, methinks the *Hatred* and *Revilings* of all your Opposers should appear as *nothing* to you.

(3.) THE present *Juncture of Affairs* does more especially call for the *Exerting of your Selves*.

THE Affairs of *this Nation* have receiv'd such a *Turn*, since the *last Reformation Sermon* preach'd in *this Place*, as should give a *Spring* to your  
Hopes

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(b) See the Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners.

Hopes and Endeavours: There should be excited in *all of us*, a suitable Concern to answer the Calls of such loudly-speaking Providences.

IF you would shew your Selves grateful for the KING that is now set over you, and if you really wish that his *Reign* may be Prosperous and Happy, this will put you upon doing your utmost to correct that *Wickedness*, which otherwise threatens to bring Calamities both *on us and our King*.

AFTER GOD has so seasonably and graciously appeared for US, He may well expect that something should be done for *Him*.

LET me therefore engage you to *renew* and *reinforce* your Endeavours; and to consult upon *further Expedients*, and Methods of Procedure and call in all the Help and Assistance you can; and then *unite* your Councils, your Interests, and your Strength, and make *one more hearty and resolute Attempt* to Reform a wicked Age. Who knows, but from this very Time, GOD may say, *He has seen the perverse Ways of this People, and He will heal them*, Isai. lvii. 18.

BUT whatever may be the *Event*, which is GOD's; this must be look'd upon as present *Duty*, which is *yours*. GOD can, if He please, order the Affairs of a Nation, so as that *Good Men* shall be advanced to the highest Dignities and Authority, or that *Great Men* shall become eminent for Piety; He can make neglected, despised Religion flourish, and prevail; and can bring it into Request among all Ranks and Degrees of Men; yea, if He pleases, a *Nation* shall be *Born at once*: But if we should not see such *Wonders*; as these, yet we should be found in the *Way of our Duty*, as knowing that we shall not finally lose our Reward.

(4.) I shall close all, by directing you to consider the Verse *immediately following my Text*: In which the *Apostle* proposes *one thing* that He expected should, *of it self*, be sufficient to raise the serious Christian above all the Contempt and Evil-speaking of vicious Men: Namely, that such Revilers *shall give Account to him that is ready to Judge the Quick and the Dead*. Those Enemies of all Goodness that have escap'd deserved Judgments in this World, shall not escape in the future Day of Accounts: And those, that *now* carry it as if they thought to outbrave *Him that sits in the Heavens*, will, in a little while, find themselves at his awful Tribunal: The Revilers of all Generations, both *Quick and Dead*, shall be summon'd to Judgment. *They* may not perhaps believe, or think of this; but *you* should receive it as those that can refer your Selves to *that Day* for a full Vindication against all their Reproach.

I know you are often put in Mind of this; but not *more* often than there is *need* for it. 'Tis what you ought to think on *every Day* of your Lives, and what you are taught in a particular Manner to apply to your Selves, whenever you are *ill spoken of* for your Acting against Men of *Riot and Excess*. You may perhaps suffer, in this respect, from such as shall never be call'd to any Account in *this Life*; but when the *Judge of Quick and Dead* shall appear, He will execute Judgment, so as to *convince the Ungodly*, of all their *ungodly Deeds* which they have committed, and of all their *hard Speeches* which *ungodly Sinners* have spoken against him, Jude ver. 15.

HOW differently would Men behave themselves to what they generally do, were they careful to keep up a *lively Regard* to that solemn

lemn and dreadful Account they must one Day make to Almighty GOD. The *realizing Apprehensions* of this, should give Vigour to all Attempts for GOD; and should make us despise, yea, even Glory in Reproaches for his Sake.

A steady Belief of this, would make every thing in this present Life appear very little to us: The *Enjoyments* of it would not be so *tempting*, nor the *Evils* of it so *terrible* as they are commonly thought to be.

LET others then live in Sensuality and Unbelief, because their LORD *delays his Coming*; but let it be our Concern to do those Things at all Times, which we shall wish to be doing when actually call'd to Judgment. Thus the *Apostle* directs us to behave our Selves, as apprehending our Judge always *ready* to appear, and not as putting far from us a Day of such Importance: To add no more, let us so think of his being *ready to Judge the Quick and the Dead*, as that we may be *ready to appear before Him*; and so, as that both *Living and Dying* we may be the LORD's.

F I N I S.

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Error, Pag. 10. l. 21. for as too, read of too.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**J**UST Publish'd, by the same Author, A little Treatise of being *Born again*, without which, no *Man can be saved*. Being the Substance of *Four Sermons* preach'd at *Black-Fryars*; with some *Enlargements*.









