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A
SERMON
Preached before the
K I N G
AT
WHITE-HALL.

Being the last Sermon preached at COURT,
By the Right Reverend Father in God
BENJAMIN LANEY
Late Lord Bishop of ELY.

L O N D O N,
Printed for *Henry Brome* at the *Gun* at the
West end of *S. Pauls.* 1675.

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Maii 18. 1675.

THO. TOMKINS.

A

S E R M O N

Preached

Before His M A J E S T Y

A T

W H I T E - H A L L.

G A L. VI. V. 7. 8.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

BEfore we look into the particulars of the Doctrine of this Text, we may from the Preface [*Be not deceived*] learn so much of the nature of it, that we are either in danger to be deceived, or in great danger if we should

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be deceived, or both. It will therefore be necessary, first to implore the aid and assistance of Gods grace, which is the best Guide to lead us through the intricate ways of Error and Deceit, &c.

The Text it self seems not at first sight to answer the expectation which the Preface hath raised of Danger to us. It hath but one purpose, but that is carried upon two Propositions; One General, That *whatsoever a man sows, he shall reap.* The other Particular, of what shall be reaped, from the *Flesh*, or from the *Spirit*.

For the General, I must confess, it is a truth wherein few or none are deceived, not any Gardener or Plough-man, never so simple, that looks to reap what he hath not sown. God gave that vertue in the Creation to all living things *to bring forth after their kind.* And our Saviour himself made use of it to a higher purpose, *we cannot gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figgs of Thistles.*

So far we may possibly digest this truth in the General, and fear not much to be deceived, but when we come to Particulars, where it touches our own *flesh* and *spirit*, though it be as true as the General, and must
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be so, being contained in it : yet because in this case it mixeth with our own Interest and Affection, what we wish may not be true, we are easily misled to think it so.

To this therefore, at least the Caution in the Preface is proper and necessary, though not in the General. For this reason I shall lay that aside, as less liable to fraud, and bestow our care at this time upon this to which the Apostle directs his, where we are in danger to be deceived ; *He that soweth to the flesh, &c.*

And here our first care must be that we be not *deceived* in the meaning of the words ; which look so like a Description of the Day of Judgment, that some Expositors have taken them for it, and to be the same with that 2 Cor. 5. 10. *We shall all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

I do not refuse this Exposition for any danger that might come by mistaking, for it would howsoever lead us to a point of great consequence, and not a little necessary for these times in which our beloved *Liberty* hath rifled so far into the Mysteries
of

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of Religion, and digged so much about the Foundation, that the House is in danger; where, they say, all depends upon the report of others, who know as little as our selves whether there be a Heaven or Hell, or Day of Judgment or no. The detection of so dangerous a Deceit had been necessary, if the occasion had been as fit; I shall therefore leave it to other Texts, which are more proper for it then this is, knowing well, that Truth receives not more prejudice any way, then when it is set upon weak and uncertain Foundations.

1. Now the reason why I take not that sense in here, is because the words will not fairly bear it. If it had been sowing the sins and lusts of the flesh, whereupon the last Judgment shall be given, it had been clear for that; but the words are *to the Flesh*, and *to the Spirit*, *es corpus*, and so must have another meaning.

2. And as the Sowing, so the Reaping also differs from that at the Day of Judgment; for he that sows to the flesh shall reap corruption; and it will be hard to find Everlasting burnings in that word, which naturally signifies no more then privation of Life or Being. Now they

they that give themselves over all their lives to the lusts of the flesh without remorse, would be content with this doom, and hear no quit all scores with Dying, if they might more of it.

What other sense then will the words more properly bear? *To the flesh*, and *to the spirit*, imply rather the *soil* wherein they are to *sow*, then the *seed*, and are as two *Fields* in which God sets all men to work. Every one hath two Ploughs going, one to the *flesh*, and another to the *spirit*.

For the *Flesh* first, it must be taken abstractly from the *sins* of the *flesh*, though it be hard parting them, as the best of us know; yet we may consider them apart, and so we saw them in our Saviour, who took our flesh upon him, that is, our natural and civil condition of life, he had all the infirmities of the one except sin, and the burthens of the other; he was born under the Law, and paid obedience and tribute to the Civil Power. This is that flesh which God hath given us as a stock to be employed, but upon account. He hath not given us our natural lives to sling away at our pleasures, by disorders, distempers, or quarrels. Nor hath

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hath he put us here into the World into the Societies of men, to live in want and contempt, but to improve our industry to the best advantage both to our selves and others; and may by that attain to some luster and splendor of riches, honour, and command, to which no oppression, or extortion, or any lucky sin hath advanced us, and that is, though we have brought no corruption into the flesh, yet we shall reap corruption from it. This is a Doctrine, which our daily experience abundantly confirms, by the frequent turnings, changes and vicissitude of things.

But that our desires should be so unchangeably fixed upon things so mutable, must be some great delusion; or in the Apostles phrase in a like manifest case, a bewitching, not to trust our own eyes in what we see every day. But because though the World be full of Deceivers, we are still the greatest deceivers of our selves; let us take it upon the credit of others, and those the wisest Kings, *Solomon*, and his Father *David*, who may be the better trusted in this, for that neither of them were any great enemies to the flesh. *Solomon*, when he had

run through all the glories, pleasures, and delights of the world, never any King drank deeper in that cup; yet he at last wearied, sate down to write a Book to teach others, that all was *Vanity*, and that is but another word to signify *Corruption*. And *David*, as well of observation as experience, *I my self have seen the ungodly in great power flourishing like a green Bay tree; I went by and lo he was gone, I sought him, and his place could no where be found, Psal. 37. 36.* And least we should think this the portion onely of the ungodly, *Psal. 49. 9. Wise men also die and perish together, as well as the ignorant and foolish, and leave their riches for others; and it may be not that neither; For riches. (saith the Wise man Prov. 23.) make themselves wings and fly away from the owner.* And at another time the Owner too makes himself wings and flies away from them. All things in the World are upon the Wing. And it is a strange deceit the Prophet observes (*vers. 11.*) *And yet they think that their houses shall continue for ever.* And to give themselves a kind of Immortality, they call them after their own names. But they are oft times deceived in that too; so far doth *Corruption* eat into all our designs. The

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lewd people will be the Gossips and name the Child in despite of the Father, and that little to his liking or honour. We are not sure to enjoy that poor vanity to leave a name behind us upon that which cost us so much care and expense. Lastly, How well soever he speeds here, and that *the Glory of his house be increased*, yet this will be certain, (*vers. 17.*) *He shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth, neither shall his pomp follow him.*

I do not think by this, or any thing that can be said more, to make you out of love with the *flesh*, it is neither possible nor needful. I shall only for a conclusion of this first part beg in the Apostles name, that ye would not be deceived, as all are who give more for a thing then it is worth. To spend all our time and cost upon that which will be worth nothing; or as ill, no better then rottenness and corruption.

I make the more haste through this Field of the *Flesh*, that we may stay the longer in that of the *Spirit*, where our labour and tillage will be to better purpose, for ye see the best that can be hoped for from the other, is but to flourish as a Flower of that Field,
and

and that *Pfal. 103. 19.* as soon as the wind goeth over it is gone. *Nullus flos nisi novus.* Corruption bloweth upon the most florid condition in it. But the growth and increase from the field of the Spirit is incorruptible, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, *1 Pet. 1. 4.* for he that soweth, &c.

When we see so great a Harvest, and yet so few Labourers in the Field, some strange delusion there must be, wheresoever it lies; we must confess the Apostles caution here was no more then needs: *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* For is it possible where so good wages are, so few should set themselves at work? unless they either mistrusted their pay, Eternal Life, and so mocked God that promised it; or mistook the sowing, and so deceived themselves. Both these would deserve to be well considered, but because they who have some diffidence of a life hereafter to come, have not the confidence to say so; I have not so much spare time as to spend in proving that which they will be ready to say they do not deny. I shall therefore now endeavor only to undeceive them, if it may be, in the vain pretences they make to it in the *sowing.*

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And here, first it will be necessary, that whatever else deceives them, to see, that a misunderstanding of the words give no occasion to it, to know what this *sowing to the Spirit* is, and how it comes to make a Title to Everlasting Life, for there are no mean Competitors in the same Claim. For,

1. *Christ* is the Author of this life, *For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. 15. 4. And 2 Tim. 1. 10. *Our Lord Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light.*
2. Another Competitor with the Spirit, is the Gospel, that is the immortal seed of this life, *Being born again by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. *It is the Power of God to Salvation.*
3. *Faith* puts in to the same Claim, *The Just shall live by Faith*, Rom. 1. 17. And 1 Tim. 1. 16. *St. Paul* professeth that *Jesus Christ* had set forth him as a Pattern to all them who should hereafter believe on him to everlasting life.

Is there yet another way to Everlasting life by *sowing to the Spirit*? It is happy for us that there is any way to it, but yet we
may

may be at a loss and confounded where there are so many.

To remove that fear, we must know, that all these are but several names of the same thing, though in divers appearances, and *Phases*, as the Astronomers word is, *Christ*, *the Gospel*, *Faith*, and the *Spirit*, do all relate to *life everlasting*.

Christ as the Author of it, provided all things necessary to it. The *Gospel*, as the Register of all that is to be known or done to attain it. *Faith* is our submission and obedience to the Gospel. The *Spirit* is the publisher and preacher of it, *Ephes. 3. 5*. *The mysteries of Christ which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit*. And for this reason the Apostle expressly calls the *Gospel* the *Spirit*, *Gal. 3. 3*. For whereas they having already embraced the Gospel, fell back to Circumcision and other rites of the Law, severely charges them with folly; *Are ye so foolish having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?* The *Spirit* is the *Gospel*, and the *Law* the *Flesh*: they are so called *Heb. 9. 10*. *Carnal Ordinances*; and the reason why is intimated, because they were tem-

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temporal, imposed upon them, until the time of Reformation and no longer; whereas the Gospel *abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23.

Thus we see that Christ, and Faith, and the Gospel, and the Spirit must all meet in the title to everlasting life; if we separate and divide them, we are certainly deceived; it is a fallacy *à compositis ad divisa*, dividing those things which the Spirit hath joyned together. And by this we may trie and examine the sufficiency of their Pleas apart and divided.

1. First, For those that make their title to life from Christ alone, that they are Christians at large, not to be tied up by any particular rules of Faith or Obedience, that is to divide Christ from his Gospel against his own will, who promised to reward them that forsook any thing for his sake and the Gospel, he joins them both together, *Mark 10. 29.* and will not own them for his friends that do not all that he commands them, *John 15.* and they shall find more Work-commandments in the Gospel than a fantastical name of Christianity. Whilest by this means they think to avoid Schism, they make one, for they are Schismaticks upon re-

record, 1 Cor. i. 10. It is declared (saith Saint Paul) that there are divisions, the Greek word is Schisms among you; every one of you saith I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ. Is that a Schism to be for Christ? Yes sure, it is dividing of him; for he adds, *Is Christ divided?* and how could that be, but from his Apostles, whom he had appointed to instruct them in the Gospel, and had made them as it were one person with himself, *He that hears you hears me.* And thus was Christ divided.

What could probably be the cause of this separation from them, but that they were not satisfied either with their Doctrine, or severity of their Discipline, sought to shroud themselves under the name of Christ, not out of a great respect to him and his Doctrine, which we may well presume could not differ, but because it was a more plausible way to shift off their Authority, by appealing from the Servants to the Master.

Much after this Copy do our Christians of the *Latitude* write. They believe in Christ without a Creed, they obey him without doing his Will; they worship him, no man knows how, but every man as he likes;

likes ; and if he likes that better, not at all.

2. As these are deceived by dividing Christ from his Gospel, so secondly others by the same fallacie divide the Spirit from it. So fully was the Mystery of Christ made known in the Gospel by the Spirit, that St. *John* gives a charge, that if there come any that bring not that Doctrine, *not to receive him, nor bid him God speed, 2 Joh. 10.* This Doctrine serves not many mens purpose, they must have other Doctrines, and to credit them, other Spirits too. Every one will have a Familiar Spirit of his own to teach him.

But are we to look for no other Instruction from the Spirit, but what is already taught in the Gospel? that is to depose him of his Office from the time that the Gospel was first revealed, and leave him no work to do after. God forbid, there are many other excellent Offices of the Spirit besides Revelation ; there is the Spirit of Sanctification, whereof we have continual need, to infuse all divine Graces and Vertues into us, to assist and strengthen us in all our infirmities, to lead us out of temptations, troubles, and dangers, which every day surround us ; yet not to reveal anew what we are to believe

lieve or do, which is already done in the Gospel. And yet the Spirit will help us in that too; For when any difficulty or contention arise about them, we may and must pray for the Spirits assistance, to clear our understandings, by removing pride and prejudice that obscure it; to inflame us with a true love of truth, not to dictate and reveal, or whisper any thing which is not to be seen in the Gospel, as well by the eyes of others as our own.

But doth not the Spirit bear witness to our spirits that we are the children of God? This can be no other but a private Spirit. That this Text stand not in our way (*Rom. 8. 16.*) we must distinguish, not onely, as I have said already, the Spirit by the several operations of revealing and sanctifying: So of the several kinds of bearing witness, which is either proper, by affirming or denying any thing expressly, or improperly, by proof and argument from the Nature and Incidents of the matter in question; as *Acts 14. 17.* *God left not himself without witness in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons.* Rain and fruitful seasons affirm nothing of God, yet prove sufficiently his Godhead, Power,

and Providence in governing the World.

Now the Spirit in both these senses doth bear witness to our spirits, that we are the children of God, without the help of private Revelations. For if we speak of bearing witness properly, the publick Spirit in the Gospel will effect that where it gives this testimony, That whosoever believes, repents, and amends his life, is the Child of God, when our spirits can experimentally assume that we are so qualified, then the Spirit in the Gospel beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. And if we speak of bearing witness in the other sense, of proving by argument and reason, then the Spirit of Sanctification working a real change in us, a detestation of Sin, and a true love and practice of Vertue and Godliness, beareth witness to our spirits that we are the children of God. Here is therefore no place in this Text for private Revelations, and I wish they had none amongst us; for under colour of them, every one will have a private Spirit, though of his own making. No Chymist can extract Natural Spirits out of any thing with more ease, then they can Divine; any vain Dream or
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Imagination, nay any wicked devilish suggestion shall be an impulse of Gods Spirit. It were happy for this Kingdom and Church if we could lay these Familiar Spirits; No *Schism* in the Church, no *Mischief* in the Commonwealth; no *Rebellious Practice* which was not carried on by the conduct and impulse of these Spirits. Thus by them they trouble the World, deceive simple men, and work despite to the Spirit of God.

There is yet another title made to *Life-everlasting* upon the same fallacie, by *Faith* divided from the *Gospel*.

3.

Faith hath been an unhappy word of contention; but I shall onely take notice here of the insufficiency of the Plea of that Faith, which by those that invented it, is called, *Fides specialis misericordie*, that no man is justified, and by consequence, hath right to *Life Everlasting*, but he that believes by a special mercy to him in particular, his sins are forgiven; or which is all one, that he is elected, for without that there is no remission.

The Faith of the Gospel they think is too general, without life, and common to the

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Devils, who *believe and tremble*; they are *Believers* and *Quakers* too, and yet are *Devils*. I cannot say how much of the Gospel they believe, but by their trembling, and their own confession to our Saviour, *Art thou come to torment us before our time?* that they believed the Article of the last Judgment; that they shall be one day tormented for their sins. By the way, the Devils may shame them that have not learned so far in their Creed.

But notwithstanding this, we must not be so kind to the Devils, as to think they have the Faith of the Gospel, because that works by love; *Circumcision availeth not any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love, Gal. 5.6.* I think no man hath so much charity for the Devils, as to think they have any. There is no reason therefore why the Faith of the Gospel should suffer for their sakes. The word of Faith, saith St. Paul, *Rom. 10.8. is that which we preach*, and that was the Gospel. Our particular election may be written in the Book of Life in Heaven, but it is no where to be found written in the Book of the Gospel. True Faith is that which we preach, saith the Apostle, but this Faith of
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Election no man can preach; for who can say and say truly of his own knowledge, that I, or you, or any man by name is elected. Now if this Faith cannot come by hearing, what will become of our Sermons? indeed, of any thing that can be called *Religion* or *Sowing to the Spirit*? for that leads us a way to Heaven through believing some mysteries we understand not, through many a heavy and hard law of mortification and denying our selves; whereas this Faith cuts off all that, and may well go for *sowing to the flesh*. For first, in favour to this, it shrinks up all the duties of the Gospel into Faith; and then all Faith into one Article, and that not in the Creed neither: and something they pare from that too, it works not as an act which we may call ours, for that will prejudice Gods free Grace, but as a relation to Christ; and in the Logick Schools it is disputed, whether Relations have any real being or no. And thus all hangs upon a Pins point, and leaves not a Corn to be *sown to the Spirit*. We may therefore conclude that this, and the other Pretenders are all deceived, mistake the Field of the Spirit, which is the Gospel, and sowe quite beside it.

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It will be now time to enter into the Field it self, and see what work the Spirit there sets us to. It is a large Field, and reaches as far as the Gospel; indeed too large to be passed through at one time. But this as a great Country may be seen in a little Chart.

1. 1. One of the works, and a chief design of the Spirit in the Gospel, is a godly, righteous, and vertuous life.
2. 2. And a second is like to it, A right Faith in the Mystry of Christ and Salvation.
3. 3. A third is a devout and reverent worship of God in Prayers, Praises, and Confessions.
4. 4. A fourth is a careful use of the auxiliaries of Grace, Sacraments, Fastings, and other acts of Humiliation.
5. 5. Fifthly, Then we have the adorning all these with comely and decent Ceremonies. This last though far from the Heart of Religion, is yet within the Body of it, as well as the rest.

One thing more I have not yet named, which seems at a farther distance from the great duties of the Gospel, and yet hath the advantage above the rest, that it is here expressly

pressly called, *sowing to the Spirit*; and what that is, we shall learn from the Verse precedent; where

6. The Apostle exhorts *him that is taught in the Word, to communicate to him that teacheth in all good things*. If there be any coherence in the discourse, any reason in the rational Particle [*for*] *For he that soweth unto the Spirit*. The communicating our Goods for the Gospel, is *true sowing to the Spirit*.

6.

This duty therefore together with those already named, are all Sowing to the Spirit, and have a joint tendency to life everlasting. For the meaning is not that any of them apart make a full Title to it, but according to their quality and degree carry us their part in the way towards it.

It is therefore but a piece of fraud and Sophistry to discountenance one duty, by setting up a greater against it, as the manner is, that the main purpose of the Gospel looks another way. And so run down one duty with another; the less with the greater, as Great Persons do their Inferiors. This is not onely a Deceit, but plain mocking of God, who commands both, and a setting him against himself.

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I note this Fallacy in common, that it be not made use of here on our particular, to mislead us from the due regard ought to be given to the maintenance of those that minister in the Gospel; though it be not the accomplishment of the great duties, yet hath a remote influence upon all. Set it in as low a place in Gods House as you please, but for the Spirits sake, let it not be turned out of dores.

I single out this duty from the rest, that may deserve our care more, and need it less. It hath fewer friends to speak for it I confess, but the true reason why I do it, is because it was the particular occasion of the Apostles delivering this doctrine; and in this I shall keep both a better measure with the Time, and with the Apostles intention, and it is a point too, wherein we are as much *deceived* as in any.

Our worldly Goods by nature and kind are Carnal, yet being *sown to the Spirit*, become spiritual, they are enfranchised and incorporate into the Family and Retinue of the Spirit, they alter their property, not by imprinting any real indelible character into them, as envy and ill-will objects, but giving

ving onely the respect that persons of low birth have, when they are adopted or affianced into a more noble Stock. When the *Flesh* serves the *Spirit* it is advanced above her condition, the Volatile nature of the *Flesh* is fixed by the *Spirit*, and helps to make up the title to everlasting life.

This is warrant enough for me to make a Suit, and reward enough for those that grant it: That for Gods sake and the Spirits, when the Church Revenue comes into your thoughts to cast an eye, if not of duty, of compassion upon such miserable places, where there is but too much necessity for it. I can speak of my own knowledge, that there are many hundreds of Parishes in this Kingdom, where there is not so much yearly maintenance for serving the Cure, as one of your Foot-men stand you in.

If so great a scandal to Religion, and real obstruction to it, be in these indigent Times too heavy a burthen to be removed, and therefore unseasonable also to be moved. Though this be no time of *sowing to the Spirit*, it can be no season to pull up that which hath been already sown by the devotion of others.

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'Tis strange that the Church maintenance should be thought to hang so loose, more then other mens Estates, as that any man, when the fullen humour takes him, can think to blow them away with a Motion, *Let the Church Lands be sold.*

If they were held onely upon *Frank al-moign*, it is as firm a Tenure as any is in Law. But it is more strange, that they should think to mock and elude God, who once declared it to be a robbing of him also. When he charged the Jews for detaining Tithes and Offerings from the Priests of that Altar. What reason can be given that the Ministers of a better Covenant should have a worse title? There are not many Estates in the World besides which God himself owns; this bears the Image and Superscription of the Spirit. It must be a desperate boldness to break into his peculiar, to stir any thing that is sown in his Field.

And that it may not seem strange that Carnal things should be thus advanced to spirituals; for by a like conversion Spiritual things degenerate into Carnal. This likewise will be worth our observation.

Religion is out of doubt a Spiritual thing,
yet

yet if that spread and run into Schisms, it grows Carnal. For while one saith, *I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal, 1 Cor. 3. 4. So Rom. 16. 17. They who cause divisions among you serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Bellies; if any thing be flesh sure the Belly is.*

If there be so much malignance and sowreness in Schisms and Divisions to turn Religion into Flesh, what shall we think of a Religion, in Design, that is made up all of Sects and Divisions? that must be all Flesh. I say no more, it is in private Design onely; as when St. Paul charged the *Corinths* with strife, and schism, it was but upon report onely. *It is reported (saith he) by them of the house of Cloe, that there are contentions among you.* So I say, onely, it is reported from a house of Cloe, how these Schisms shall be disposed of. A Church shall be contrived that will give room and Liberty to them all.

But if the Church must be new modelled for their sakes, they must new model the Rules of Wisdom and Government too; For by that it was ever thought necessary that the People should conform to the Laws of the Church; never that a Church should

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conform to the humours of the People.

This is so irregular a thing, that it will not be labour lost to take a little farther notice of it. And first that you may know it by name, it is to be called, *a Comprehensive Church*; a name, I must confess, not unfit for the purpose, though I think it might have been better called a Drag-net, that will fetch in all kind of Fish, good or bad, great or small, there will be room enough for *Leviathan*, to take his pastime therein. But how shall the Church be drawn out to such a breadth and latitude?

That will be no hard matter to do. It is but pulling down the Old Walls, the Confession of Doctrine, and Canons of Discipline. Lay all common, and then no doubt there will be room enough for all.

But will these prove so good company when they are in, for whose sake this should be done? Will they not rather give us cause to fear what the poor *Trojans* found, when they broke down the old Walls of their City to let in a Horse with a *Comprehensive Belly*, that carried armed enemies enough to ruine them and their City.

And least we should think this done for
love

love of their company, they let us know they have no meaner inducement to it, then that which governs all the World, Gain and Profit; advancement of Trade, and increase of Money. This is plain dealing, they profess to sowe the Spirit to the Flesh. They will make a Church that shall make us rich. But can there be any blame or harm in this? Can we not be Religious and rich too? I will not dispute that, if we bring riches up to Religion. But I will dispute it, and deny it too, if we bring Religion down to Riches. Godliness may be Gain, but Gain will never be Godliness. Riches may be a good Nurse to cherish it, but an ill Mother to bring it forth, for *whatsoever is born of the flesh is flesh.*

It is the greatest dishonour that can be to the Spirit to make it serve for Compost, onely to lay in the Field of the Flesh.

But these; you say, though carnal things, may be secondary ends; which do not make void the spiritual. *Peace and Charity* are the two Pillars whereon this Church is to be built; and they will serve to keep up the Spirit in it.

We cannot deny but that they are true
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spiritual things, but if both these Pillars should fail, there would nothing be left in the Church but Flesh.

- i. For Peace and Union, that which feeds the hope of that, is taking down the Walls that divide them; that is, removing the Confessions and Canons, and all will naturally fall in together.

For answer to this, we must distinguish the quality of the persons for whom this room is to be made. And they are either such as will be content to leave their faults and errors behind them; and to those we shall do well to set our gates wide open, and need not pull down our Walls. Or they are such as bring their errors, animosities, and divided judgments along with them. And to pacifie these, the taking away the Walls will do no good, for they bring their Divisions with them into the Bowels of the Church, where the flame will be more fierce and dangerous, then when it burnt onely without. All the benefit can be hoped for by taking away the Confessions and Canons, is but to secure them from punishment, but leaves them free to all other causes of dissention, or rather

ther fortifies and animates them to pursue their differences with more violence. Impunity and Authority will not cool their zeal of advancing the Interest of their Sect; for it is not *Toleration* but *Mastery* they aim at. In the mean time our *Sowing* will be turned into *Fighting*, our *Plough-shares* into *Swords*; the *field of the Spirit* into a *field of War*, and thus we shall live in a perpetual storm. This is all the hope we have of Peace by it.

And for *Charity*, we shall find it hath as little to do here. It will be neither want of *Charity* to leave them out, nor a work of *Charity* to take them in.

2.

1. It will be no want of *Charity* to leave them out, if by that we condemn them not. And condemn them we do not, if we keep *St. Pauls* rule. *Schismaticks* are without the *Church*, we judge not them; *Those that are without the Church, God judgeth*, 1 Cor. 5. 13. They must stand or fall to God. And when we do refuse them, we do not condemn them to Hell. All we say is, if they will not go to Heaven our way, they shall not go in our company; and in truth they cannot.

2. It

2. It is no work of Charity to take them in with all their faults. For though Charity be a good natured Vertue, and covers a multitude of sins, but when they are not known abroad, but cherisheth none that are. I could never think it a breach of Charity to condemn Heresie or Schism, which are known sins, though it be against Charity to condemn any person of either, of whose guilt there may be doubt. Charity may sometimes absolve the Offender, but never the Offence. When the Offence is known to us, and the Fact avowed by them, they cannot be taken in for Charity sake, if we love our own quiet, and Charity begins at home.

Now if neither Peace nor Charity have any share in framing this *New Church*, I may for a Conclusion ask the question our Saviour did the Jews concerning *John's Baptism*, *Is it from Heaven, or of men?* or which is all one, is it from the *Flesh* or from the *Spirit*? If they shall say from the *Flesh*, all men will adjudge it to Corruption; If they shall say from Heaven, or from the Spirit, I will ask them another question, Whether a Church with-
out

our Walls can be of Gods making? *His Church is a garden enclosed, Cant. 4. 12.* And when he planted a Vineyard, *Ejay 5.2.* and that was his Church, *he fenced it in.* But when he saw it brought forth wild Grapes, then he threatens them with this Judgment, *I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the Wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.* Can it be wisdom to draw that upon our selves, which God would not inflict but in vengeance? To make the Field of the Spirit no better then the Field of the Sluggard? *Prov. 24. 31.* *I went by it, and lo it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.* Nothing can be liker then Schisms to Thorns, and Liberty from Laws to a broken Wall.

If I had kept my self to the proper work of the Preacher this day, which is *Palm Sunday*, I should have carried a *Palm* to the triumph of our Saviour entring into *Jerusalem*. But finding some so busie in strewing our way with THORNS; in stead of PALMS, I thought it fitter first to clear the way of them, to prepare it

F.

this

Of Comprehension.

this day for a greater Triumph at *Easter*, over *Sin*, *Death*, and *Hell*.

I have no more to say, but to end as I began, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* That which is dearest to us, our own Credit, that we be not men *deceived*; and that which ought to be Gods honour, that he be not *mocked*, are both engaged in the Truth of this Doctrine, that we do not rashly adventure to *sow* what we would be loath to *reap*; and unwisely prefer that which will certainly and suddenly fade away, before that which will last for ever. *He that soweth to the flesh, &c.*

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