





S O M E

# CONSIDERATIONS

Contributing unto the

# DISCOVERY

Of the Dangers that threaten

# RELIGION,

And the Work of

# REFORMATION

In the

## Church of Scotland,

Published for informing the Ignorant and Inadvertent, for awakning the Careless and Secure, for stirring up unto the Exercise of Repentance, and Faith towards G O D, and for perswading unto a godly Union and edifying Peace, &c.

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By *James Guthrie*, Minister of the Gospel at *Stirling*.

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*Amos 3. 8. The Lion hath roared, who will not fear?  
the Lord God hath spoken, who can but Prophecie?*

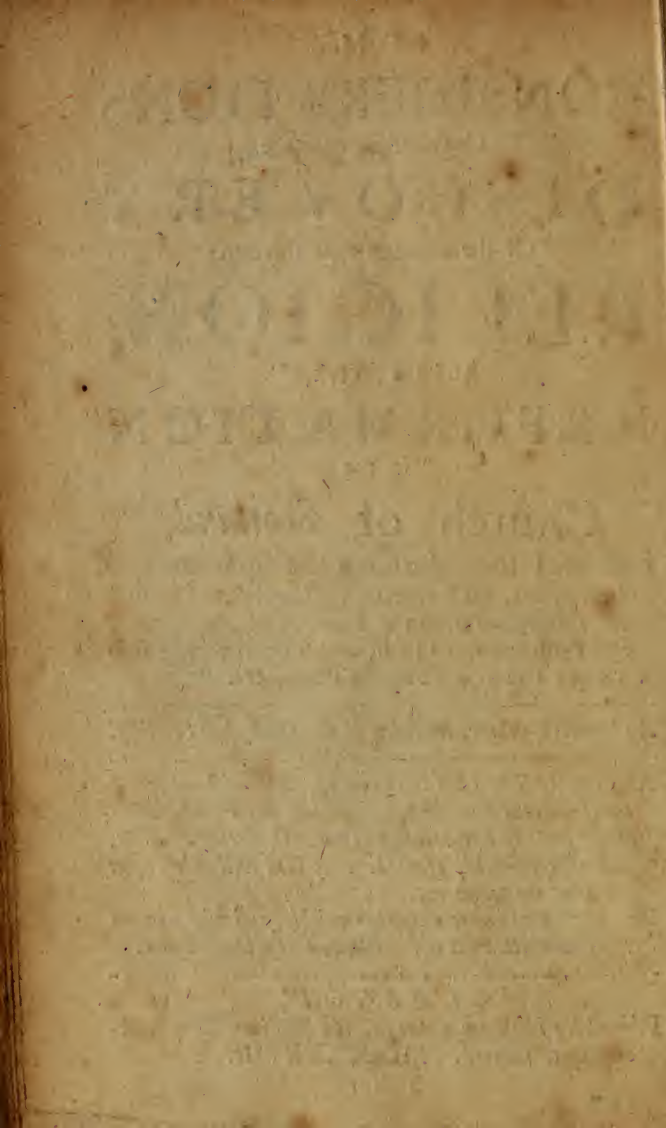
*Jonah 1. 6. What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise,  
call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon  
us, that we perish not.*

*Rev. 2. 5. I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove  
thy Candlestick out of his Place, except thou repent.*

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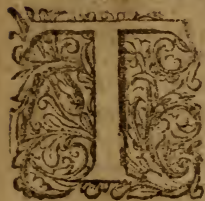
G L A S G O W,

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THE  
PREFACE  
TO THE  
READER.

Christian Reader,



THE true Protestant Religion as reformed in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government in the Church of Scotland, is a Pearl of so incomparable Value and Price, that the very hearing and apprehension of any Danger, threatening its Spoil and Ruin,

cannot but affect every Soul that knoweth the Worth, and is in love with the Beauty thereof, especially the Hearts of all the genuine and true born Sons and Daughters of God, who have received their spiritual Life and Being therein, and do grow up under the Shadow thereof: How much more ought it, and I hope, doth it affect thee, when such Dangers do threaten the same, as we nor our Fathers have not heard nor seen the like, since the Time of Reformation from Popery; these in the Year 1588. from the Spanish Armado without, and from the Plottings and Practises of Papists within, seem in many Respects nothing comparable to these of this Time: And though

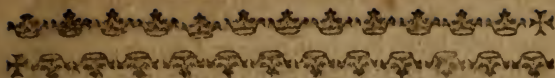
*I be far from extenuating the Hazard that Religion stood into under Prelacy, ( especially when the Service Book and the Book of Canons were violently obtruded upon this Church ) or from reflecting upon the necessary, and just, and laudable Opposition that was made thereunto; Yet I do believe, that upon sober and serious Examination, it shall be found by Men of Judgment and Understanding, ( who are pleased to make the Parallel ) to involve nothing, contrary to the Words of Soberness and Truth, to assert, That the Hazard of Religion is greater now, nor it was then, and that the Tokens and Prognosticks of a dreadful Night of Darknēss and Desolation upon the Sanctuary of the Lord in this Land, are more and more pregnant now, than they were at that Time: The General Assembly of this Church thought, that they had Reason thus to speak in the Year 1647. in their brotherly Exhortation to England. “ We cannot ( say they ) but look upon the Danger of the true Reformed Religion in this Island, as greater now than before; not only for that, these very Principles and Fundamentals of Faith, which under Prelacy, yea, under Popery it self, were generally received as uncontroverted, are now by the Scepticism of many Sectaries of this Time, either opposed or called in question; but also because instead of carrying on Reformation towards Perfection, that which hath been already built, is in Part cast down, and in Danger to be wholly overthrown, through the Endeavours of Sectaries, to comply with many of the Prelatical and Malignant Party, and their joining hand in hand, and casting in their lots, and interweaving their Interests together in way of Combination against the Covenant and Presbyterial Government; yea, the unclean Spirit which was cast out, is about to enter in again with seven other Spirits*

“ rits worse than himself, and so the Latter-end like  
“ to be worse than the beginning.” If there was ground  
for such a Warning and Complaint above twelve Years  
ago, when the Toleration of Errors and Heresies was  
not enacted by a Law, and the Parliament of England,  
and the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, were pro-  
ceeding in the Work of Reformation, and Uniformity  
in Religion, and the State and Church of Scotland  
were in their Integrity: How much more now, under  
all the Evils that have since come to pass in both Nati-  
ons, and which do grow upon us Day by Day, and are  
come to such a Height, that without a wonderful and  
mighty Hand of gracious Providence, interposing to  
preserve Religion, it seems to be nigh to Ruin amongst  
us, and that our Land shall be involved in Darknes,  
and plunged in the Depths of Atheism, and Error, and  
Popery, and Profanity? The thought of these things,  
as they did induce me two or three Months ago to pen  
these Considerations, tending to the Discovery of the  
Dangers that threaten Religion, and the Work of Refor-  
mation in this Church; So hath it now perswaded me  
to send the same abroad with the former Testimony, that  
by casting these few Mites into the publick Treasury of  
the Sanctuary, I might according to my weak Mea-  
sure, contribute and concur with other more faithful and  
able Ministers and Witnesses of Jesus Christ in the  
Land, for informing of the Ignorant and Inadvertant,  
for rebuking of the Careless and Indifferent, for  
awakning such as are secure, for warning of such as  
have left their First-love, that they may remember  
whence they are fallen, and repent, and do the first works,  
and for stirring up of these who have received the Truth  
in Love, to be zealous for the Lord of Hosts, and valiant  
for his Truth upon the Earth, by standing in the Breach,  
and contending diligently for the Faith once delivered to  
the Saints, for perswading unto the Exercise of Repen-  
tance

*tance and Faith towards God, and to Watchfulness and Tenderneſs in Duty, and unto cordial and well grounded Union in the Lord, that we may all of us in Subordination to him, with one Shoulder to the outmoſt of our Power, by all lawful Means in our Stations and Callings, faithfully endeavour the Preſervation of Religion, and the Work of Reformation, that the bleſſed Truths of the Goſpel, and precious Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt being preſerved amongſt us in their Purity and Integrity, they may be tranſmitted without Spot to our Poſterity. I do not doubt, but diſcerning Eyes may ſee more Dangers than I have ſpoke unto, I have but pointed at a few, and if any ſhall judge this Diſcovery to be defective, I ſhall be glad, and not think my Labour loſt, if they may but thereby be provoked to give a more diſtinct and full Sound in theſe Things. It will haply be the Expectation and Deſire of ſome, that ſomething ſhould be ſpoke alſo for diſcovering of theſe Duties that the Lord calls for at our Hands, for preſerving of Religion in the miſt of ſo many Dangers: Somewhat of Duty there is, which the Diſcovery of the ſeveral Dangers doth by native and clear Conſequence point forth, the whole would be a Work very difficult and comprehenſive, and that doth require much Light and Leaſure: Therefore hoping that it may be done to better Purpoſe by theſe of more Prudence and Authority in the Church, I ſhall for the preſent forbear to meddle further therein, and wiſhing that the little which I have done in the firſt Part of the Work concerning the Diſcovery of the Dangers, may be accepted of the Saints, and contribute for thy Edification. I do continue*

Thy Servant for Jeſus ſake,  
in the Work of the Goſpel,

JAMES GUTHRIE.



Some Considerations contributing unto the  
Discovery of the Dangers that threaten  
Religion and the Work of Reformation,  
in the Church of Scotland.

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## Confideration First.

*From that swarm of Pestilent Errors and  
Heresies that doth abound in the neigh-  
bour Nation of England, and our Vici-  
nity thereunto, and intimate and day-  
ly Correspondence therewith.*



It is far from my Purpose to cast  
any Imputation upon *England*,  
or to render the neighbour  
Church and Nation vile in the  
Eyes of any, by discovering of  
their Nakedness, in reckoning  
out the many pestilent Errors  
and Heresies that many therein  
are infected with: I know there be many Thou-  
sands in that Land, who have not bowed their Knees  
to *Baal*, nor defiled their Garments by departing a-  
way from the Faith, but do sadly bemoan and faith-  
fully bear Witness against the falling away of others.  
And I do easily acknowledge, that *England* hath a  
great

great and honourable Company of precious, and sound, and able, and godly Ministers and Professors, as readily are to be found in any Nation or Church upon the Earth; but I hope it shall be no Injury nor Offence to any to say ( and would to God I could speak it with that Compassionate Resentment and serious affectedness of Heart, that doth become in so sad and Soul-concerning a Case ) that a great many in that Church and Nation, are infected with many noisom Errors and pestilent Heresies, which fret as a Gangren unto the destroying of many poor Souls: Is there almost any of the precious and necessary Truths of God, but hath some Opposers and Contradicters in *England*? Not only are the beautiful Superstructures thrown down, but the very lowest and most necessary Foundations of the Christian Religion razed and plucked up by the Roots, by the Blasphemies of some. To dispute and declaim, and write against the blessed Trinity, against the Divinity of the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever, against the sacred Scriptures that they are not the Word of God, are with not a few, things common and ordinary; yea, these very things which *Jews* and *Mahumetans*, and not a few in Pagan Nations do acknowledge; and which being denied, the Condition of a Man is made little better than that of a Beast; such as the Immortality of the Soul, the Resurrection of the Dead, Heaven and Hell, eternal Rewards, and eternal Punishments, are by diverse wantonly debated, and by some pertinaciously denied and oppugned. The Time was, and that not many Years ago; when *Independency*, *Erastianism*, *Brownism*, and *Anabaptism* in that Land, were looked upon as threatening Danger to the Churches and Work of Reformation in these Nations; yet in Comparison to the Errors that now abound in *England*; these are but as Mole-hills to Moun-

Mountains: The whole Body of *Arminianism*, *Antinomianism*, *Pelagianism*, *Socinianism*, *Familism*, *Quakerism*, and almost what not that hath at any Time been broached by the Father of Lies, and infested the Christian Church, but hath some Brockers and Patrons there. That these things are so, is but too sadly true, and these things being so, Is not the Church of *Scotland* by Reason of its Vicinity unto, and intimate and daily Correspondence and Commerce with *England*, in eminent Hazard to be tainted with Infection thereby; the Vicinity and next neighbour-head of Nations and Churches, especially when attended with intimate and ordinary Fellowship, hath always had great Influence upon the Manners of one another, chiefly as to the depraving and corrupting of Religion, to which all the Sons of Men by Reason of their inbred Ignorance, and Instability, and the Power of corrupt Imaginations, are of themselves but too too prone. The Children of *Israel* (not only) when they lived in the Land of *Egypt*, were infected with many idolatrous and heathenish Customs, *Ezek. xxi. 27.* ( but even ) when separated and brought into *Canaan*, albeit railed in and fenced with the holy and perfect Law of the Lord, to which was added the Sanction of many great and precious Promises to such as did obey, and of many dreadful Threatnings against the Disobedient and Rebellious, which were accordingly verified by God in eminent Acts, of his Justice and Goodness; the Idolatrous Opinions and Practises of their neighbour Nations had such Influence upon them, that they could not be kept ( scarce at any Time for one Generation together ) from learning their Works, and going a whoring after their corrupt Customs, *Psal. cvi. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39.* Yea, sometimes came to be worse than the Heathen, whom the Lord had de-

destroyed before them, *2Chron. xxxiii. 9.* and to change his Judgments into Wickedness, more than the Nations, and his Statutes more than the Countries, that were round about them, *Ezek. v. 6.* especially after that Religion came to be corrupted amongst the ten Tribes by *Jeroboam*, his erecting the Calves at *Dan* and at *Bethel*. *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, though they had the Temple and the Ark, and the Oracle, and the Altar, with all other the Ordinances of God, and also many Prophets arising up early, and speaking to them in the Name of the Lord, did then become treacherous, *Jer. iii. 11.* *Aholah* saw what *Aholibah* had done, she became more corrupt in her inordinate Love than she, and in her Whoredoms more than her Sister, and her Whoredoms -----till the Lord saw that she was defiled, and that they took both one way, *Ezek. xxiii. 11. 13.* The Histories of the *English* and *Scots* Nations and Churches, do testify, that they have for the most Part run one Lot, both as to their reforming and corrupting of Religion: This Consideration was the prime Ground of these Bonds and Confederacies that were transacted, first, between *Elizabeth* Queen of *England*, and the Lords of the Congregation in *Scotland*, and afterwards between that Queen and King *James* the sixth: It was also this especially, that did induce these Nations and Churches to engage themselves in the solemn League and Covenant, *Anno 1643.* because ( as it is expressed by the Ministers of *England* in their Letter to the General Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*, *Anno 1641.* ) ‘ they did know and ac-  
‘ knowlede, that these Churches of *England* and  
‘ *Scotland*, seem both to be imbarcked in the same  
‘ Bottom, to sink and swim together, and are so  
‘ nigh conjoynd by so many strong Ties, not only  
‘ as Fellow-members, under the same Head, Christ,  
‘ and

‘ and Fellow-subjects, under the same King, but also  
 ‘ by such Neighbour-hood and Vicinity of Place,  
 ‘ That if any Evil should infest the one, the other  
 ‘ cannot be altogether free, or if for the present, it  
 ‘ should, yet in process of Time, it would sensibly  
 ‘ suffer also, ” which is homologated by the Assem-  
 bly in their Answer to that Letter : ‘ We have learn-  
 ‘ ed ( say they ) by long Experience, ever since the  
 ‘ Time of Reformation, and especially after the two  
 ‘ Kingdoms have been by the great goodness of  
 ‘ God to both, united under one Head and Monarch,  
 ‘ but most of all, of late, which is not unknown  
 ‘ to you, what Danger and Contagion in Matters  
 ‘ of Kirk Government, of divine Worship, and of  
 ‘ Doctrine, may come from the one Kirk to the  
 ‘ other ; which besides all other Reasons, may  
 ‘ make us pray to God, and to desire you and all  
 ‘ that love the Honour of Christ, and the Peace of  
 ‘ these Kirks and Kingdoms, heartily to endeavour,  
 ‘ that there might be in both Kirks one Confession  
 ‘ of Faith, one Directory for publick Worship, one  
 ‘ Catechism, and one Form of Kirk Government, ”

And the Commissioners of the Parliament of *Eng-  
 land* in the Propositions given by them to a Com-  
 mittee, to be presented to the General Assembly of  
 this Church, *Anno* 1643. for perswading of them  
 to further and expedite the Aid and Assistance, then  
 demanded by both Houses from the Kingdom of  
*Scotland*, after they have given them to understand,  
 that by Reason of the prevailing of Papists, the pre-  
 latial Sanction and other malignant Enemies, to  
 these who desired Reformation, the hopeful Begin-  
 nings thereof, were likely not only to be rendred in-  
 effectual, but all the former Evils, Superstitions and  
 Corruptions to be introduced by strong Hand. They  
 do in the next Place tell them, That if once these

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should

' should again take Root in the Church and King-  
 ' dom of *England*, they would quickly spread their  
 ' Venom and Infection into the Church, and  
 ' Kingdom of *Scotland*," the Truth of which being  
 well known; both to our Church and State, did pre-  
 vail upon them to concur with *England* in Counsels  
 and Forces, for suppressing and preventing of these  
 things, as may be seen in their Answers to the De-  
 clarations of the Honourable Houses of the Parlia-  
 ment of *England*, concerning that Purpose. Up-  
 on the same Ground, the Church of *Scotland* did fre-  
 quently by her Commissioners at *London*, and by her  
 Letters to the Parliament of *England*, and to the  
 Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, and by her Ex-  
 hortations to her Brethren of *England*, often warn  
 of the Danger of Errors and Heresies, when they  
 were but yet in their first Buddings, and far from  
 the Height that now they are at in *England*. The  
 Words of the Assembly in their Declaration and  
 brotherly Exhortation to their Brethren of *England*,  
*Anno* 1647. are worth the repeating in this Case:  
 ( say they ) while in the Neighbour Kingdom,  
 ' The Staves of Beauty; and Bands, Covenant, and  
 ' Brother-hood, are broken by many, the Horn of  
 ' Malignants and Sectaries exalted, the best affected  
 ' born down, Reformation ebbing, Heresy and  
 ' Schism flowing: It can hardly be marvelled at by  
 ' any Person of Prudence and Discretion, if we be  
 ' full of such Fears, and Apprehensions, as use to be  
 ' in these who dwell near to a House set on Fire, or  
 ' a Family infected, especially being taught by the  
 ' sad Experience of the Prelatical Times; How easi-  
 ' ly a Gangren in the one half of this Island may  
 ' spread through the whole, knowing also the inve-  
 ' terate and insatiable Malice of the Enemies of this  
 ' Cause and Covenant, against this Church and  
 ' King-

Kingdom, which we cannot be ignorant of, unless we would shut our Eyes, and stop our Ears": I might cite many things to this Purpose out of the publick Records of both Churches and Nations, but these few I hope do sufficiently witness, what were the Thoughts and Apprehensions of Men of Judgment and Understanding in both, but a very few Years ago, as to the Danger of Religion in *Scotland* in the case of *England's* being infected with Errors and Heresies. And if there was Reason then so to Judge, how much more now, when besides the Vicinity and Contignity of these two, and the dayly Commerce and Correspondency that is between the People thereof, *Scotland*, is incorporated into one Civil Body and Government with *England*, and have also the Bar of Civil Laws for keeping out, and curbing of many Errors and Heresies taken away, and Toleration and Protection allowed thereunto, by which it cometh to pass, that the Danger which was formerly nigh unto us, is now also in our Bowels. And to this I shall speak in the next Place.

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## Consideration Second.

*From the Infection of Errors and Heresies already begun, and the Footing that they have already got in this Church and Nation.*

**T**HOUGH the Plague when near unto us is dangerous, and Fire in our Neighbours House, can hardly be kept from taking hold of our own, yet Infection in our own Body, is more dangerous, and much harder it is to keep our

House from burning when the Fire hath already  
 fized upon it, and the Flames are flashing about our  
 Ears ; and this is the Case that the Church of *Scot-*  
*land*, and Religion therein do stand into at this Day:  
 Not only have we amongst us many Strangers who  
 vent their Errors at will, and without Controul-  
 ment, but sundry also of our own Church and Na-  
 tion, are come to be infected therewith. The Mi-  
 nistry of the Land, though differing in that unhappy  
 Question about the Publick Resolutions, yet are by the  
 singular Mercy and goodness of God, for any thing  
 that doth yet appear, kept sound and unanimous in  
 their Judgments against the Errors of the Times;  
 and so also is the Body of the People according to  
 the Measure of their Knowledge in their several  
 Ranks and Degrees; neither have Sectaries so much  
 Cause to boast of their Number and Growth in  
*Scotland*, as commonly they do give out, they are  
 ( blessed be the God of Truth and of Mercy for it )  
 as yet but very few, and inconsiderable in Compari-  
 son to the Body of this Church, scarce one to a  
 thousand ; yet is the Infection such, as ought not  
 to be despised or neglected, as threatning no Danger  
 to Religion and the Work of Reformation amongst  
 us: Besides sundry others who are infected with  
 Errors in several Sorts, there being not a few of  
 these monstruously Erring-souls, commonly called  
*Quakers*, who strike at the Root of Christian Reli-  
 gion, by denying the Scriptures to be the Word of  
 God, and setting up, and holding forth their own  
 doting Fancies, and foolish Imaginations, under  
 the Name of the Light within them, as the infallible  
 Dictats of the Spirit, of Truth, and by denying  
 the In-being of Sin, and asserting the Perfection  
 of the new Creature in the regenerated, even  
 to such a Measure of Righteousness and Holi-  
 ness,

ness, as is equal with that of our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ himself, and by denying of the Resurrection of the Body from the Dead, and maintaining many other Errors, which though abominable and vile in themselves, yet are boldly vented and actively spread by these Persons, and which is more lamentable, sad Experience proveth in both Nations, that not a few, and these not of the most Ignorant and seemingly Profane, are apt to receive, and be carried away with these strange Delusions: And therefore would we not be so slothful and secure, as to think that Religion is not in Hazard by the Infection already begun amongst us. The Apostle telleth us, *That a little Leaven leaveneth the whole lump*, 1 Cor. v. 6. And if the Church of *Corinth* was in hazard by one incestuous Person, sinning against the light of Nature, shall we not judge our selves to be in Hazard by some hundreds; the Leaven of whose Errors is not so sowre to the natural Man's Taste. As the Infection of the Plague of Pestilence hath in a little Time derived it self into many, and at last brought forth the Ruin of great and populous Cities and Societies, so hath the gangren of Error often spread it self from one or a few Members of particular visible Churches unto the Body of visible Professors therein, that from the sole of the Foot unto the top of the Head, there has been little or no Soundness, but Wounds, and Bruises, and putrifying Sores. The *Arrian* Heresy, which was one of the most dangerous and dreadful, that ever troubled the Christian Church, had its Beginning from one Presbyter in the Church of *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, and yet did run so fast and so far, that in a few Years, it did over spread a great Part of the Christian World, which made *Jerom* to say, that the World did

did groan and wonder at it self, that it was become *Arrian*. We will ordinarily find, that the greatest and most prevailing Heresies, have had their Rise and Original from very small Beginnings, and that their Authors and Abettors have been at first but very few and inconsiderable. If we will not believe our Ears, and that which our Fathers have told us, yet let us believe our Eyes, and that which Experience hath taught us. How few and inconsiderable were the Sectaries in these Nations some eighteen or twenty Years ago? And how numerous are they at this Day? The *Quakers* ( besides many others of several Sorts ) do boast themselves to be for Number sundry ten thousands: And yet I do believe, that within these sixteen Years, or little more, scarce were ten single Persons of that Judgment, heard of in any Place of these Nations; and their increasing in so short a Time to so great a Number, may convincingly teach us, what we may and ought to fear, the Growth and Increase of Sectaries in *Scotland*, albeit their Number for the present be not great: And though haply there be not in every Respect, such an aptitude in the People in this Nation to receive Errors, nor such Parts and Abilities for spreading of them as in sundry of the *English*, and that we have also the Advantage of Church-Discipline for curbing of them; yet would we not upon such Apprehensions as these, be secure: Errors have got no small Footing amongst us already, and if the Infection could enter while the Body is more intire and sound, how much more is it like to spread, when sundry of the Members are corrupted. If we shall take a View of the many great Advantages, that the spirit of Error and Delusion hath at this Time, for strengthening and enlarging it self in this Land, a Man that  
hath

bath but half an Eye, may see, that Religion is eminently in Hazard thereby. Therefore I shall now proceed to speak somewhat unto these.

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## Confideration Third.

*From the Toleration and Protection that is pleaded for, and allowed to many gross Errors and Heresies.*

**T**Hat the Civil Magistrate is appointed of God to take Care, not only of these Things that do belong unto Righteousness, and concern the Civil Peace, and natural Life of Man, but also of the Things that concern Religion; and do respect the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls: And that in Subordination to these Ends, such outward Impediments and Obstructions as do hinder the same, ought by him to be removed out of the way, and not to be tolerated in a Christian Common-wealth; Is a Truth so clearly set down in the Scriptures, and so fully confirmed in the writings of Divines, and so plainly and solemnly engaged unto in the Solemn League and Covenant, that it were needless for me to insist upon the Proof thereof: Neither is this my Purpose, if any do desire to furnish themselves with Scripture and Reason, in these Things, they will find somewhat for their Help in the former Testimony, and in the Warning and Testimony of the Reverend Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, lately emitted against that sinful and unseasonable Petition of some of our unhappy Country-men to the Parliament of *England*:

That which we have to lament, is, That notwithstanding the clear Light of the Scriptures, and that Reason both Divine and Humane, do strongly plead the contrary, and that these Nations are solemnly engaged by the publick Vows of God upon them, without respect of Persons, to endeavour the extirpation of *Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresie, Schism, Profaneness*; and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound Doctrine, and to the Power of Godliness: Yet a very vast Toleration is not only pleaded for, and promoted by many, but also framed into a Law; by which, Protection and Encouragement, is allowed unto many gross Errors and Heresies, that do not only deny and destroy many of the beautiful Superstructures, but do also strike at not a few of the Corner-stones, and chief Foundations of Christian Religion, which doth minister singular Advantage to the Spirit of Delusion, for strengthening and spreading of it self, unto the corrupting of the Truth of God, and subverting of Souls. The corrupt Nature of Man, is of it self most fertile of vain Imaginations, and most prone to carnal Liberty, and to transgress the Bounds, and remove the Landmarks, that are set unto it of God; so that even when curbed and hemmed in with the Rail of his Law, and with the outmost Extent of the Care and Diligence, and Faithfulness, and Zeal, both of Spiritual and Civil Rulers, it can hardly be kept from debording into many gross Extravagancies in the things of God, and from turning into its Course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle: What then can be expected, when not only the Yoke is taken off its Jaws, but that it is also fostered upon the Breasts, and dandled upon the Knees of Protection, and Countenance and Encouragement, and suffered to grow up under the warm Shadow of Civil Authority; but that the

the Fountains of the great Deep shall be opened up, and overflow the Face of the whole Land; when Satan is loosed out of his Prison, shall he not deceive the Nations? and when the Serpent's Bands are taken off, shall he not cast out of his Mouth Water as a Flood after the Woman, that he may cause her to be carried away of the Flood? Let us but a little consider, what hath been the Fruits of such Toleration in these Churches and States where it hath got footing. I shall not go so far back as to the first Ages of the World, in which Men being left to themselves in the things of God, *professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools, and changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four footed Beasts, and creeping things.* Neither shall I speak of the Condition of Religion, in some Protestant States beyond Sea, in which Toleration is allowed; but I desire it to be considered:

1. How it fared with the Church of *Judah* in these Periods of Time, when Toleration got any footing therein: I shall not now stand to debate, Whether it was at any Time established in *Judah* by a Law; but it is clear enough, that when any of the Kings of *Judah*, whether through Negligence or want of Integrity, or upon carnal and politick Considerations, did not restrain, but tolerate false Prophets, and Idolaters, and corrupters of the Worship of God, and perverters of his Truth, that Idolatry, and the Leprosie of manifold Errors and Corruptions, did quickly spread themselves over the Face of that Church and Nation, that if the LORD had not been graciously pleased to raise up some good Kings, who in the Zeal of God, and Conscience of their Duty, did imploy their Power for destroying of Idolatry and false Worship, and for making the People *to serve the Lord God of their Fathers, according*

*cording to the Law, and the Testimony:* It had fared no better with them, than it did with the Church of *Israel*, or of the ten Tribes, who came by their sinful neglect of the Things of **GOD**, and tolerating and protecting of false Worship, in a few Generations, to lose the Substantials of Religion, and the very Face of a Church, and of a State too. What sad Instances were of these things in the Days of *Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Jehoram, Abaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Ahaz, Manasseh, Ammon, Jehoiakim, &c.* 2. When about the Time of the Incarnation of our blessed **LORD**, and his being on the Earth, sundry Sects were tolerated in the Church of the *Jews*, did they not come at last to be all overgrown with Nettles and Thorns, and to lose the Being and Face of a Church? It is worthy of Observation, that the Men of that Time, who were zealous Patrons of Toleration, were in the just Judgment of **GOD** given up to themselves, to be zealous Opposers of the Gospel, and to crucifie the **LORD** of Glory. 3. It would be considered, what hath already been the sad and dreadful Effects of this Toleration in these Nations; Is not the Glory of **GOD** trodden under Foot, the precious Truths of the Gospel corrupted and perverted, the Ordinances of **JESUS CHRIST** contemned and cried down, the Government and Discipline of the Kirk in a great Measure overthrown, the Worship of **GOD** despised and profaned, the **LORD'S** Day misregarded and casten loose, the Power of Godliness eaten out, and the whole Work of Reformation obstructed, and in many Things overturned, many Souls subverted, *Popery, Libertinism, Superstition, Heresie, Schism, Scepticism, Atheism, Profaneness*, and many things contrary to sound Doctrine increased? And if there be such a growth of so dreadful Evils, in

in so few Years, and whilst that Generation is yet living, whom God brought back from the Borders of *Babylon*, ( to which we were threatned to be carried captive under the Corruptions and Tyranny of the *Prelates*? ) And who have seen the wonderful Works of the Lord in that great Deliverance, and have lifted up our Hands to Heaven, to swear by him that liveth, and reigneth for evermore, that we would endeavour the Extirpation of these Things? What is to be expected, if this Toleration shall continue, and be transmitted to our Posterity, but Darkness, instead of Divination, and that Darkness shall cover the Land, and gross Darkness the People? 4. Let us suppose, that such a Toleration were granted unto Men, in the Things that relate unto the Duties of Righteousness, that are commanded in the second Table of the Law, *to wit*, that they might without Controulment of the Civil Authority, and with Assurance of Protection from the same, walk in these Things, according to the Dictats of their own Spirits, and Imaginations, and Inclinations of their own Hearts; were it possible, that there could be long Peace to him that goes out, or to him that cometh in; or that Goods, or good Name, or Chastity, or Life, could be long preserved; should not the whole Land in a very short Time, be filled with Rapine, and Oppression, and Violence, with Thefts and Robberies, and Slanders, with Fornications, Adulteries, and Incests, with Blood, and Murder, and every sort of Abominations? And is there not in the Heart of Man, as great, if not greater Pravity, in order to the Duties of the first Table, as to these of the second Table? Nature's Light in our corrupt State, being more eclipsed and depraved in the one, than in the other; Can we then expect any better Fruit of this Toleration,

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in order to the Things of God, and that do concern Religion, than it would produce in reference to the Things of Men, and that do concern Righteousness? Upon this Account, it is, That as God hath revealed in his Word, the Rule, both of Religion and Righteousness, according to which he hath commanded us to walk in his Matters, and in the Matters of Men, and not according to the Imaginations of our own Hearts, doing what seemeth good unto us in our own Eyes, either in the one, or in the other; so hath he appointed Civil Governments, and Magistrates amongst the Children of Men, that they might be Keepers of both Tables of his Law, and that by keeping of both, they might preserve both Religion and Righteousness, which do otherwise ( without a mighty Hand of more than ordinary Providence ) soon go to Ruin, when Rulers are not a Terror to evil Works, that are done against both. 5. As Toleration doth bring forth the sad Fruits already mentioned; so doth the Mother and Daughter, both of them, *provoke the Lord, to give up Men to vile Affections, and to give them over to a reprobate Mind, to do things not convenient*, as appeareth from the last Part of the first Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*; and so bringeth at last the Ruin, both of Religion and Righteousness, and *Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power*: All which, with many other obvious Considerations, that would be tedious to insist upon, may make it evident to such, as will impartially and without prejudice, weigh the same in the Balance of the Lord's Sanctuary, and of Reason and Experience; that as the Spirit of Error and Delusion hath singular Advantage, so Religion is in eminent Hazard thereby.

## Confideration Fourth.

*From the Ignorance, Unfruitfulness, Instability, Looseness, and Profanity, that do abound in the Land at this Time.*

**D**Angers and Diseases, whether natural or moral, or spiritual, are more or less to be feared, according to the Weakness or Strength, the Disposition or Indisposition of the Object about which they are conversant, to resist or to receive the same, as weak, and ill complexioned Bodies are readily obnoxious to Sicknes, and do soon receive Infection, and unwise, and unvigilant States are easily deceived, and soon broken, and put into Confusion; So ignorant, or unstable, or carnal, or profane Souls, do easily become a Prey to Temptations, whither in the Matter of their Profession, or of their Conversation; their Ignorance and want of Watchfulness, rendring them blind, as to the discovering of the Snare; and their want of spiritual Life and Strength, rendring them impotent and indisposed, as to the avoiding and resisting of it; and their Instability and Looseness inclining and disposing them to tamper, and dally with it: By which it cometh to pass, that they are easily and often intangled, especially in a Time of abounding Temptations; yea, it is righteous with the Lord, because they do not like to retain him in their Knowledge, to give them up to a Mind void of Judgment; and because they receive not the love of the Truth, to send them strong Delusion, to believe a Lie: Hence it was, that the  
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World in older Times, both before and after the Flood, came to be drowned in gross Superstition, and abominable Idolatry, and that a great Part of the Christian Church in latter Ages, came to be drowned in *Mahumetanism* and *Popery*. Now, if we shall look through the Breadth of our Land, may we not find, that there are Multitudes of ignorant Souls, who do scarce know the first and most common Principles of Christian Religion, much less, have they their Senses exercised in the Knowledge of the Truth, and of the holy Scriptures, which are the Ground thereof? And how many do sit down satisfied with a very small Measure of Knowledge, taking many precious and necessary Truths upon meer Tradition from their Ancestors and Teachers, without searching the Scriptures, whither these Things be so, that they may attain in themselves a warrantable and well-grounded Perswasion thereof? By which it cometh to pass, that sundry such meeting with Deceivers, come to be soon shaken in their Minds. Be there not also many simple and unstable Souls, who are as Reeds shaken with the Wind, and apt to be driven to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine? And be there not many luke-warm and indifferent, and of a carnally politick Spirit, who care for none of these Things? Be there not many Loose and Profane, all which are apt to cast off the Profession of the Truth, and to be easily seduced and drawn away into Error? Because, though happily, many such do not much regard, either Truth or Error; yet when Error is like to prevail, and come in Reputation, and the owning thereof to be attended with carnal or civil Advantages, they can easily be induced to shape their Garments, and wear their Cloaths, according to the Fashion of the Time: Yea, their *carnal Mind, which is Enmity to God*, is also

also Enmity to his Truth; and doth dispose them to cast off the Yoke thereof, which they are easily perswaded to do; when there is nothing to hinder it, but naked Respect to the Truth it self: Every Man in some Sense naturally is a Heretick, having the Seeds of Error in his Soul, and an Aptitude and Inclination to bring forth these bitter Grapes of Wormwood, and of Gall; and the more that he liveth in Formality, and Hypocrisy, and Looseness, these Seeds do in the common Body of Sin, that is in him, receive the more Increase and Strength, and become the more apt to bring forth their own native Fruit: There is also, no doubt, a great similitude between Errors of Judgment, and Looseness of Conversation, and an easie Passage from the one to the other; a Heretick is easily made vicious and profane, and a vicious and profane Man, is easily made a Heretick; a great Part of the Christian World first turned formal, and carnal, then *Arrian* and *Nestorian*; &c. and in the end *Mahumetan*: Do we not see that Looseness and Profanity in the Conversation of sundry, doth easily usher in *Papery* in their Profession, but much more swiftly do such Men by swarms, decline from the Truth, and embrace Errors, when to their natural Inclination and corrupt Disposition, temporary Advantages or Disadvantages, the Countenance or Disrespect, the Command or Threatning of Civil Authority, cometh to be superadded? Hence it is, that the bulk of sundry People and Nations, have after their receiving and professing of the Truth, sometimes suddenly shaken it off again, and turned aside into Errors, whereof we have many Instances, both in Sacred and in Church-story. Therefore albeit the Truth, is for the present professed in Purity by the Inhabitants of this Land; yet, there being amongst the Body of  
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the People, such a Multitude of ignorant, lukewarm, unstable loose Souls, who have lived and grown up in these Sins for many Years together, under the Light of the Gospel, as they may be easily made a Prey to the Temptations unto Error and Delusion, that do already abound amongst us; so there is just Cause to fear, that if the LORD shall for the further Punishment of our Provocations, give us up into the Hand of a Popish or Heretical Power, who should joyn their Profession by a Law, that many such would soon turn Popish or Heretical: And whither this may not be our Lot to be exercised with such a Trial, I leave it to wise Men to judge.

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## Confideration Fifth.

*From the great Decay of a true publick Spirit, and of Diligence, and Zeal, and Watchfulness in the Things of God, and from the great Increase of a Spirit of Sloth, and Neutrality, and Security amongst us.*

**T**Hough in the Things of GOD it be eminently true, that *except the Lord build the House, the builder buildeth in vain; except the Lord keep the City, the Watchmen watcheth in vain*; yet doth he call upon, and command his People to be zealous for his House, and to be faithful and watchful in the Things that relate thereunto; the Blessing is his, and the Duty is ours: And as it's a token for good, when his People are cordial and active for his Interests, so it's a prognostick of ruin and decay, when they become neutral and indifferent, and deal with a slack Hand, and wax secure in the midst of Dangers: In speaking  
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to this, It is not my Purpose to charge Backsliding upon any Party or Person in the Land, upon the account of publick Differences, I think, that without reflecting upon these, or giving Offence to any that are concerned therein, upon one Hand or another, that taking the Body of this Church complexly, it may be truly said, that there is a great Decay of a true publick Spirit, and of former Integrity, and Diligence, and Zeal, and watchfulness for the things of God amongst us, and that no Party is so unsensible of their own Guilt, or so Tenacious of their own Innocency, that they will deny this: I do not speak as to appearing, nor acting in civil Capacities, the Lord having broke our civil Government to Pieces, and casten by our Governors as broken Vessels, whereof he maketh no Use for the Defence and Preservation of Religion, but what a Decay is upon us, as to many of these things that do beseem us as Christians, especially in such an Hour of Temptation; and when the publick Cause of God, and all the precious Interests of Jesus Christ, and of his Kingdom, are in so eminent Hazard. It is true that every Man hath his Gifts and Station assigned him of God, according to the Measure and Bounds of which, without overreaching, ( a thing too common in these evil Days ) he is to demean himself: But it is also true, that all of us being Members of the Body of Christ, and having an Interest in the things that concern his Kingdom, we ought to be so far of publick Spirits, as not only cordially to wish well unto, and pray for the Body and common Interests thereof, but also according to the Talents we have received of him, and in our Station, and as we are thereunto called of God, to put forth our selves

cheerfully and actively for the Good of the same; whither by doing or suffering. The publick Cause and Work of God was wont to be precious and dear unto us; and the Time was when no Pains, nor Expence, nor Hazard was declined, for preserving or promoting thereof: We were wont to stir up our selves, and to stir up one another, and to wrestle with God in Prayer and Supplication together and a part, for setting up of *Jerusalem* and making her a Praise in the Earth. The Time was, when upon the appearing of any Danger to Religion; though haply but afar off, and far inferior to many Dangers that are now within our Bowels, seasonable and clear Warning was given thereof, by the Body of the Watch-men in the Land, and many private Christians made it their Work to deal seriously with God in the secret Watches of the Night, for preventing of the same, and many were found of every Rank and Condition throughout the Land, who did readily put forth themselves in their Stations and Callings; to prevent future, and remove present Prejudices to Religion. The Time was, when the things of God were more minded and sought, than our own things, his Matters were wont to have the Preference in all publick Councils and Transactions amongst us; and as publick Motions and Overtures did tend to the promoting or prejudicing of the things of God; so they were wont to be entertained or rejected, in publick Meetings; civil Interests were wont to be carried on in Subordination to these that are spiritual, our own Safety and Security was wont to be minded, in Subordination to the Safety and Security of Religion, and of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; but now such a publick and tender, and vigilant Spirit is in a  
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great Measure gone from amongst us, and in stead thereof, Neutrality, and Indifferency, and carnal Security possesseth many, as to what concerneth Religion and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to many it seemeth to be but of small Concernment, whether the Lord's Matters sink or swim; many seek their own things, and study to secure themselves, and their own Matters, but few seek the things of Jesus Christ, or care for the preserving or the securing of his Interest: Is it not for a Lamentation that in the publick Meetings which have been kept in the severall Shires of this Nation, these eight or nine Years past, There hath been little or no Care, or Repentment of Religion; or of the Work of God, but these things have been in a great Measure forgotten or laid aside, as if we were not a People devoted to the Lord; Or, as if Religion were nothing of our Concernment; Or, as if all that Care did belong to Ministers only: To these it is indeed in a special way incumbent to take Care thereof; and would to God, that all of us who bear that Name, did endeavour to be faithful and vigilant in this Hour of Tentation: There is no doubt, but we, even we also, have our own Faintings and Failings as to many things that are called for, in such a Day, and that our Breaches have both weakned our selves, and blunted and stumbled others: But surely neither all the Fault, nor all the Duty is ours only. As the severall Ranks and Estates of the Land were honoured of God to be eminently instrumental, both in the Beginning and Progress of the Work of Reformation, for sundry Years together; so there is no Question; but it is still incumbent to them in Duty, in their severall Stations and Callings, according to the Oath of God in the Covenant,

Really, constantly, and sincerely, all the Days of their Life, to endeavour the Preservation of the reformed Religion in the Church of *Scotland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government and not to give themselves over to Indifferency and Neutrality thereanent, or to give themselves to be possessed with a Spirit of carnal Security, and Negligence, in Reference thereto. I do not doubt, but the Conscience and Care of their Duty, is upon the Hearts of some of all Ranks in the Land: But who can deny, that a Spirit of Security and Neutrality hath prevailed upon many: Flesh and Blood, and carnal Wisdom, will not want Excuses in these Matters; But if we shall enter into the Sanctuary of the Lord, and weigh it in his Balance, it cannot be excused, that the Covenant and Cause of God, that Religion and the Interests of Jesus Christ should be so much forgotten and laid aside, and that there should be so small Resentment of the Injuries that are done thereunto; and that no security, nor Remedy against the Encroachments that are made thereupon, and the Dangers that threaten the same, should be so much as propounded, or desired. How far is this from that which we were once at, and is there not Cause to fear, that because of this Luke-warmness, God shall spue us out of his Mouth, as he threatneth to do unto the Church of *Laodicea*, because she was neither hot nor cold, but Luke-warm in the Matters of God, *Rev. iii. 16.*

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# Consideration Sixth.

*From the Divisions that are amongst us.*

**W**HILST I am speaking of these Dangers that are intestine, and do Minister Advantage to the Spirit of Error and Delusion, I cannot overpass our Divisions, that being a Danger that is none of the smallest: It is the Assertion of our blessed Lord Jesus, which Reason and Experience doth verify, that a Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand; and how sad are these Divisions which are in *Scotland* at this day, I shall not insist on these that do concern Civil Government, which yet (where ever they are) have no small Influence upon things religious; Men being oftentimes apt to follow that way, even in the things of **GOD**, that seemeth most to contribute for setting up or settling these Civil Governments and Governors, which their Hearts did most affect, and their Endeavours thereanent, together with the reciprocal Endeavours of these Governors; themselves having oftentimes no small Tendency unto the altering or changing somewhat in Religion; but waving those things, Is there not Difference and Division amongst us, even in order to things Religious? To wit, the Discipline and Government of the Church, and the Covenant, and a great Part of the late Work of Reformation, &c. It is true, there hath been external Subjection in these things by the Body of the Inhabitants of this Land, but it were to shut our Eyes, and to befool our selves in the

clear Day, to think, that all these who did externally subject themselves thereunto, before the Year 1650. do now approve thereof; the Practises and Professions of many, witnessing the contrary; some being openly fallen off to *Independency*, some to *Anabaptism*, some to *Quakerism*; and many being fraughted with the old Malignant Enmity against the Covenant, and the Work of Reformation, and the Discipline, and the Government of the Church, speaking evil of, and reproaching these Things at their Pleasure, and making it manifest, that they would be glad of any Means and Opportunity to bear down and overturn the same; and how sad are these Divisions that are amongst us of the Ministry? How are the Watchmen, who ought to see with one Eye, and to speak with one Tongue, and to bear with one Shoulder, divided amongst themselves? It is not my Purpose at present to discover the Fountain of this Evil, or to impute the Guilt thereof to one rather than to another: Neither do I mean from the bad Consequents of our Divisions, to debate Innocency and Truth into Silence, or to perswade to an Union upon any Terms, though with the Increase of our Sin against God, and with the greater Prejudice of his Work, and with more Offence to the Consciences of these that are truly tender and godly, but simply to hold forth, that the Division doth in many Respects, threaten Danger to Religion, and the Ordinances of Jesus Christ amongst us, that so the true Causes and right Cure thereof may be searched into, and studied.

1. It giveth Advantage to Adversaries to cast Slanders and Imputations upon our Church, and the Government thereof, as having (if they may be believed) little or nothing of that Unity and Peace, and Love, that becometh the true Church,

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and Pastors of Jesus Christ. 2. It doth lay a stumbling Block in the Way, not only of ignorant and carnal, and profane Men, to make them cast at Religion and Reformation, but also of some less knowing, and weak amongst the Godly, who are brought to doubt, which Way to follow, whilst they see some Learned and Godly Ministers pleading for one Thing, and others also Learned and Godly pleading for another. 3. It doth much harden and confirm such of that Party in the Land, who formerly opposed the Work of Reformation, and do retain their Enmity thereto, that it is not a Work that hath been of God, as having no consistence, nor concord with it self, but like to pull down and destroy it self by the Divisions that are amongst the chief Instruments thereof. 4. It doth divert the Judicatories of the Kirk, and the Members thereof, from imploying themselves against the common Adversaries, and promoting the Exercises and Power of Godliness. 5. It maketh Discipline and Church-Censures sundry Times to be misregarded, as not proceeding from Presbyteries and Synods jointly, but oftentimes in a divided way. 6. It breedeth sundry Inconveniencies in the planting of Churches, sometimes obstructing the Plantation for sundry Years together, sometimes planting them with Men not satisfyingly qualified, sometimes making two differing Plantations in one Congregation, by which, both the Ministers and the People come to be divided, or the dissatisfied Party, if they cannot win at a Minister, to be casten loose, and left without a Ministry, and the Benefit of the publick Ordinances. 7. The Door is thereby shut sundry Times, against sundry able and Godly Expectants, who are thereby kept from entering into the Ministry. 8. Advantage is thereby given to disaffected

disaffected People in some Congregations, to separate and withdraw from their own lawful Pastors, and either to cast themselves loose of the Ordinances, or else to call and set up others in an inordinably way. 9. It doth retard and obstruct the purging of the Church from insufficient and scandalous Ministers and Elders, which do shelter themselves, and are taken but too little notice of, under these Differences and Divisions. 10. It doth occasion Men in the Heat of their Debates, anent these Differences, to run too far upon the asserting and venting of Things for the Defence of their own Opinions and Judgments, that may prove Seeds and Inlets to Tenets and Evils that are of greater and more dangerous Consequence. 11. It doth in no small Measure alienate the Minds, and estrange the Hearts and Affections of good Men one from another, and weaken them in their Prayers before G O D one for another, and in that Confidence and Cordialness that they should have in their joynt carrying on of common and uncontroverted Duties; all which, as they are present Prejudices to Religion and the Work of G O D; so being continued, are like to prove more and more dangerous and destructive thereunto.

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## Consideration Seventh.

*From the Attempts and Assaults that are made by many upon the Ordinances of Jesus Christ.*

**A**S this inferior World without the Light of the Sun, would be but a Mass of Darkness and Confusion, so would the Church Militant

tant without Ordinances; and as Food is necessary  
 for preserving of the Life of the Body, so hath  
 G O D appointed, that in our Pilgrim Condition  
 here below, the Soul's Life should depend upon the  
 Use of his Ordinances: What is Religion but a  
 conscientious worshipping of G O D, after the Man-  
 ner, and in the Use of the Ordinances prescribed  
 by himself? And yet I do not know, if in any Ge-  
 neration the Ordinances of G O D have been more  
 directly struck at, than they are by many in these  
 Nations at this Day: I shall pass that fanatick Ge-  
 neration of *Familists*, that cry down all Worship  
 and Ordinances, as Things below a Saints Condition,  
 fundry of which as wandering Stars be travelling  
 up and down these Lands: But let us a little con-  
 sider what Attempts and Assaults are made by many  
 against the Word of G O D, and the preaching thereof,  
 against the Sacraments, against the LORD'S Day,  
 against the Ministry, and against the Discipline  
 and Government of the Church; which Things are  
 the very Pillars of Religion, that being destroyed,  
 Religion cannot but evanish and turn into nothing.  
 As to the holy Word of G O D contained in the  
 Scriptures of Truth: There be not only sundry *Je-*  
*suites* and *Seminary-Priests* lurking in sundry Places  
 of the Land, who cry down the Perfection and Au-  
 thority of the Scriptures, and the reading thereof  
 in our vulgar Tongue, and the Bibles which are in  
 Peoples Hands, as false, and corrupt, and heretical  
 Translations, and do commend unto them the Au-  
 thority of the Church of *Rome*, and her Traditions,  
 for the Ground of Salvation, and the old Latin  
 Version for the authentick Text of the Scripture,  
 and the Bible of *Dorway* for the best and purest *Eng-*  
*lish* Version, and all our publick Worship as cor-  
 rupt; but we have also the whole Tribe of the  
*Quakers* concurring and conspiring to the outmost

of their Power, to cry down the Divinity and Authority of the written Word of God, and to persuade such as will believe them, that the Scriptures have no Authority over Mens Consciences, and that no Command in Scripture that was given to others, doth bind us, save what we have an Impulse upon our own Spirits for, and that every Man in the World hath a Light within him, sufficient to guide him unto Salvation, without the help of any outward Light or Discovery, and that the Dictats of this inward Light, are the infallible Dictats of the Spirit of God, which every one is bound to hearken unto. This, as it is one of the most impudent, so it is one of the most compendious ways that ever was taken by Satan, for striking at the Root of Christian Religion, and banishing of it out of the World. If the Scriptures be not the Word of God, what have we for the Ground of our Faith, and Rule of our Duty? The Light that is within us, when not derived from, and founded upon, and agreeable unto the Law and the Testimony, is but Darkness, and leadeth us, unto as many By-paths of Division and Destruction, as our corrupt Fancy can devise, or the Father of Lies suggest unto us: Neither are these Men any greater Friends to the Sacraments instituted and appointed by Jesus Christ under the Gospel, they cry down Baptism with Water, and the Lord's Supper, as being but Types and Shadows ceasing upon the Appearance of Christ within them. The *Anabaptists* also, tho' they do not simply deny nor oppugn the Ordinance of Baptism, yet by denying and oppugning the Baptism of Infants, born within the visible Church, they do not only at one Dash Unbaptize and Un-church all the Thousands of our *Israel*, but do also leave our Children and Posterity, in regard of any Covenant-Privilege, or Seal,

in little or no better Condition, than these of Infidels or Pagans; and how prevailing an Opinion and Party this is in these Nations at this Day, is manifest enough. The Lord's Day, tho' a Moral and Divine Institution, and generally acknowledged in the Churches of Christ, to be the Key of Religion, and that Ordinance which keepeth all the rest in Life and Being, by separating us one Day of every Week from the World and worldly Business, to be solemnly set apart and exercised in religious Duties, chiefly these that concern the publick Worship of God, in the publick Assemblies of his People; yet is by many of the Sectaries of this Time, also cried down, and the keeping thereof, slighted and opposed, which being added to that natural Aversness and Enmity that is in the Hearts of all carnal and profane Men, ( the Number of which in all Quarters of our Land is not small ) unto the giving or keeping a Day unto the Lord, threatens no small Danger unto this most necessary and divine Institution, and to the whole publick Worship of God. What is more like to take with Worldly-minded Men, and wanton Persons, and carnal Libertines, than this, That all Days are alike, and that the Lord's Day is but a Device of Man, and a Yoke, and a Bondage upon the Necks of the Disciples, from which they ought to deliver themselves? This being one of the Things which carnal Hearts do most desire and hunt after: When carnal Liberty getteth Conscience upon its Side, and carnal and licentious Practises get under the Shadow of religious Opinions, they do then wax bold as Lions, and tear in Pieces the precious Truths and Commandments of God, that stand in their way; and thus it is like to prove in the Matter of the Lord's Day. And not only are Ministers had in Derision, and Contempt, and railed upon, and reviled as Deceivers, Thieves, Robbers, *Baal's* Priests, Conjurers, Antichrists, Witches,

Witches, Devils, *Symon's* Serpents, bloody Herodians, Scarlet-coloured Beasts, *Babylon's* Merchants, Wolves, Dogs, Swine, *Sodomites*, Murders; Ministers of Darkness, cursed Speakers, *Cain's* Stock, Vagabonds, who walk in the way of *Cain*, *Balaam* and *Core*, and what not, that a malicious Heart can invent, and a violent Tongue utter; but the Ordinance of the Ministry it self is also cried down, as altogether needless, and burdensome to the Lord's People under the Gospel, who (if some of these Men may be believed) have no need of any outward teaching, by reading or hearing the Scriptures, opened or applied, that Light within them being sufficient to teach them in the Knowledge of the Will of God; As to all these Things that concern their Duty and Salvation, or as others of these Men will have it, all of them are warranted to be Teachers themselves, and that a peculiar Office of a Teaching or Preaching Ministry, is no Ordinance of Christ; Or, if any such be, that they are not to be by any mediate Call from Man, but by an immediate Call from God, and the peculiar Instinct of the holy Ghost. I may add to these Things, the general Disrespect and Disesteem that prevaieth on the Hearts, and appeareth in the Carriage of disaffected and profane Men, to the Ministry; together with a strong Inclination that is in many, to have Ministers according to their own Hearts, who will speak smooth Things unto them, and heal their Hurt slightly, and that the Maintenance of Entrance to the Ministry, to which there was wont to be free and legal Access by vertue of their Ordination, is now seized upon by the Civil Power, who do not allow it to any, but upon Condition of their declaring their Resolution to live peaceably under the present Government: And for the Discipline and Government of the Church, not only are the

Civil

Civil Laws that concern the upholding thereof, and giving Obedience thereunto repealed, and Liberty allowed to all these who are pleased to speak or write against it, or withdraw their Subjection therefrom; but other Sorts also of Kirk Discipline and Government that are destructive thereunto, are set up and promoted, and protected, and countenanced amongst us. These Things being so, is it not past all Question, that the Pillars of Religion, which is Wisdom's House, are in Hazard to be overthrown by the malicious and subtle Devices of Satan? And that it is high Time for us to awake, and see our Danger, lest, e'er we be aware, we be spoiled of the precious Treasure of the Gospel, and blessed Ordinances of Jesus Christ, by which we live, and in which is the Life of our Souls.

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## Danger Eight.

*From the Growth and Increase of Popery in the Land.*

**T**Hat the Pope and his Party hath these many Years past, had a special Eye upon *Britain*, and upon this Nation as a Part thereof, for reducing the same into the Obedience of the See of *Rome*, is better known than that I need to insist upon the Proof of it; and therefore hath he always had his Emislaries the *Jesuites*, and *Seminary-Priests*, travelling up and down in this Island, under diverse Masks, for perverting of Souls, and setting Plots and Conspiracies on Foot, for compassing that Design. How much their Hopes were heightened, and in what a fair way they were for bringing it about, before the Year 1638. is fresh in Remembrance; And altho' these Hopes were in a great Measure blast-  
ed

ed by the Reformation, then begun in *Scotland*, and prosperously carried on in both Nations for fundry Years thereafter; yet are they now again revived under our present Distempers and Confusions, which ( especially by Reason of the vast Toleration of Errors and Heresies, of which I have already spoke ) do minister unto Papists great and singular Advantages; for promoting and compassing their Design. Not only is Liberty afforded them to vent most part of the Popish Doctrine, ( which keeping of the Pope's Supremacy, and the Popish Hierarchy, with some other Things of that kind, they may do without Hazard ) but these penal Statutes and Laws, which concern Mens coming to Church, and attending the Word and Sacraments, &c. being taken away, they have Liberty to withdraw themselves from the Ordinances and Means of Conviction, and Instruction, and may keep their own private Meetings with their ghostly Fathers at Home, without Regard to the Censures of the Church; and in the mean while *Jesuites* and *Seminary-Priests*, come not a few of them into the Country, and do import, or cause to be imported, Numbers of Popish Pamphlets, which are industriously spread, and put into the Hands of such as they perceive in any Measure inclinable to their Way, or by Reason of their malignant Disposition, to be in dislike with the Covenant, or the Government and Discipline of the Church, or any Part of the Work of Reformation, or to be Ignorant or Loose in their Conversation: Neither are fundry of them wanting in the mean while, to the outmost of their Power, by subtle and fair Speeches, to draw away such from the Purity of their Profession, and to instill into them, the love of the way of the Church of *Rome*, as that which was the Religion of our Fore-fathers. Not a few Papists also, who had formerly left the  
Country,

Country, because of the strictness of the Laws, do now return Home again, and others who staid at Home, and did profess Subjection and Conformity to the Church, do now withdraw and openly avow themselves to be Papists: Neither is their Advantage small by the Remnant of the Malignant and prelatiſtical Party, that is yet amongst us: These also having a great Enmity against the Covenant and Government of the Church, and the Work of Reformation: And there being in sundry things a great Simipathy between these Parties, and a great likeness in their Principles and ways, and a deal of readiness to correspond together, and to countenance one another: By these Means, and such as these it comes to pass, that Popery grows and spreads in several Places of the Land from Year to Year, to which if we shall add, the Correspondence that Papists have with, and the Encouragements they have from their Friends Abroad, together with the Design ( which hath been long a hatching ) of the Popish Leaguers beyond Sea, their invading of *Britain* as the strongest Bulwark of the Protestant Cause, that it being brought under, they may the more easily make a Prey of the rest of the Protestant States and Churches, and that this Invasion is like to be stated upon such a Quarrel, and carried on under such a Pretext as will engage the Affection and Assistance of some, and blunt the Opposition of others: Do not all these things, put together, much heighten the Danger of the true Protestant Religion in *Scotland*.

## Danger Ninth.

*From our Guiltiness in many of these things for which the Lord threatneth to depart, and remove his Candlestick.*

**I** Have spoke to sundry Sins that do abound amongst us, as they do weaken the Soul, in resisting of Temptations, and in following of these Duties that are necessary, for preserving of Religion in its Purity and Power, and as Inlets to dispose unto things, that are contrary and destructive thereunto. I shall now resume some of these Sins, and add thereunto some others, whereof we are in a great Measure guilty, for which the LORD threatneth to depart, and to remove his Candlestick. The first I name, is, That gross Ignorance of the Gospel, and of the necessary Truths of GOD that possesseth Multitudes of our Land in this clear Gospel-day, and under the Plenty of the Means of Knowledge, Is not this the Condemnation of many, That Light is come amongst us, and that they love Darkness rather than Light, the Ignorance of many is affected and perverse, and therefore without Excuse: Is there not Cause to fear that dreadful Word, *It is a People of no Understanding, Therefore he that made them, will have no Mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no Favour, Isa. xxvii. 11.* And that of another of the Prophets, *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my Soul depart from thee, Jer. vi. 8.* The second, is, The abounding and prevailing Formality that is amongst us, or a Form of Godliness without the Power thereof, because of this, the LORD threatens

to send Delusion, strong Delusion upon a People that they may believe a Lie, 2 *Thef.* ii. 10, 11, 12. yea, to chuse their Delusions, and bring their Fears upon them, *Isa.* lxvi. 3, 4. And do not such Delusions seem to be the proper Plague of these Nations at this time, chosen and sent of G O D for punishing our Formality: Hath there been at any time more strong Delusion, whether we look unto the Multiplicity and monstrosity of the Errors that are hatched and vented, or multitude of the Persons that have come quickly to be infected therewith: This is doubtless a piece of the Hour and Power of Darkness, wherein Satan is loosed out of his Prison, and is gone forth to deceive these Nations, and when Delusions are chosen and sent of God, and the holy One doth in his spotless and righteous Providence, for punishing the Sins of Men, say to the lying Spirit, who offers himself to be the Minister of enticing of Souls, go forth, and thou shalt prevail, have not all of us Reason to tremble and fear, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall,* 1 *Cor.* x. 12. The third, is, Barrenness and Unfruitfulness under the Gospel, for which the L O R D threatens to take away the Hedge of his Vineyard, and it shall be eaten up, to break down the Wall thereof and it shall be trodden down, to lay it waste, and it shall not be pruned nor digged, *Isa.* v. 6, 7, A Charge is given by the Master of the Vineyard, to cut down the Fig-tree that yielded no Fruit for three Years, *Luke* xiii. 7. And the Apostle telleth us, *That the Earth that drinketh in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth nothing but Thorns and Thistles, is rejected and near unto cursing,* *Heb.* vi. 8. And is not this in an eminent Measure the Sin of our Land? That notwithstanding, the Lord doth plentifully water us with the Dew of Heaven, and with the sweet Rain of the Gos-

pel, Day by Day, yet are we as to most of us, an empty Vine, that bringeth forth Fruit unto our selves, but not unto God. The fourth, is, Slighting and loathing, and wearying of the precious things of God, and the blessed Opportunities thereof, and preferring our own carnal and worldly Advantages thereunto, for which the Lord threatens that he will cause the Sun go down at Noon-day, and that he will darken the Earth in the clear-day, and that he will send a Famine of hearing the Words of the LORD, and that his People shall wander from Sea to Sea, and from the North even to the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the LORD, and shall not find it, *Amos viii. 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12.* And this Sin also reigneth amongst us: How many loath the Ordinances, and slight the Opportunities thereof? How many weary of the LORD's Day, and half it between GOD and the World? How is our blessed LORD JESUS and the inestimable Treasure of the Gospel valued by many at a very low Rate? many Time less than thirty pieces of Silver; that he may justly take up that sad Complaint, *A goodly price that I was prized at of them, Zech. xi. 13.* and break his Statutes and be gone. The fifth, is, refusing to hearken unto GOD, for which my GOD saith the Prophet *Hosea, chap. ix. 17. will cast them away:* Are we not a rebellious and gain-saying People, who neither fear the Threatnings of GOD to repent, nor entertain his Promises to believe, nor regard his Commandments, to obey? And may not the LORD upbraid us as he did these Cities, wherein most of his mighty Works were done, because they repented not, and bring upon us the Judgments and Desolation threatned in that Place? *Matth. xi. 21, 22, 23, 24.* May he not because of our Unbelief, cut us off, as he did the Church of the Jews, *Rom. xi. 20.* doth not their Example call upon us, not to be high-

mind-

minded, but to fear? May he not because of our  
 Disobedience, and that so many of us do refuse to  
 suffer him to reign over us, pass upon us that sad  
 Sentence that is recorded, *Luke* xix. 27. The sixth;  
 is, That which is written as the Sin of the Prophets,  
*Jer.* vi. 14. *Ezek.* xiii. 10. 16, 22. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 18,  
 19, 21. *Micah.* iii. v. for which the LORD threatens  
 that Night shall be unto them, and that they shall  
 not have a Vision, that it shall be dark unto them  
 that they shall not divine, and that the Sun shall go  
 down over them. I do not intend the Application  
 of this, to any upon the account of the publick Dif-  
 ferences, but without Respect to Parties, or Diffe-  
 rences, it can hardly be denied; that though, blessed  
 be G O D for it, there be in the Land many precious  
 Ministers of both Judgments, who study to divide  
 the Word of G O D aright, warning the Wicked to  
 turn from the Evil of his way, and encouraging the  
 Godly in the Pursuit and Practice of Godliness, and  
 speaking a word in Season to weary Souls; yet there  
 be not a few who heal the Hurt of the Daughter of  
 the LORD's People slightly, and do speak Peace to  
 these to whom the LORD doth not speak Peace, who  
 thrust with the Side and the Shoulder, and bite  
 with the Teeth these who ought to be encouraged  
 and comforted. It is sadly bemoaned by the Seri-  
 ous seekers of G O D, in many Places of the Land,  
 that the Work of some Ministers is not to commend  
 themselves to every Man's Conscience, as in the Sight  
 of G O D, but to handle the Word of G O D deceit-  
 fully, in making sad the Hearts of the Righteous, by  
 turning the Edge and Application of their Doctrine  
 against them, under the Notion of Hypocrites and  
 Sectaries, and such like, and in strengthening the  
 Hands of the Wicked, that he should not return from  
 his wicked way, by promising him Life, by which it  
 cometh to pass, that sundry of the People in sun-

dry Congregations, do bleſs themſelves in their Hearts, and ſay, that they ſhall have Peace, though they walk in the Imagination of their Heart, to add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt, and that the few ſeekers of G O D that are in theſe Congregations, or in the Country about, are looked upon by ſuch, as the vileſt and moſt hateful of Men, and their way more ſcared at, than that of the Drunkard, or the common Swearer; becauſe of this, there is Cauſe to fear that the L O R D ſhall accompliſh the Threatning of the Prophet, by ſending Darkneſs in ſtead of Divination. The ſeventh, is, Dealing treacherouſly with G O D in the Matter of his Covenant, for which the L O R D threatneth dreadful Deſolation, *Deut.* xxix. 22, 23, 24, 25. And in many Scriptures beſides, which Threatnings, he hath eminently verified againſt the Church of the *Jews*, who becauſe of Breach of Covenant, were caſt out of his Sight many hundred Years ago, and have continued in that doleful and deſolate Condition unto this Day: And are not we, even we alſo, theſe who have been unſtedfaſt, and have dealt falſely in the Covenant of G O D? I ſhall not deſcend into Particulars, about which there may be Difference: But ſure I am, that cleaving unto G O D, and cloſſ walking with him and Zeal for the Kingdom of J E S U S C H R I S T, and againſt the open Enemies, and Adverſaries thereof, and the reforming of our ſelves, and of our Followers, in our ſeveral Stations and Capacities, will be denied by none, to be amongſt the great Ends, whether of our Baptiſmal Covenant, or of our National Covenant, or of the Solemn League and Covenant; and that every tender Heart amongſt us, will alſo acknowledge, that moſt of us have not only come exceedingly ſhort, but moſt palpably and groſſly tranſgreſſed in order to all theſe things, in ſo far, that the very Obligation thereunto,

unto, is not only forgotten, but trode under-foot of many : A Sin that is much heightned by the greatness of the LORD's Mercies, and wonderful Works manifested and done in our Behalf, in the contriving and carrying on of these Covenants, and by the Openness and Solemnity of our way, in engaging of our selves thereunto : We may say, that because of the Oath of the Covenant, the Land mourneth, and that G O D hath a great and sore Controversy with us for this thing, and that there is just Cause to fear, that as he hath begun, so he will continue to pursue the Quarrel thereof, until he bring Darkness and Desolation upon us, unless Mercy shall prevent us, by giving us to repent and turn again to himself. The eight, is, Forsaking of our first Love, for which the LORD threatneth to remove the Candlestick of the Church of *Ephesus*, *Revel. ii. 4.* which may also breed us great Fear, that our Candlestick shall be removed : And that upon these two Grounds, first, because we have in a very great Measure lost our first Love, and declined from our former Attainments. I shall not compare this Generation of our Church with the Generation of our Fathers, I mean, these who did shake off the Yoke of the *Roman* Antichrist, and imbrace the Light of the Gospel, from whose Zeal we are far degenerated ; but let us compare our selves with our selves, I mean, what we are now, with what we once were, and that but a very few Years ago, and see if there be not Cause to say, that we have lost our first Love. I shall name but a few Particulars, First, There was in our Love not long ago, a tender Respect to all the precious Truths of G O D, with a fervent Desire and serious Endeavour of attaining and possessing them in their Purity, which brought forth a deal of holy Abhorrency, and Indignation against

every thing that tended unto the leavening or corrupting of the same: What if the Toleration that is now amongst us, had been but moved in *Scotland*, some ten Years ago? Would it have been bruik'd with so many close Mouths, and with so many dry Eyes, as it is this Day. Secondly, There was in our Love a wonderful Zeal for the Priviledges of the Church, and of Christ's visible Kingdom amongst us, that these might not be encroached upon, nor born down by the Powers of the World; but now we can hear and see sad Encroachments made upon these, and say little or nothing, against it, either before G o d or Men. Thirdly, There was in our Love a great deal of Zeal against that bitter Root of Malignancy, I mean, that which is so diametrally opposite to Godliness, and to the Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST; but now it getteth leave to grow up kindly under our Shadow, and many are so favourable to it, that they will scarce once name it, or suffer it to be named. Fourthly, There was in our Love a holy Severity in the Exercise of Church-discipline, for purging of the House of G o d, especially against corrupt and scandalous Church-officers; but that is now in a great Measure slack'd and gone. Fifthly, There was in our Love much Christian and Cordial Respect one to another, which brought forth sweet Union, and Concord, and Harmony in the Judicatories of the Kirk, and amongst the Ministers of the House of G o d, but now we bite and devour one another. I might also name the abating of our Love to the Ordinances, and to holy Duties; and to Christian-fellowship and 'Tenderness of conversation. But passing these, I come to the other Ground of Fear, and that is, That we seem to be much more fallen from our first Love at this Day, than the Church of *Ephesus* was fallen from hers; when

when God threatned to remove her Candlestick: Let us look upon the Text, and see what *Ephesus* then was, *I know thy Works, and thy Labour, and thy Patience,* (saith Jesus Christ unto her) *and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them Liars: And hast born, and hast Patience, and for my Names sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*

Do we deserve so great a Testimony as this? Or, are we not far short in all these Things? Where are our Works, and where is our Labour, and Patience, and where is our Zeal against these that are Evil? Are we not a barren and fruitless People? Is not our way the way of the Sluggard, and full of Murmuring, and Fretting? Do we not bear with many who are Evil? and do we not suffer many to go without Trial, who say they are Pastors, and are not? Do we not decline the Cross of Jesus Christ, and refuse to bear, and labour for his Name? And do we not either faint, or turn aside to crooked Ways? And shall we in all these Things fall so far short of *Ephesus*, and of her Carriage, even when the removal of her Candlestick was threatned, and yet not fear the removal of our Candlestick? If we deal impartially with our selves, by considering all these our Provocations, which I have already named, and many more that are but too obvious, and would be tedious to insist upon, we cannot but be affrighted that the Lord shall depart from amongst us; yea, he hath in no small Measure departed already, and this is that to which I shall speak somewhat in the next Place.

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#### D A N G E R Tenth.

*That the Lord who is our Light, and Life, and Strength, is in no small Measure departed from us, and hath smitten us with many Plagues of Heart.*

**T**HE Presence and Appearances of God amongst a People, are either such as do concern them simply, as Men united together in Civil Society under Civil Government, in order to Righteousness and Peace, or such as concern them, as Christian Men united in a Church-state, under Ecclesiastick and Spiritual Government, in order to Truth and Holiness. Of the first Sort, are these, which are manifested in the common Operations and Effects of the Spirit, when he giveth unto them the Gifts of Knowledge, Wisdom, Fortitude, Temperance, Justice, Courage, and such like, in reference to Civil Administrations, and blesteth, and prospereth them in the Exercise thereof; So the Lord was with *Cyrus*, whose right Hand he did hold to subdue Nations before him, and to loose the Loins of Kings, and to open before him the Two leaved Gates, &c. *Isa.* xlv. 1, &c. Of the other Sort, are either these, which are manifested in the more peculiar Operations and Effects of his Spirit, ( which yet are but common in Opposition to saving Grace ) when he giveth unto his People the Gift of Prophecie, or Ministry, or Teaching, or Exhortation, or Church ruling, and countenanceth them in the Exercise thereof, *for perfecting of the Saints, and edifying of the Body of Christ, Rom.* xii. 6, 7. *Eph.* iv. 8, 11, 12. Or else these, which are manifested in the special Operations of his renewing Spirit, when he giveth sanctifying and saving Grace, and by his continued Breathings, and quickning Influences thereupon, maketh his People to be more and more renewed in the inward Man Day by Day; so he was with his Servant *Paul*, in the midst of all his Tribulations and Afflictions, *2 Cor.* iv. 16. And according to the Measure of the Appearances or Withdrawings of God in these Things; so do the Matters of his People, whether Civil

Civil or Ecclesiastick, or Spiritual, prosper or decay. Now in reference to all these, G O D is in no small Measure departed from amongst us, and hath left us under a Cloud of Desertion, and smitten us with sundry Plagues of Heart. As to Civil Administrations, Wisdom, and Understanding, and Courage, and Strength, and Success, was taken from us, and the Lord did smite us with Blindness, and Confusion, and Astonishment, and Trembling of Heart; Wisdom was not to be found with the Antient, nor Understanding and Counsel with the Prudent, he mingled a perverse Spirit in the midst of us, that caused us to err in every Work; he went not forth with our Armies, and therefore our Princes became like Harts that find no Pasture, and that fly without Strength before the Pursuer; and the Men of might did not find their Hands, but became like unto Women that were affrighted, and did fear, because of the shaking of the Hand of the Lord of Hosts, which he shook over our Land: He made all our strong Holds to be like Fig-trees, with the first ripe Figs which fall into the Mouth of the Eater, when they are shaken, and the Gates of our Land to be set wide open to our Enemies; and his Hand was against us, until he had taken away from us the mighty Man, and the Man of War, the Judge, and the Prudent, and the whole Stay of Armies, and the Staff of our Civil Government: Neither is his Wrath in these Things turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still. Our Nobles are not of our selves, nor do our Governors proceed from the midst of us, but Strangers do bear Rule over us, and the Home-born Sons are broken as the breaking of a Potter's Vessel that is broken to Pieces; so that there is not found in the bursting of it; a Sheard to take Fire from the Hearth, or to take Water out of the Pit:


Neither

Neither is the Lord's Departure small in reference to our Church, and Church-Administrations. He hath sorely cracked, if not broken to Pieces, both the Staffs, *the Staff of Beauty, and the Staff of Bands*, the Unity and Authority of Pastors, and of Church-Judicatories: He hath divided us in his Anger, and poured Contempt upon us; and tho' we have essayed to heal our Wound, and to recover our Strength, yet have all our Essays hitherto, for the most part, been frustrated of the LORD: Do we not come together many Times for the worse, and not for the better? Is there not bruising instead of binding up, and much bitter Contention and Strife in many of our Meetings? Instead of the sweet Fruits of an edifying Union and Peace, whilst we should draw in the Work of the Lord with one Shoulder, do not some draw one way, and others another, rendring our Endeavours almost useles to the Church, comfortles to our selves, and despicable to others? Hath not GOD in his holy and just Indignation, mingled somewhat of a perverse Spirit in the midst of us, and are we not full of the Fury of the Lord, and of the Rebuke of our God? We wait for Light, but behold Obscurity, for Brightness, but we walk in Darknes, we grope for the Wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no Eyes, we stumble at Noon-day as in the Night, we are in desolate Places as dead Men, we look for Judgment, but there is none, for Salvation, but it is far off from us. And is not the LORD's Hand also upon his Ordinances; to restrain and withhold the Blessing thereof? In this Respect, much is sown, and little brought in: The Word of Salvation, as to any sensible Evidence thereof, is but rarely blessed in the Hand of the Ministers, unto the converting of Souls, and turning Men from Darknes unto Light,  
and

and from the Power of Satan unto God. It is the Complaint of Faithful Ministers in many Places of the Land, *That they Labour in vain, and spend their Strength for nothing*; yea, how doleful and dreadful is the withering and decay that is upon many Souls, who lay Claim to Conversion, and to a real Interest in JESUS CHRIST? The Generation of the Righteous in the Land do bemoan this Thing, and complain Day by Day, *That Light is darkned, that Life is withered, that Strength is abated, that Presence is evanished, that Tenderneſs is gone, that Influences are withholden, that Prayer is restrained and ſhut out, that Faith faileth, that Love is grown cold, that Hearts are hardned as Stones, that there is little or no Delight in God, nor in his Word, or in the Fellowship of his People, that Corruptions are aſt, and Heart Plagues do abound, that God hideth his Face, and is as a ſtranger unto his People, and leaveth them to preſtle alone in their Duties and Difficulties*; ſo that to deny the withdrawings of GOD from his People, were to deny what they find and feel, written upon their Hearts, and upon their Way in a continued Tract of ſad Experiences, now for a long Time; and yet whiſt it is confeſſedly thus, How little ado is there for his Departings, even amongſt theſe who are convinced, and do acknowledge that he is in a great Measure gone? Some Remembrance there is of a better Condition, whiſt we did enjoy his Fellowship, and his Countenance did ſhine upon us, and ſome Light to diſcover our Loſs, and the Evils that do attend it, which bring forth a ſort of Deſires to recover our former State; but theſe, how faint and ſeckleſs are they? and how many of us, are in a manner, content to live without God, and to ſuffer him to be gone, without taking hold on the Skirts  
of

of his Garments? It may justly be said, *That we do fade as a Leaf, and that our Iniquities like the Wind do take us away*; and that there be few among us that call upon his Name, or stir up themselves to take hold on him; for *he hath hid his Face from us, and doth consume us, because of our Iniquities*: If his gracious Influences were strong upon our Hearts, we would not, we could not easily bruik his Departing, nor would we, or could we be satisfied, or hold our Peace, Night and Day, until he did return, and revive his Work, and renew his Strength, and repair the Ruins, and build up the Breaches of his People; And our sitting, almost fastidied, and silent under his withdrawings, doth say, *That many of us, tho' we have a name that we are living, yet we are dead*; and that the Spiritual Life which remains in others, is ready to die; which Things do say, *That our Gourd is withering at the Root, that Religion is wounded at the Heart, and smitten in its Vitals, in the Spiritual Powers of the Soul*; within which, if the LORD breath not from above, by pouring out of his Spirit from on high, will soon make any Fruit or Leaves of Profession that do remain without, to wither and decay, and leave us like *Nebuchadnezzar*, his Tree, which by the Command of the Watcher and holy One that came down from Heaven, was hewn down, and had its Branches cut, and its Leaves shaken, and its Fruit scattered, and the Beasts driven from under it, and the Fowls from its Branches, and the Stump of its Roots only left in the Earth, bound with a Band of Iron, and of Brass, until seven Times did pass over it.

Some Considerations soberly offered in Answer to these, who seem to entertain a fixed Perswasion, that God will not remove his Tabernacle from amongst us.

 HERE be not a few who can hardly be induced to admit or entertain any Thoughts, that the LORD meaneth to remove his Tabernacle from *Scotland*, having received and someway fixed in their Bosoms, a kind of Perswasion to the contrary : I would be loath to discourage the Hearts, or weaken the Hands of any, who do in a humble and sincere Way, and in Subordination to the Scripture Rule, desire to believe, that the LORD's Thoughts towards this poor Church and Land, are Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil, to give us an expected End of all our Troubles and Fears, by making Mountains Plains, and crooked Things straight, and bringing forth the Head-stone of the Work of Reformation, causing his People to cry, Grace, grace unto it : Much less is it my Purpose to adventure upon the Secrets of GOD, or determine any Thing positively and peremptorily, either as to his continuing or removing of the Gospel ; but I do believe, that upon sober and serious Search, it will be found, that many have taken up, and do entertain these Perswasions of GOD's  
abiding

abiding amongst us, with greater Confidence, than the Foundations upon which they build, the same can well bear up. In some they are meer Perswasions, of which they can scarcely render any Reason, unless it be, that they think so, or at the best, that they would fain have it so; others give some Grounds of their Perswasion anent this thing, especially these five.

1. The exceeding Riches and Freedom of the Grace and Love of G o d which he hath Days without Number, and at sundry Times, and diverse manners, manifested to this poor Church and Nation, redeeming us many hundred Years ago from the Bondage of brutish Ignorance, and heathenish Idolatry: And again, about one hundred of Years since, from the Bondage of Popery: And lately from the Bondage of Prelacy, and all these by a mighty Hand and out-stretched Arm, when we were not thinking of him, and were able to do nothing for our selves.
2. The late blessed Work of Reformation, whereby G o d was pleased to bring us in a solemn publick way in a sworn Covenant with himself, and to establish amongst us the Purity of his Ordinances, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, and to own his Work by the Pouring forth of his Spirit, and many signal Testimonies of his lifted up Hand, against the Opposers, and for the Friends thereof, which Work must needs in the Perswasion of many, have a further Progress amongst us, because it is not his Manner to lay a Foundation, and not to build upon it, to begin a Work, and not to bring it to Perfection.
3. The many fervent and sincere Prayers and Supplications that have been put up to G o d, both by our Fore-fathers, worthy Men of G o d who lived in the preceeding Generation, and by many in this Generation, in order to the LORD's continuing to dwell in our Land, and making his Work yet

yet more glorious in these Nations; which Prayers are yet before the Throne, and in a great Measure unanswered; and it cannot be that the Prayers of his People shall perish before him, who is the hearer of Prayer. 4. That there is a precious Remnant, and a holy Seed of converted gracious Souls in the Land, and that, as numerous at this Time, if not more numerous than at any Time, heretofore; and how can God remove from that Land, in which he hath so many Sons and Daughters. 5. That there is a select choice Number of able and Godly Ministers, sowing the immortal Seed of the Word Day by Day, in all the Quarters of the Land; which doth say that the LORD hath yet a Work and Harvest in *Scotland*: But from none of these singly, nor from moe or all of them jointly, can we certainly draw any such Conclusion, that God is not about to remove his Tabernacle, and to depart from amongst us. All these things notwithstanding, he may come unto us quickly, and remove our Candlestick out of its Place; yea, many things there be that are sad and threatening Prognosticks, that the LORD purposeth so to do, even all these to which I have already spoke, besides sundry others that I have not mentioned: And as to these five Particulars, albeit I would be very loath to extenuate any of them, but do desire to stir up my self, and invite others unto a thankful Acknowledgement, and humble Admiration of the exceeding Riches of the goodness of GOD therein, and to improve the same so far as we are warranted of GOD unto the strengthening of our selves in Faith and in Duty; Yet in order to the awakning us from our Security, and putting us on to more wrestling with GOD, and more Watchfulness and Tenderness, and Diligence, and Zeal in our Duty, I desire it be considered. 1. That there is no particular

ticular Church upon Earth, that hath a Promise of God's dwelling and abiding with it for ever. The Church of *Rome* doth indeed pretend to it, but is found in all these Pretences to be a Liar, and a Deceiver, and that whilst she would make the Christian World to believe, that she is infallible, and built upon the Rock, against which the Gates of Hell shall not prevail: She is *Babylon* the great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations in the Earth. 2. That the Covenant of God with particular visible Churches, is conditional only, he promiseth that *he will be with them, whilst they are with him*, 2 *Chron.* xv. 2. *Exod.* xix. 5. *Deut.* xxix. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. And therefore as he doth threaten to cast off particular Churches, because of their Barrenness, and Backsliding, and Breach of Covenant, and Disobedience, and Rebellion, *Deut.* xxix. 18, 19, 20, 21. *Isa.* v. 5, 6, 7. *Hos.* i. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Hos.* ix. 17. *Matth.* xxi. 43. *Rev.* 2. 5. so hath he really and actually, because of these Sins, cast off the most famous and flourishing particular Churches that have been in the World, whom he did as eminently own, and for whom he did at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, as eminently appear in the Effects of his Power, and Mercy, and Grace, as ever he did own or appear for the Church of *Scotland*: Such as that famous Old Testament Church of *Israel* and *Judah*: That famous New Testament Church at *Jerusalem*, and sundry other of the famous Churches of *Asia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*: The Apostle *Paul* upon Consideration of the holy Severity of God in this Matter, calleth upon us, *Not to be high minded, but to fear, that if God spared not the natural Branches, lest he also shall not spare us*, *Rom.* xi. 20, 21, 22. 3. That there hath been solemn publick National Church Covenants attended with eminent Pieces of Reformation, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government, and with signal Appearances of God,

in more than ordinary Works of Providence, for countenancing and carrying on of the same; and that these have been extended to neighbour Churches and Nations to begin a Reformation there also: And yet Desolation and Darknes hath followed shortly upon the back of all these Things: Such Covenants, and Reformations, and Providences of God there were in *Judah*, in the Days of these two good Kings, *Hezekiah* and *Josiah*, which were also extended to many in *Israel*, as may be read, *2 Chron. Chap. xxix. Chap. xxx. Chap. xxxi. Chap. xxxiv. Chap. xxxv.* And, *2 Kings Chap. xxix.* and yet we know what followed upon the back of these Things, in the Days of *Manasseh*, *2 Kings Chap. xxi. 2 Chron. Chap. xxiii.* and in the Days of *Jehoiakim* and *Zedekiah* Kings of *Judah*, *2 Chron. Chap. xxxvi.* Yea, the Scriptures testifie, that fiery Trials, and sad Dispensations, commonly do befall the Church of God, upon the back of eminent Mercies and Blessings on his Part, and great and solemn Engagements and Undertakings upon her Part. The Wisdom of God so dispensing, partly for the Trial and Proof of the Faith and Patience of such as are upright in their Hearts, and partly for discovering of Hypocrites, and punishing of these who dealeth falsely in his Covenant. Such Things befell to *Israel* in the Wilderness, after their coming out of *Egypt*, and through the Red-Sea, and the L O R D's giving of the Law and Covenanting with them at Mount *Sinai*, as may be read in the Books of *Exodus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*; and to the Ten Tribes after the Days of *David* and of *Solomon*, and to the Church of *Judah* in the Days of *Manasseh*, *Amon*, *Jehoiakim*, &c. as may be read in the Books of the *Kings* and *Chronicles*. And such Things came upon many of the Churches of Christ, not long after their first planting, and afterwards, as may be read in the *Acts* and Writings of the Apostles, and in the Story

of the Church downward, unto our Days. 4. That it is hard to determine how far the LORD answereth the Prayers, and satisfieth the Desires of his Servants and People, in order to the State and Condition of a particular visible Church, and to the continuing of his Gospel, and Ordinances therein. They do oftentimes ( no doubt ) desire and pray, That the Sun of Righteousness may never go down upon the Church, whereof they are Members, and that his Ordinances may be continued therein till many Generations, yea, till Time shall be no more. And yet it cannot be said, that the Lord satisfieth these Desires, or answereth their Prayers in that particular, as to such a length of Time, because Experience telleth us, That he doth oftentimes remove his Candlestick from particular Churches, where his Servants and People have prayed much to the contrary. Neither yet doth it follow, that they seek him in vain, because, as they are accepted of God, in being faithful in this Piece of their Duty, so doth he ordinarily grant much more as to the Substance, even of the Things which they do desire, than may abundantly Witness the Tender Respect he hath, and the 'gracious Recompense he doth allow unto the Travel of their Souls in these Particulars. The LORD hath already done so much in *Scotland*, as may justly be esteemed a bountiful Return of all the Prayers of his Servants and People therein, tho' they had been a Thousand Times more than they have been. 5. That as we must not measure the Perfection of the Works of GOD; by the Line of our Imagination and Reason, but by his own holy Purposes and Ends; So the great Work which GOD mainly intendeth in his Appearances in visible Churches, and which he accomplisheth and bringeth to Perfection, is not such a Pitch and Continuance of the Purity of Ordinances and outward Reformation, but the gathering of his Saints, and the perfecting

fecting of the invisible Body of Christ: Unto this all his Dispensations in the Ordinances, and outward Administrations are subordinated, and so proportioned, for Measure and Length of Time, as may bring forth this great End: And when this is done, I mean, when the whole Number of select chosen Ones, whom the LORD meaneth effectually to call in a Land, are gathered home to himself, then commonly he taketh down his Tabernacle, and is gone, as having done his great Business for which he sent his Gospel amongst a People. And therefore though he should be quickly gone from amongst us, we cannot justly say, That he hath laid a Foundation, and not built upon it, or that he hath begun a Work, and not brought it to Perfection, seeing we do not know but that he hath accomplished, or is near about to accomplish his own holy Purposes and Ends, and dispensing such a Measure and Length of Ordinances, and outward Administrations for that Effect. 6. That the LORD sometimes sendeth forth not a few burning Lights, and gathereth not a few Souls unto himself, immediately before his Departing from a Land, as the Sun sometimes shineth brightly, and maketh a clear and warm Evening, immediately before the setting and going down thereof: A Company of able and faithful Ministers, and a Harvest of Saints, are indeed sometimes the Evidences of the *Days-spring visiting from on high, and of the Sun of Righteousness going forth as a Bridegroom from his Chamber, and rejoycing as a strong Man to run his Race*: But sometimes they are as the Tokens of his last Farewell, so it was amongst the *Jews* in the Days of the Apostles, the LORD sent amongst them many of his Servants to preach the Gospel unto them, and many Thousands of them were converted and did believe, *Acts xxi. 20.* and yet within a few Years thereafter, *He did finish his*

*Work, and cut it short in Righteousness* amongst that People, as the Apostle speaketh, *Rom. ix. 28. 7.* That the LORD, tho' he do not utterly remove a Churches Candlestick, but hath into it a Remnant, both of a faithful Ministry, and of Saints; yet he doth sometimes visit with very darkning, and ruining, and desolating Dispensations for many Years together; so he did unto the Church of *Israel*, in the younger Years of *Samuel* the Prophet, by forsaking the *Tabernacle of Shiloh*, the Tent which he placed among Men; and delivering his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies hand, *Psal. lxxviii. 60, 61.* And unto the Church of *Judah* in the Days of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, by bringing upon them the King of the *Chaldees*, who slew their young Men with the Sword, in the House of their Sanctuary, and had no Compassion upon young Man or Maiden, old Man, or him that stooped for Age: the Lord gave them all into his Hand. And all the Vessels of the House of God, great and small, and the Treasures of the House of the LORD, and the Treasures of the King, and of his Princes; all these he brought to *Babylon*. And they burnt the House of God, and brake down the Wall of *Jerusalem*, and burnt all the Places thereof with Fire, and destroyed all the goodly Vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the Sword, carried he away to *Babylon*: where they were Servants to him and his Sons, until the Reign of the Kingdom of *Persia*, *2Chron. xxxvi. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.* And this did God also to most of the Churches in *Europe*, for some hundreds of Years together under *Popery*, before *Luther's* Time: And thus also hath he done to most of the Churches of *Asia* and *Africa*, under the *Turk*, and other *Mahumetan* Princes: And thus he did unto the Church of *England* not long ago, after the Death of *Edward* the sixth, during the Reign of  
Queen

Queen *Mary*: And do not his present Dispensations in a great Measure speak, that he meaneth thus to do unto us also? 8. We will not find many Instances ( if any ) of visible Churches, enjoying the Ordinances for any long Time together, in Purity and Peace, such is the Mixture and Leaven of Hypocrisie and Corruption that is within, and the Fire of Enmity and Malice that is without: That it is a rare Thing for a Church for one compleat Century of Years together, either not to be infected with Heresie and Error, or not to be trodden down of Persecution. The Church of the *Jews*, which was one of the most permanent and longest lived, as continuing from *Abraham* till some Years after the Death of Christ; yet what a various Lot did she run, almost in every Generation, sometimes by the Spirit of Error, and sometimes by the Spirit of Persecution, and sometimes by both at once? These Things being duly considered, and it being thereunto added, That *Scotland* hath now for a long Time enjoyed the Light and Liberty of the Gospel: And that notwithstanding of all the Goodness of *G o d*, in sending and continuing it amongst us, and of all our Engagements to reform our Ways, and to walk answerably unto the same: Yet our Ignorance, and Barrenness, and Looseness, is great exceedingly, and our Backslidings and Provocations are many: Is there not much Cause to fear that our Sun may be near the setting, and a Night of Darkness and Desolation at our Door, by the *L o r d*'s removing of our Candlestick; at least, by sending a black and sad eclipse for a Time, especially, there being such sad Prognosticks and Threatnings for Tokens of it?



A  
DISCOVERY,  
Of the true  
STATE  
OF THE

*Difference betwixt the Town-Council, and the Kirk-Session, and of the Misrepresentation hereof, and some ill grounded Alledgeances thereabout, contained in a Paper communicated unto the People under the Hand of the Clerk of the Town-Council.*

**T**HE true State of the Difference, is not as is insinuate in that Paper, whether any besides the Minister and Elders should have any Hand in the Nomination of the Elders, and Calling of a Minister, because it hath been often times offered to the Town-Council, that if they had any just Ground of Grievance  
or

or Objection, against any Member of the Session, that it should be taken in Consideration and judged impartially; And that if the Council did so desire, there should be a greater Number of Elders named by the Session, in an orderly way, and according to the Discipline of the Kirk, whose names should be intimated publicly to the whole Congregation, that if no relevant Exception were propounded, against them, they might be added to the Session, and because the Session have again and again, by sundry Messages to the Town-Council very earnestly desired, That the Council and they might meet together for condescending upon and Calling of a Minister in an unanimous Way, and by the joint Consent and Concurrence of both; but the Town-Council did always most peremptorily refuse to meet with the Session or any Member of the Session except the Minister, in Order to that Business; yea, sundries of them would not so much as once speak in the Business, when any of the Elders were named, to speak with them thereanent, but did run out at Doors so soon they came in.

THE true State and main Ground of the Difference, is, the Town-Council's refusing to acknowledge the Session, pretending that they are not a lawful and rightly constitute Session, that so they may have some Shadow of Pretext for denying unto them the Nomination and Choice of a Minister, and for taking it into their own Hands: Which things are the more strange, seeing the Session were not only Chosen in an orderly Way, and publicly admitted and sworn unto their Office by that pious and godly Man *Mr. David Bennet*, late Minister of this Congregation;

gation; but also, have been in the constant Possession and Exercise thereof, now for four Years past, and that the haill Congregation have without Question or Exception made by any of them, been constantly subject to their Discipline, and that sundry of the Magistrates and Town-Council themselves, being then Members of the former Session, were consenting and concurring in their Election, and that none of them did ever heretofore decline or disclaim them, but have often concurred to cause the Inhabitants of the Town in case of Disobedience to compear before them; And have upon Representations from them proceeded to civil Censures against sundry Delinquents: What then can be intended by denying them now to be a Session, but the taking out of their Hands the Trust committed unto them of G o d, and by the Discipline of the Kirk, and Laws of the Land in the Nomination of a Minister, that so a more easy way may be made to the Purpose of those who would name a Man according to their own Heart, and in a way contrary to the standing Order and Discipline of the Kirk, which all of us by Covenant are sworn to maintain.

N E X T, It would be considered how unjustly it is alledged in that Paper, That Mr. *James Guthrie* had sent an Act of Session to the Council, desiring that they may in all things condescend to him, but bearing no Condescendence on his Part:

T H E R E is no such Desire in that Act of Session, nor any thing that may import the same; As would have soon appeared, if that Act had been read to the People with that other Paper. Mr. *James Guthrie* hath in sundry things that concern

this Business condescended very far to the Council. As first, He was willing that the Choice of a Minister, should have been delayed for a while, until all Parties concerned therein, might have had Time to think upon it at Leisure, providing that the Town-Council would have allowed something in the mean time to an able and Godly Expectant who might have born some of the Burden in the frequent Diets of the Preaching, but they would not condescend to allow any thing that way, or that any Expectant should be named for that End, and how unfit it were that the People should have wanted Preaching at the ordinary Diets, any may judge; As also, how improbable it is, that he can bear all the Burden alone. Second, He and the Session did so far condescend to the Council, that they were most willing, and earnestly desirous to meet with them about the Choice of a Minister, and to proceed therein by mutual Help and Concurrence and Consent. Third, Albeit the Council's questioning the Constitution of the Session, was very unreasonable and ill Grounded, yet when they did propone, that that Business and the choosing of a Minister, might be absolutely submitted to four Ministers, they did so far condescend, that they were willing to concur in writing to these Ministers, and to hearken to their Advice, so far as the same should be agreeable to the Word of G o d, and the Discipline of this Kirk, which is as much as any can justly condescend unto, by way of Submission in a Matter of Conscience and Religion. And here it would be considered, whether those who do oppose the Session in this Business, be indeed pressed in their Consciences as before G o d so to do, seeing that they themselves do without any Condition,

tion, or Restriction, as to what is to be determined, offer an absolute Submission of the haill Business, and to engage themselves to stand to the Sentence of these Men, whatever it shall be, if they be indeed convinced in their Conscience upon good Grounds, from the Word of G O D ( which is the Rule by which Men ought to judge and walk in these Matters ) that the present Session is not a lawful and rightly constitute Session, or that they have proceeded in a wrong way, in the Choice of a Minister, or have named one who is not fit for the Charge. How can they, without sinning against G O D, bind themselves to the Sentence of any Man, though never so judicious and godly, that shall determine in any thing to the contrary; and if they be not really convinced in their Consciences of these things, how can they without offending of G O D, make such Opposition thereto, and such Trouble and Division thereanent, or do they think, that the Constitution of a Kirk-Session, and the choosing of a Minister of the Gospel, are but as Civil-Bargains, which Men may submit; and upon which they may cut and carve at their own Pleasure, or at the Pleasure of others: No Man that has learned J E S U S C H R I S T, will so judge.

*Lastly*, I T would be considered, That tho' there be many in the Town-Council, and amongst the Merchants and Trades, who do not intend any such thing, yet there be sundry who are drawing on a Design for bringing in some of these Ministers who hath been formerly censured by the Judicatories of the Kirk, for their Malignant and scandalous Carriage: Which Design if it take Effect, will not only tend exceedingly to the Hindrance

drance of the Gospel, and to the Hurt of Souls in this Place, but will also set up three Ministers in this Place, of very contrary and opposite Judgments and ways, which cannot but have very bad Effects amongst the People, even in those things that concern the Wealth and Peace of the Town. And therefore it is most earnestly desired, and it doth much concern the Magistrates and Town-Council, and all the Members of the Congregation, not to suffer themselves to be possess'd with any unjust Prejudice, or groundless Alledgance against the Minister and Kirk-Session, nor to refuse their own Mercies in opposing or denying to concur to call that able and godly Man Mr. *Robert Rule*, who has a Testimony in their own Consciences that he is fit to be their Minister: But that seeing the LORD offers so fit an Opportunity that they would all of them make Choice thereof, and concur to give him a Call, which will contribute much for the promoving of Godliness, and intertainng of Peace and Love in this Congregation. *Sic. Subr.*

Mr. *JAMES GUTHRIE*,

In Name of the KIRK SESSION.

FINIS.





