

THE  
DOCTRINE  
OF THE  
Two Sacraments.

THE  
*WAY* of *SALVATION*:

The Pleasantness of that *WAY*, and Beauty of *Holiness*; of the *Virtues* which adorn it, the Prejudice it receives from disorderly Walkers; and the *Duty* of withdrawing from such.

To which is subjoin'd,

A SERMON against Rebellion.

WITH  
An APPENDIX, containing some *Passages* omitted in that Part of the Author's Works published in *Folio*.

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By the Right Reverend  
Dr. EZEKIEL HOPKINS,  
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All now first Publish'd from his Original Manuscripts.

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A  
T A B L E  
O F  
C O N T E N T S.

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THE  
DOCTRINE  
OF THE  
Two Sacraments.

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EPHES. V. 26.

*That he might sanctify and cleanse it  
with the Washing of Water by the  
Word.*



THE Holy Sacrament of Baptism, as it is our Solemn Entrance and Admission into the visible Church of Jesus Christ, so is the Doctrine of it, with very good Reason, set as an Introduction to that farther Account of  
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## The Doctrine of

Christian Faith comprised in our Publick Catechism. And indeed, it seems but Reason that we should begin our Christian Profession where we began our Christian Race ; and that the Doctrine of Christianity should commence at the same Holy Institution where we first took upon us the Name and Title of Christians. I shall therefore, through the Assistance of Jesus Christ, who is *the Author and Finisher of our Faith*, endeavour to explain the Principles of our Religion contained in that brief Summary, the Catechism, beginning with that of Baptism ; wherein (as it is there expressed) *we are made Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

There are high Encomiums of this Ordinance, and inestimable Privileges conferr'd by it, and to some may possibly seem too lavish ; yet I doubt not but to make it appear, that all these Privileges do appertain unto us according to the Phrase of Scripture, by our being baptized into the Church and Faith of Christ.

I have chosen this Portion of Scripture, to shew the great Influence that Baptism hath upon our Sanctification, by which it is, that *we are made Members of Christ*, vitally joined by an holy Band to an holy Head. The Words are brought in as a  
 Demon-

## *the Two Sacraments:*

3

Demonstration of the Love of Christ to his Church, which the Apostle gives as a Pattern for Conjugal Love and Amity. *He loved the Church, so as to give himself for it, as it is in the precedent Verse. And the End of this unspeakable Gift we find contained in this Verse, He gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the Washing of Water by the Word.*

Not to speak any Thing of the Context, nor to make any laborious and critical Explication of the Words, here be Two Things worthy of our Observation :

*First*, That one End why Christ was given to the Church is, that he might sanctify it.

*Secondly*, That the Means to sanctify the Church, is Baptism, and the Word.

As to the former of these, being alien from our present Purpose, let it suffice to note briefly, that Christ hath purchased for us not only Eternal Glory, but present Grace. He who hath called himself both *the Way, and the Life*, gave himself for us, not only to purchase Life, but to lead us in the Way tending to it. He died to procure Heaven for all, if they

## The Doctrine of

would believe; but he died to procure Grace for some, even his chosen Ones, that they might believe and attain unto Heaven and Happiness. For their Sakes, as he tells us, *John 17. 19. He sanctified himself*, that is, he devoted and separated himself to undergo the cruel and accursed Death of the Cross: And for his Sake, God sanctifies us from our Filth and Pollution, thereby preparing us to enter into those Mansions which he is gone before to prepare for us.

But that which more concerns us at this Time to observe, is the Means for effecting this Sanctification; and they are Two, *the Washing of Water, and the Word*. By the former I suppose none will doubt but that Baptism is meant; or if they should, yet so many other parallel Places might be produced, where Remission of Sins, Justification and Regeneration, are ascribed to this Holy Ordinance, as the Effects of it, that it may be sufficient Conviction that Baptism is likewise in this Place understood by *the Washing of Water*. So *Acts 22. 16. Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy Sins*, saith Ananias to Paul; which is no other than being *sanctified and cleansed with the Washing of Water*. So likewise, *Acts 2. 38. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ,*  
for

## *the Two Sacraments.*

5

*for the Remission of Sins.* And Baptism is called, *Tit. 3. 5.* ἀπεθὲν παλίστασιαις, we render it, *the Washing of Regeneration*; according to his Mercy he saved us, by the *Washing of Regeneration*; but the Word signifies, *the Bath of Regeneration*, which is that *Baptismal Water* wherein we are buried with Christ.

But before I can come particularly to shew you what Sanctification it is that we receive by Baptism, and how we are in it made the *Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven*, it is necessary, and I hope will be useful, to vindicate the Practice of baptizing Infants, which some of late have eagerly disputed against. For if the Church be mistaken in the Persons to whom this Ordinance belongs, certainly they can claim no Privilege by Vertue of their having been baptized. And therefore, since Baptism is usually administred to Infants, let us briefly examine whether their Admission to this Holy and Mystical Institution be according to the Precept of the Gospel: For if not, how can they say, as the Catechism directs, that in their Baptism they were made *Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*?

## The Doctrine of

Herein I shall, *First*, prove to you the Lawfulness of *Infant Baptism*.

*Secondly*, Answer some Objections that are plausibly urged against it.

*Thirdly*, Shew you what are the Uses of Baptism, and Ends for which it was ordained.

I shall begin with the Arguments, to prove the Lawfulness of *Infant Baptism*.

The *First* is this: Infants are Members of the Church of Christ, and therefore to be baptized. Two Things are here to be proved, that Church-Members are to be baptized; and then, that Infants are Church-Members. I suppose the former may be evidently demonstrated, because there is no other Way of solemn Admission into the visible Church but by Baptism; and therefore if the Members of the Church ought to be solemnly admitted into the visible Flock of Christ, they ought to be baptized. But clear enough it is, that those who are Church-Members ought to be solemnly admitted into the visible Church of Christ. They are Members of the Church as a King is a Sovereign before his Coronation, or a Soldier is such before his Military Oath: So Baptism is our Publick and Solemn Inauguration into the Kingdom of Christ; it is our Military Oath and Sacrament to  
be

be Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants unto our Lives End. It only remains now to prove, that Infants are Church-Members: And that appears, because once they were so, and that Privilege is not repealed. For in the Church of the *Jews*, Infants were a Part of them who entered into Covenant with God. See *Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12. You stand all of you before the Lord, your Little Ones, and your Wives, and the Stranger, that thou shouldst enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God.* It is not, nor indeed can it be denied, that the *Jews* Children were Members of their Church; consequently then the Children of Christians must likewise be Members of the Christian Church, unless it can be manifested, that Christ hath repealed and recalled this Privilege. No such Repeal I am confident can be produced. Nor indeed can the Repeal of such a Privilege, as the being Members of the Church, consist with the greater Mercy and Goodness of God, revealed since Christ's Coming, in Comparison of what it was before. The Children of the *Jews* were Members of the *Jewish* Church before Christ's coming into the World; but if a *Jew* be converted to the Faith, shall not his Children be now Members of the Church of God? If not, they are

in a far worse Condition since Christ than they were before, which is little less than Blasphemy.

Again, that the Infants of Believing Parents are Members of the Church of Christ, appears from this, that they who deny them to be Members of the visible Church of Christ, must of Necessity make them to be Members of the visible Kingdom of the Devil. For there is no Third Estate on Earth; but the Kingdom of Christ, which is the Church, or the Kingdom of the Devil, divide all Mankind between them. Those who are not of the Church, are of the World, since our Saviour affirms, that *he hath called and taken his out of the World, and that they are not of the World*; and the Devil is called *the God and the Prince of this World*: Therefore all that are not of Christ's Flock, and of his Church, are of the World, and they belong to the Kingdom of the Devil: And so by a very uncharitable, but yet an unavoidable Consequence, if we deny Infants to be Members of Christ's Church, we must hold, that they are all Members of Satan, Subjects of the Kingdom of Darkness, and in a desperate State of Condemnation.

From all this it follows clearly, that the Children of Christian Parents are Church-

Church-Members ; and being Church-Members they have a Right to Baptism, which is appointed by Christ to be the Standing Ordinance for solemn Admission into the visible Church. So that when they are in our Catechism said to be *made Members of Christ in their Baptism*, the Meaning only is, that now they are owned and publickly acknowledged to be such by their solemn Admission into the Society of Christians. They are Christians *nati*, born Christians by the Covenant ; Christianity is their Birth-right, and their Native Privilege. That's the first Argument.

*Secondly*, The Second Argument to prove *Infant Baptism* may be formed thus ; Infants are Christ's Disciples, and therefore they ought to be baptized. That Christ's Disciples ought to be baptized, I suppose none will deny : But that Infants are Christ's Disciples, is most evident from the exprefs Words of Scripture. See *Acts* 15. 5. where it is said, there arose a great Controversy in the Church, because, that certain erroneous Brethren, some converted *Pharisees*, perswaded them that it was still needful to continue the Custom of circumcising their Children. To decide this, a Council of the Apostles and Elders assembled together ; and in *Ver.* 10.

## The Doctrine of

we have their definitive Sentence against the Necessity of Circumcision, *Why tempt ye God to put a Yoke upon the Neck of the Disciples, which neither our Fathers, nor we, were able to bear?* Now on whom would these *Pharisees* have laid this Yoke? Was it not on the Disciples? And what was this Yoke? Was it not Circumcision? And who were they whom they would have to be circumcised? Doubtless, all the *Gentiles*, who believed in Jesus Christ, both Men and Children; and in following Ages, especially if not only Children were to have been circumcised, if this erroneous Doctrine had prevailed. Well then, they whom these False Teachers would have to be circumcised, were Disciples: But it is plain, that they would impose this, not only upon adult Persons, but Children; for that they required they should be circumcised according to the Law of *Moses*, as *Verse 1*. Now, according to the Law and Manner of *Moses*, all Children, whether of Native *Jews* or *Profelytes*, ought to be circumcised the Eighth Day. And this, saith the Holy Synod of the Apostles, is a Yoke, that *neither they, nor their Fore-fathers, were able to bear*. Not that Circumcision itself, although a painful, was yet an intolerable Rite, but only as it was a Sign and Seal

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engaging them to keep the whole Law of *Moses*, which was this pinching Yoke, and this insupportable Burden, that the Apostolical Council decreed should not be put upon the Disciples : And therefore, either Infants are Disciples, or notwithstanding this Decree they may still receive Circumcision as an Engagement to the Observation of the Mosaical Law.

*Thirdly*, Another Argument may be drawn from the Text ; *He loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the Washing of Water.* From whence I thus argue : Those for whom Christ gave himself that they might be saved, those he doth likewise intend to bring to Salvation by sanctifying and cleansing them with the Washing of Baptismal Water ; but he gave himself likewise for Infants, that they might be saved ; for he expressly tells us, that *of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, not only of their Conditions, but of their Condition ; and therefore Infants are ordinarily to be cleansed with the Washing of Water in Baptism. I do not say, that none can or shall be saved without Baptism ; that were too uncharitable an Opinion and Doom upon those who are inevitably deprived of this Holy Institution.

But

But this I say, that Baptism is the ordinary Means appointed by God for the sanctifying and cleansing of those for whom Christ gave himself to bring them to Salvation. And though the Children shall not be damned for Want of Baptism, yet (as King *James* said) I doubt whether the Parents of them may not, for their Neglect and Contempt of it.

Many other Arguments might be produced, but these may suffice in a Place where this great Doctrine need not be laboriously proved, especially being such as cannot be sufficiently answered.

Let us therefore, in the next Place, take into Consideration some of the most principal Objections that are made against Infant Baptism, which I would not mention in a Place where this Practice is not contradicted, but that I know the Evidence for it is abundantly superiour to the Cavils against it, and that you may be fortified against the Fallacies of Deceivers hereafter: For in these broken and divided Times, when the Whimsies of Men, and their confident Fancies, have so far prevailed against the Unity of the Church, God knows what they may next attempt; and plentiful Experience hath shewn, that Anabaptism usually follows Separation.

It is objected, 1. That Infants are not capable of the Ends of Baptism, and therefore ought not to be baptized. The End of Baptism is to signify to the Receiver of it, *the Washing away of Sin by the Blood of Jesus Christ*. But Infants, not having the Use of Reason, cannot possibly comprehend this Significancy: And therefore, it being to them an insignificant Thing, it cannot be the Ordinance of Christ that it should be administred to them.

To this I answer; That altho' Infants are not, as such, capable of all the Ends for which Baptism was ordained, yet it doth not, thence follow, that it is insignificant, and therefore unnecessary or unlawful to baptize them.

For, *First*, Baptism may be administred to those who are capable of some of the Ends of it, though they are not of all. 'Tis true, one great End of Baptism is to be a Sign of the washing away of Sin, and cleansing the Soul; and why may not this be God's Sign towards Infants, tho' it cannot be theirs towards him? Certainly the Sacraments are instituted to be the Signs of God's Favour to his Children, as well as Pledges of their Service to him. Again, we find that our Lord Jesus Christ himself was baptized by *John*, whose Bap-

tism was the Baptism of Repentance ; and yet our Saviour had no Sin to be repented of, no Filth to be washed away. By which Instance alone it is sufficiently clear that an Incapacity for some Ends of an Ordinance, where there is a Capacity for others, doth not exclude from a Right of partaking of it.

For, *Secondly*, Another great End of the Institution of Baptism was to be God's Seal to the Covenant of his Grace. Now as a Man may seal a Deed of Gift to an Infant, which shall be valid, though he understand it not, so God may, and doth seal the Promises of his Covenant to Infants ; and yet their Incapacity of knowing it doth not make the Truth and Promise of God of none Effect.

*Thirdly*, Though Infants cannot perceive the Significancy of Baptism, yet this can be no Reason to exclude them from it : For I suppose it will be granted, that Circumcision was significant, being a Sacrament as well as Baptism. And yet we read and know, that Circumcision was instituted for Infants who were altogether as incapable of understanding the Nature and End of that Ordinance, as our Children are of Baptism. If therefore Circumcision were not an idle insignificant Ceremony to the *Jewish* Children, which

which is Blasphemy to assert, no more is Baptism to the Children of Christians, tho' they cannot understandingly reflect upon the Significancy of it.

But, *Fourthly*, Though at present Infants cannot understand the Significancy of Baptism, yet this Sign may be effectual and operative when they are grown up to the Use of Reason, and they may then be taught (as it is the Duty of all Parents to instruct their Children) what an early Covenant God entered into with them, and they with God. Certainly it is of some avail to have a Child's Name put into a Lease or Deed of Gift, though for the present he understand not the Use of it. It may afterwards be of as much Value to him as all his Estate and Livelihood is worth. The Covenant of Grace is a Deed of Gift made to us by Christ, wherein he promiseth to bestow upon us eternal Life and Happiness. Now as it would be absurd to say, that a Child's Name ought not to be put into any Legacy, or Deed, till he come of Age to understand it; so alike absurd, and far more injurious is it, to leave out our Children from this Heavenly Legacy that Christ hath left his Church; which, tho' for the present they do not understand, yet may it be of infinite Use to them af-

terwards when they are grown up to Years of Discretion, and they may strongly plead it with God with good Success.

2. Another main Objection against *Infant Baptism* is, That neither Christ nor his Apostles, have any where commanded Infants to be baptized. Now it might seem strange that a Matter of such Consequence should be omitted in the Scripture, if it were a necessary Duty.

To this I answer, *First*, The Scripture commands whatsoever may be deduced from it by good and necessary Consequence. Now it is plain in Scripture, that Infants are Disciples; again, it is plain in Scripture, that Disciples ought to be baptized. It is plain in Scripture, that Infants are Members of the Church; again, it is plain in Scripture, that the Members of the Church ought to be solemnly admitted into it by Baptism. And this is plain Scripture-Proof, supposing that the Scriptures were written for Men who have Reason to deduce Consequences from Promises. For it is a known and a certain Rule, That whatsoever is drawn from Scripture by true and solid Reason, is Scripture.

*Secondly*, I answer, That it lies upon them to shew where Christ hath excluded Infants; not upon us to shew where they are

are expressly admitted: The Reason of it is, because it is clear, that Infants were once admitted to be Members of the visible Church by Circumcision. Now if Christ hath repealed such a Privilege as this, let them first produce this Repeating Act, which they can never do: And next, let them shew what greater and better Privilege Christ hath bestowed on Infants instead of it, or else they will make him to be *darns Deus Infantum*; and that our Children, under the Gospel, are in a far worse Estate than the *Jews* Children under the Law.

*Thirdly*, It is certain, that the Apostles knew nothing of the Repeal of this Privilege: They could not think that Christ had excluded Infants from being any longer of his Church, when they thought themselves bound to observe the *Jewish* Customs, and to continue all the Observances of the *Jewish* Church; yea, and that after they had baptized many Thousand People.

Yea again, *Fourthly*, We find that those of the *Jews*, who believed on Christ, were yet very much offended at the Neglect of Circumcision. This is clear from that Speech of the *Jewish* Christians to St. Paul, *Acts* 21. 20, 21. They said unto him, Thou seest, Brother, how many Thousand

*sands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the Law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their Children.* To remove which Prejudice, he himself observed the Rites of Purification, prescribed by the Law of *Moses*, and upon the same Misprision had before circumcised *Timothy*, as we find it, *Acts* 16. 3. So that certainly *St. Paul* thought not any Privileges of the *Jewish Church* to be repealed by their becoming Christians, but that they might, according to the Law of *Moses*, circumcise their Infants, as being Members of the Church; and therefore they ought to baptize them, this being as much required by the Gospel, as the other was by the Law. These Things therefore being well consider'd, we may see Reason and Authority enough to continue our Practice of baptizing Infants, unless they can bring some Place of Scripture that doth exclude them from this Ordinance.

But then again they object, *Thirdly*, That such a Place they can, and do produce; and that is, *Matth.* 28. 19. where our Saviour gives Commission to his Disciples, *To go teach all Nations, baptizing them.* Here it is clearly expres'd, that they are first to be taught before they are to be bap-

baptized; and consequently Infants, who are incapable of being taught, are thereby rendered incapable of being baptized.

For Answer to this, you must consider, *First*, That there is a vast Difference between a Church in its first Institution, and a Church in its Progress and Continuation. The Apostles, who received this Commission immediately from the Mouth of Christ himself, were sent to frame a Church out of the Heathen World, who had never known the True God, nor heard of the Name of Christ Jesus, and therefore were to be instructed in his Doctrine before they could be baptized in his Name. It had been a strange preposterous Course, if Men grown up to Years, and the Use of Reason, should be baptized into the Profession of Christ, before ever they had heard who this Christ was, and what was that Belief into which they were baptized. But when once they were thus taught and baptized, it is more than barely conjectural, that their Infants were made Partakers of the same Ordinance, from this, that some whole Families are said to have been baptized; wherein they must be unreasonably bold who will deny there were any Infants, or Children, as incapable to receive the Knowledge of so high a Mystery, as In-

fants are. But now we are not to lay the Foundations of a new Church, but to build upon the old. Indeed, were we to convert an Infidel, Reason and Religion would shew, that we should instruct him before we baptize him. But the Children of Believing Parents are Members of the Church of Christ by their Birth-right; and therefore have a Right to Baptism long before they have a Capacity for Instruction. So saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 7. 14. That the Children of a believing Parent are holy.* Now to be Holy, signifies to be separated unto God; and certainly if they be separated to God in their State and Condition, they ought to be solemnly dedicated unto him in the Ordinance of Baptism: *For they are not unclean, i. e. they are not in the same State with the Children of Heathens and Infidels: But they are Holy, and therefore Members of the Church (unless we would imagine a Generation of Holy Persons without the Church); and therefore are they capable of being baptized before they are capable of being instructed.*

*Secondly,* Consider if our Saviour had sent his Disciples to convert the *Gentiles* to the Law of *Moses*, what other Words could he have used to them, but *go teach*

*all Nations, circumcising them.* If therefore such Words would not imply, but that the Infants of profelyted Heathens ought to have been circumcised before they were taught and instructed in the Law of *Moses*, no more do our Saviour's Words imply, that the Infants of Believing *Gentiles* ought not to be baptized before they are instructed in the Faith of Christ : For if Christ had used such Words, none would have imagined that the Infants of profelyted *Gentiles* were to be excluded by them from Circumcision : And therefore neither can there be any Reason to imagine, from the Words as they lie, that our Saviour did intend by them to exclude the Infants of Christians from Baptism.

Again, *Thirdly*, We must consider what Apprehensions the Apostles, to whom our Saviour speaks, had concerning the Church Estate of Infants in their Time. Did they not look upon them as Members of the Church then ? It is plain that they did, since they were all circumcised. And can we with Reason think, that when our Saviour bade them gather whole Nations into his Church, they should imagine that Infants must now be excluded out of it by a new Example, since they were all included in the Church

under the Dispensation which was in use among them? This is highly improbable. And therefore we have all Reason to conclude, that when our Saviour bids them teach and baptize, they understood no other, but that they were to bring the *Gentiles* into the same State of a Church in which the *Jews* were before, that they might enjoy the same Privileges or greater; the Adult to be taught and baptized, the Infants of these to become Church-Members upon the Faith and Profession of their Parents; just as it was before in the Case of Profelytes: And this very Sense the Word μαθητῆρι doth well bear, for it signifies to *make Disciples*, as well as to teach; and, as I have before proved, that Children are Disciples, so it is clear that our Saviour himself chose Disciples before he had taught them, and that Scholars are admitted, not because they have learned, but that they may learn. And this is in Answer to that Objection:

*Fourthly*, It may be again objected, That Baptism is an engaging Sign: But how can Infants covenant and engage with God?

To this I answer, *First*, That certainly our Children are as much capacitated to enter into Covenant with God, as were the Children of the *Jews*; and that Circumcision

circumcision was as much an engaging Seal of the Covenant as now Baptism is. If therefore they condemn Infant Baptism, because Infants cannot enter into Covenant with God, they do but thereby pretend to be wiser than God, and tell him he may possibly be a Loser by transacting with those, who perhaps hereafter may plead Nonage, and that they could not be obliged by any Thing transacted in their Minority.

But, *Secondly*, I answer, It is true that Baptism is an engaging Sign between God and the Baptized, whereby they enter into Covenant with God, and He with them: But though they cannot personally vow nor stipulate, yet they may have Sponsors and Sureties to undertake this for them. For Parents, and those who are appointed by Parents, have certainly a Right to bind and engage Children in this Baptismal Covenant. It is but a natural Right they have over them to bind them to the Terms of any Covenant and Agreement, especially such as shall be for their Benefit and Advantage. I shewed you before out of *Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12, 13.* that they were to enter their Children into Covenant as well as themselves. And though it be the Custom of our Church for those who are not the Pa-  
C 4 rents

rents to engage for the Child, yet their Stipulation is in this Case valid and obligatory; because they are hereunto appointed by their Parents, who have a natural Right over their Children, and make these their Representatives.

But some will say, and it is commonly objected, but not more commonly, than very ignorantly, that these Sureties promise more than they can perform. They promise, that the Child presented to Baptism *shall forsake the Devil and all his Works, and renounce the Poms and Vanities of this World, and continue Christ's faithful Soldier and Servant unto its Life's End.* But this is not in their Power to effect.

To this I answer, It is not they that promise these Things for themselves, neither indeed do they promise that the Child shall do them; but it is the Child that promiseth these Things by them. It is not their Duty, by Vertue of that Promise, but his. Indeed, they ought to contribute their best Help and Assistance hereunto, and that is all that is incumbent on them: Which, if they have done, and the Child prove notoriously wicked, they have not thereby broken any Covenant, but only he himself; for in entering into those Holy Engagements they bore the Person of the Infant, and their Stipulation

Stipulation is legally his : So that they leave him obliged to perform what in his Name is promised ; which, if he performs, eternal Life will be his Reward ; if not, eternal Death. They lay this Engagement upon the Child (as Parents, and those deputed by Parents, may do) leaving it to him to fulfill the Covenant, or to transgress it at his own Peril.

And thus, I hope, I have, to all sober and rational Persons, made it sufficiently clear, that *Infant Baptism* is lawfully used in the Church of Christ ; and that those Things which are objected against it, are but of small Moment, being grounded either upon Mistakes or Falshoods.

*Thirdly*, Let us therefore proceed to the Third General propounded, which was to shew you the various Ends and Uses of Baptism. Its Use is Threefold :

*First*, It is a solemn Way of entering into the Fellowship of the Church : For whosoever are Partakers of it are reckoned visible Members of the Church, and have an Interest in all the Prayers of the Saints for their Brethren on Earth. And this ought, by every sober Christian, to be esteemed a great Benefit, that his Children, by their being baptized, are wrapt up in the Prayers of all the Saints throughout the World, and so daily presented

presented to God, tho' to them unknown. Baptism is the solemn enrolling our Names in the Register-Book of the Church visible, where we stand listed under Christ *the Captain of our Salvation*; engaging our selves to maintain a truceless War against all the Enemies of his Glory and our Happiness.

*Secondly*, Another Use of this Ordinance is to be a Seal added by God to confirm to us the Fidelity of his Covenant of Grace; that as Circumcision was a Seal of the Covenant to the *Jews*, so Baptism is to Christians: For in this Holy Institution God gives us a visible Sign and Pledge of the Truth of his Promise, that he will as certainly save us if we believe, as our Bodies have been sprinkled with Baptismal Water.

*Thirdly*, Another Use of it is to be a Sign and a Representation. And thus it represents divers Things.

*First*, The Original Filth and Pollution of our Natures; for Washing doth denote Defilement. We all came into the World with fowl and unclean Natures, the Sinks of all Manner of Filth and Pollution. Parents convey a sad and necessary Patrimony of Original Sin unto all their Posterity; yea, tho' they themselves be sanctified and cleansed, yet their Offspring is

is born with this Native Taint, as a circumcised Father begat an uncircumcised Son, and as pure Grain sown in the Earth produceth Grain wrapt up in Husks and Chaff. And therefore, as they should rejoice that God hath given them to see of the Fruit of their Bodies, so they should mourn to think that they have brought into the World a Creature despoil'd of the Image of God, and thereby wofully inclined to all Manner of Vice and Wickedness ; *a Child of Wrath, and an Heir of Hell.*

*Secondly,* It signifies to us the purifying and cleansing Virtue of the Blood of Christ, which is represented unto us by the Baptismal Water : For as that cleanseth the Body, so *the Sprinkling of the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin,* 1 John 1. 7. *and purgeth the Conscience from dead Works,* Hebr. 9. 14.

*Thirdly,* It signifies to us the Nature of sanctifying and renewing Grace ; which, as Water washes away bodily Filth, so this doth the Defilements, the Vices, and evil Habits of the Soul : And therefore Sanctification is often set forth by the Similitude of Washing. *Isaiab 1. 16, 17. Wash ye, make you clean, cease to do Evil, learn to do Well.* And, *Ezek. 36. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and you shall be*

*be clean from all your Filthiness.* And thus in many other Places.

Now, tho' these Significations cannot be of Use for the present to the Infant, because it wants the Use of Reason to reflect upon them, yet they may have very great Influence hereafter, when he is grown up to more mature Age : Yea, and to us who are present, and Spectators of this Holy Ordinance, the very Sight of the Sacramental Action should lively suggest to our Minds these Spiritual Things that are signified thereby, how that *we who have been baptized into Christ were buried with him by Baptism ; that like as Christ was raised from Death, so we also should walk in Newness of Life,* as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 6. 3, 4.*

Let us not therefore entertain any slight Thoughts of this great and holy Ordinance. Indeed, 'tis too seldom that we seriously consider what an obliging Covenant we have entred into in our Baptism ; but, as if all the Promises of forsaking the Devil and his Works, of renouncing the Inticements of our own Lusts, and the Allurements of the World, were all written on the Water that sprinkled us, and wiped off together with it, we have lived not only careless of, but even contrary to our Baptismal Vows and

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Engagement. And to conclude this, whensoever we attend this Holy Ordinance, the Administration of this Sacrament, we ought to renew our Covenant with God; and again, to give up our selves unto him with more unconquerable Resolutions of being his, and wholly devoted to his Service, than formerly. So that though the Seal be not applied to us, yet to us may be confirmed the Benefits of the Covenant by Vertue of that Seal, which in our Infancy was applied to our Body, and is now, by our Faith, applied to our Souls.

Having thus at large confirmed to you the Lawfulness of *Infant Baptism*, and removed those Prejudices and Cavils that lay against it; I shall now return more narrowly to consider the Text, wherein we have (as I formerly told you) two Propositions: The One is, That the End of Christ's giving himself for the Church, was *to sanctify and cleanse it*. And, Secondly, That the Means to sanctify and cleanse the Church, is by *the Washing of the Water and the Word*.

It is the latter of these I shall insist on. Wherein Two Things only require a brief Explication:

*First,*

## The Doctrine of

*First, What is meant by the Washing of Water.*

*Secondly, What by the Word.*

As to the *First, Washing of Water*, may be understood either literally or allusively. If we take it literally, so it signifies Baptism; and the Meaning is plainly, that we are sanctified and cleansed by *Baptism*.

If we take it allusively, so this *Washing of Water* denotes to us the Manner of the Spirits sanctifying and cleansing the Soul; for as Water cleanseth the Filth of the Body, so doth the Power of Divine Grace purify the Soul from its vicious Filth and Pollutions: But certainly, the literal Sense is here the best; nor ought we to depart from it, in any Text of Scripture, without apparent Reason and cogent Necessity. For here are Two Means of our Sanctification mentioned, *Water*, and the *Word*: And to make both these effectual, the inward Influence of the Holy Ghost must concur, without which they will never attain their End.

1st. By the *Word*, may be understood Two Things: Either the very Words used in the Form of Baptizing, and prescribed by our Saviour, *Matth. 28. 19.* where

he commands his Apostle *to baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* So that, according to this, the Meaning of the Apostle is, that the Washing of Baptism, joined with the Words of Institution, is the Means appointed by Christ for the sanctifying and cleansing of his Church. And indeed, towards Infants there is no other Means appointed, nor are they capable of any other Ordinance.

Or, *2dly.* By the *Word* here is meant, the Preaching of the whole Word and Will of God: And this I judge most probable; for so the Sense runs plain, that the Two great Means which Christ hath appointed for the sanctifying of his Church, are the Administration of the Sacrament, and preaching of the Gospel.

Concerning the Influence that the Words hath in our Sanctification, I shall not now speak. 'Tis the Seed by which we are begotten, 1 Pet. 1. 23. *Born not of corruptible Seed, but incorruptible by the Word of God.* 'Tis the Milk by which we are nourish'd, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *Desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby:* 'Tis the Principle of our Spiritual Being, and 'tis the Spiritual Food of our Souls, an effectual Instrument in the Hand of the Holy Ghost, both to beget, and to increase

increase Grace in us: And therefore our Saviour prays, *John 17. 17. Sanctify them through thy Truth; thy Word is Truth.*

But the Subject which I now intend to prosecute, is concerning Baptism, and that this Ordinance is appointed by Christ for our Sanctification.

And here observe, that to be sanctified imports, in the proper Signification of it, no other than to be appointed, separated, or dedicated to God. And therefore, in Scripture, whatsoever is set apart for the Use and Service of God, whether Persons, or Places, or Things, they are said to be holy, or to be sanctified to the Lord. So the First-born are said to be *sanctified to the Lord*, *Exod. 13. 2. And Aaron, and his Sons, to be consecrated, and sanctified to minister unto the Lord*, *Exod. 28. 41.* And so for Places, *Moses* was commanded to sanctify the Mountain *Sinai*, that is, to make it Holy, by setting it apart only for God's Appearance on it, and that the People might not come near to touch it, *Exod. 19. 23.* Thus the Tabernacle, and afterwards the Temple, are said to be sanctified, *Numb. 7. 1.* for being set apart only for the Worship and Service of God, they were thereby made relatively Holy. So we read, that the Ground on which *Moses* stood is by God  
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himself called *Holy*, *Exod.* 3. 5. And Mount *Tabor*, on which our Saviour was gloriously transfigured, is by the Apostle called *the Holy Mount*, *2 Pet.* 1. 18. Because of the Special Appearance of God in those Places, which did then hallow and consecrate them. And then as for Things, a Man is said to *sanctify his House to be holy unto the Lord*, *Levit.* 27. 14. and to *sanctify his Field*, *Ver.* 16. when the Rent of the one, and the Profits of the other were devoted unto God, for the Maintenance of his Service and Servants. And so in innumerable other Places, the Word *Sanctify* is thus used, and the import of it is no other, than to signify the Dedication of a Person, Thing, Place or Time unto God.

Now there are Two Ways of Dedication unto God, whereby his Title takes Place, and what is so devoted, becomes his.

The One external by Men, as in the Instances before cited ; whereby there was no Change at all wrought in the Nature of the Thing thus dedicated, but only a Change in the Relation and Propriety of it. As in a Field devoted to God, there was no other Change but only in relation to the Owner ; God himself becoming the Proprietor, and receiving  
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the Increase of it by his immediate Servants and Ministers. And thus the Piety of our Ancestors hath sanctified the Tenth Part of the Increase of the Land unto God for the Maintenance of his Worship.

The other Dedication is internal, and wrought by God himself. And thus he is said to separate or dedicate Persons to himself, when by the effectual Operation of the Holy Ghost upon them, he endows them with those Habits which enable them to do him Service. Not to heap up many Places we have both of these, *Acts 13. 2. Separate now unto me Barnabas and Saul, for the Work whereunto I have called them.* Here is their external Separation: They were to be dedicated, to be sanctified, or made holy Persons by the Church. *Separate unto me*; that is, set these Men apart, and appoint them by a solemn Mission for my Work and Service in the Ministry. Here is likewise their internal Dedication, whereby God had set them apart for himself by the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit wrought in them: *Separate them to the Work whereunto I have called them, i. e. whereunto I have inwardly both inclined, and fitted, and furnish'd them.*

Now as there is this twofold Dedication or Separation, so there is also a twofold Sanctification.

*First,* There is an External, Relative, or Ecclesiastical Sanctification, which is nothing else but the devoting or giving up of a Thing, or Person, unto God, by those who have a Power so to do.

*Secondly,* There is an Internal, Real and Spiritual Sanctification : And in this Sense a Man is said to be sanctified, when the Holy Ghost doth infuse into his Soul the Habits of Divine Grace, and makes him Partaker of the Divine Nature, whereby he is inwardly qualified to glorify God in an holy Life. I suppose by this which hath been said, the meanest Capacity may well apprehend the Difference between these Two Kinds of Sanctification or Separation unto God.

Now in applying this Distinction to Baptism, and to shew you how it is that Baptism doth sanctify, I shall lay down these following Propositions.

*First,* Baptism is the immediate Means of our external and relative Sanctification unto God. By this Holy Sacrament, all that are Partakers of it are dedicated and separated unto him. There are (if I may so express it) but Two Regiments of Men, the one is of the World, the other is of

gion, without which there is no Salvation attainable: So that they do visibly belong to the Church and Kingdom of Satan, who are either trained up in Heathenish Idolatry, *Mahometan* Stupidity, or *Jewish* Obstinacy; or else those who revolt from the Christian Profession to embrace any of these. Those who are of the World, but yet more invisibly, are all such Persons, who, though they make a Profession of the Name and Doctrine of Christ, yet through Hypocrisy, or other Sins, reject that Christ whom they profess, denying him in their Works whom they own in their Words, maintaining no vital nor spiritual Communion with him.

From this Distinction it follows, 1<sup>st</sup>, That all that are of the visible Church of Christ Jesus, are taken out of the World; so that it may truly be said of them, that they are not of the World. I cannot indeed deny but that too many, yea, possibly the major part of the Church visible of Jesus Christ, may still appertain invisibly to the Kingdom of the Devil, which is the World: And if any of those who profess the Name of Christ, fall into any publick and notorious Sin, they ought to be cut off by the Censure of Excommunication; and 'till they give

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Satisfaction by Repentance, are to be reputed as Heathens and Publicans. But yet this is certain, that 'till Sentence pass upon them they are to be look'd upon as Members of the visible Church, and not visibly of the World: Yea farther, Excommunication it self doth not absolutely and simply cut Men off from being Members of the Church of Christ. For they who are under an Ordinance of the Church for their Edification, are certainly still Members of the Church. But as those who are outlawed are debarr'd of the Benefits and Privileges of the State in which they live, and of which they are Subjects; so Excommunication, being a Spiritual Outlawry, deprives Persons who lye under it, of the Privileges of the Church, and renders them as incapable of the visible Communion of Christians, as if they did visibly appertain to the malignant Church and the Kingdom of Satan.

*Secondly,* Hence it follows, that all those who are Members of the visible Church may truly be called Saints, and Members of Christ, and the Children and People of God; because, by being taken into the Church, they are taken out of the World, and so become God's Portion, and the Lot of his Inheritance.

## The Doctrine of

*Deut. 32. 9. The Lord's Portion is his People, Jacob is the Lot of his Inheritance. Not that they are all so in an Internal, Spiritual, and Saving Manner; would to God they were, and that all that are of Israel were Israel, as the Apostle speaks, Rom. 9. 6. but only because though many of them are Hypocrites, and many more profane, yet they may bear these Titles from the external Relation wherein they now stand to Christ, by making Profession of his Name and Religion. I look upon the Christian Church, now under the Times of the Gospel, to be in the same Capacity, and to stand in the same Relation towards God, as the Jewish Church did under the Law. But now clear it is, that in the most corrupt State of the Jewish Church, God still owned them for his People; Jer. 4. 22. My People is foolish, they have not known me. And, Isaiah 1. 3, 4. My People doth not consider; a sinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquities, a Seed of Evil Doers: And yet notwithstanding these great Complaints of their universal Wickedness, as you find throughout that whole Chapter, yet are they God's People. My People, and yet a People laden with Iniquity; My Children, and yet a Seed of Evil Doers, Children that are Corrupters: Yea, and in the New Testament we find Sancti-*

Sanctification and Holiness ascribed to those who were never otherwise sanctified than by their external Separation from the World, and Profession of the Doctrine of Christ. St. Paul directs his Epistle to the whole Church of *Corinth* as to Saints; *to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be Saints, 1 Cor. i. 2.* and it was the common Beginning of all his Epistles: Yet were there some in this Church of *Corinth* that had not the Knowledge of God, that denied the Resurrection, and were grossly guilty of foul and flagitious Crimes, as he himself witnesseth against them, and for which he sharply reproves them in that Epistle. Saints they are called only because they were visible Church-Members, and made a Profession of the Christian Faith and Name.

Neither is it easy to be conceived that all those Saints, whose Bowels *Philemon* refreshed, whose Feet the Widows or Deaconesses washed, who had Share of the Collections and Contributions of the Church, that they were all such as were internally united unto Christ by a Saving Faith: Or, that when *Saul* persecuted the Church, and shut up the Saints in Prison, his Rage and Madness look'd no farther how to find them out, than merely

merely by the Profession of the Name of Jesus: For surely he had not then the Gift of discerning between sincere and rotten Professors. *Acts 26. 10. Many of the Saints did I shut up in Prison; and who they were is clear: Acts 9. 2. All that were of that Way, that is, who professed the Name of Christ Jesus. Some are said to be redeemed, who yet certainly were never better than Ecclesiastical Saints, for after it is spoken of them, that they denied the Lord who bought them, 2 Pet. 2. 1. And some are said to be sanctified, who yet are supposed to sin unpardonably; Hebr. 10. 29. accounting the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy Thing.* These Places do irrefragably prove, that in Scripture Language those are called Saints, and sanctified, who were Members of the Church of Christ, and thereby federally or relatively holy.

Again, they are called *the Children of God, and the Sons of God.* So *Gen. 6. 2. The Sons of God saw the Daughters of Men; that is, they who were of the Church, and made Profession of the true Service and Worship of God, saw the Daughters of those who were of the World profane and wicked Idolaters, by marrying of whom they were also perverted and drawn from the true Worship of God.*

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So *Dent. 14. 1.* it is spoken to the *Israelites* in general, *Ye are the Children of the Lord your God.* And yet *with many of them,* saith the Apostle, *God was not well pleased, but slew them in the Wilderness:* There were among them Murmurers, Schismatics, and Rebels, and they were an hard-hearted and a stiff-neck'd People under all the miraculous Dispensations of God towards them, as their Guide and Governour *Moses* often complains. And the Apostle *St. Paul,* alluding to this Place of *Deuteronomy,* tells the *Galatians,* Chap. 3. 26. *Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus:* And yet the Heresy of holding the Necessity of Judaical Observations, wofully prevailed among them, so that they were generally infected, nay, bewitched with it: And yet an external Profession of the Name and Doctrine of Christ, is, in the Apostle's Judgment, sufficient to give them all the honourable Stile of *the Children of God.* So again, *Rom. 9. 4.* the Apostle tells us, that to the *Israelites,* as they were a Church, *pertained the Adoption.* Now Adoption is making Men Sons of God; yet certainly they did not all of them enjoy the heavenly and effectual Adoption, which would bring them all to the heavenly and glorious Inheritance: But only they were

were the Children of God, being separated from the World, and brought under an Ecclesiastical Oeconomy, and Dispensation of Holy Ordinances.

Again, to be Members of the Church visible, is sufficient to style Men, *Members of Christ*: So our Saviour himself speaks of some *Branches in him that bear not Fruit*, John 15. 2. And so *Rom. 11. 17.* the Branches of the true Olive are said to have been broken off, and others ingrafted in their stead. Certainly *this Vine*, and *this Olive*, is Christ; and these barren, and therefore broken Branches are *Members of his Body*; not indeed living Members united unto him by the Band of a Saving Faith, whereby they might draw Sap and Nourishment from him, for such shall never be broken off, nor burnt; but yet they are in Christ, and belong unto Christ, as his Members by an Ecclesiastical or Political Infiton, as they are Parts and Members of the visible Church.

And thus, I suppose, I have made it sufficiently clear unto you, that all who are taken out of the World into the visible Church of Christ, may, according to the Phrase and Expressions of Scripture, be called Saints, the Children and People of God, and Members of Christ.

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But now, *Thirdly*, To bring this home to our present Subject of Baptism, from all this it evidently follows, that those who are baptized, may in this Ecclesiastical and Relative Sense be truly called *Saints, the Children of God, and Members of Christ*, and thereupon *Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*. Doubtless, so far forth Baptism is a Means of Sanctification, as it is the solemn Admission of Persons into the visible Church, as it separates them from the World, and from all false Religions in it, and brings them out of the visible Kingdom of the Devil into the visible Kingdom of Jesus Christ. For if all that are admitted into the visible Church, are thereby (as I have proved to you) dignified with the Title of *Saints, and the Children of God*, then by Baptism, which is the solemn Way of admitting them into the Church, they may, with very good Reason, be said to be made *Saints, the Children of God, and Members of Christ*. But this is only a Relative Sanctity, not a Real; and many such Saints and sanctified Men there are who shall never enter into Heaven, but by their wicked Lives forfeit and lose that blessed Inheritance to which they were called. Many there are who are Saints by their Separation from Paganism and Judaism into Fellowship

ship with the visible Church ; but they are not Saints by their Separation from wicked and ungodly Men into a Spiritual Fellowship with Christ. And yet to such Saints as these, all the Ordinances of the Church are due, 'till for their notorious Wickedness they be cut off from that Body, by the due Execution of the Sentence of Excommunication. Such a Baptismal Regeneration as this is, must needs be acknowledged by all that will not wilfully shut their Eyes against the clear Evidence of Scripture: From which I have before brought plentiful Proofs to confirm it: Yet let me add one more, and that shall be *Gal. 3. 26. 27. You are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus*, i. e. by believing and professing his Doctrine. *For as many* (saith the Apostle) *as have been baptized into Christ*, i. e. baptized into the Religion of Christ, and in his Name, *have put on Christ*, i. e. have professed him, and thereby put upon your selves his Name, being called *Christians*. And this putting on of Christ in Baptism, the Apostle makes a Ground to assert them to be all *the Children of God*. But still it must be remembered, that this Sanctification, Regeneration and Adoption, conferr'd upon us at our Admission into the visible Church, is Ex-  
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ternal and Ecclesiastical : And though it alone will suffice to the Salvation of Infants, because they are thereby as holy as their State can make them capable of, yet it will not suffice to the Salvation of grown and adult Persons, if they contradict it by the Course of a wicked Life. For our Saviour hath told us, that *the Children of the Kingdom* shall themselves, many of them, *be cast into outer Darkness*, Matth. 8. 12.

And thus much for the first Position, that Baptism is a Means of our external and relative Sanctification unto God, because by it we are separated from the visible Kingdom of the Devil, and brought into the visible Kingdom of Christ, and are devoted by Vow and Covenant unto the Service of God.

*Secondly*, Another Position is this, That Baptism is not so the Means of an internal and real Sanctification, as if all to whom it is administred were thereby spiritually renewed, and made Partakers of the Holy Ghost in his saving Graces. Though an External and Ecclesiastical Sanctification be effected by Baptism *Ex opere operato*, by the mere Administration of that Holy Sacrament, yet so is not an internal and habitual Sanctification : And that whether we respect adult Persons, or Infants.

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## The Doctrine of

*First*, For adult Persons, we have a famous and uncontrollable Instance in the Baptism of *Simon Magnus*, who *believed* upon the preaching of the Gospel; for so it is said, *Acts* 8. 13. and upon the Profession of Faith in Jesus Christ, was admitted to the Holy Ordinance of Baptism; yet *Verse* 23. *St. Peter* tells him, that *he was still in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bonds of Iniquity*; in the same State of Sin and Misery, and as much a Blackmore when he came out of the Laver, as he was before he entred into it. And,

*Secondly*, For Infants, it is not easy to be conceived what inward Work can in an ordinary Manner pass upon them: And to feign an extraordinary and miraculous Work there is no Necessity, since their Salvation may be safe without it. What the miraculous Grace of God is able to do, is not fit to be disputed. But surely we have very little Reason to think that there are any real Habits of supernatural Grace infused into the Souls of Infants, since neither are they ordinarily capable of it, nor of exerting any spiritual Acts by it. However, Baptism was not instituted to any such Purpose, that it should be an Instrument of working a real Change upon Infants. For neither

can it work this Change by any immediate and proper Efficiency, since the Washing of the Body cannot thus affect the Soul, nor infuse any gracious Habits into it which it self hath not; neither can it work morally, by way of Suasion and Argument, because Infants have not the Use of Reason to apprehend any such. Again, if this Baptismal Regeneration be real, by the Infusion of habitual Grace, how comes it to pass that the greater Part of those who have received it, lead profane and unholy Lives, and too too many perish in their Sins? They who have the Seed of God in them, shall never sin unto Death; and the Perseverance of those who are inwardly and effectually sanctified, is safe, and certain. For surely, true Grace is saving, and true and saving Grace is the Effect of our Election unto eternal Life, for *whom he did predestinate, them he also called*, Rom. 8. 30. And therefore I judge it unsound Doctrine to affirm, that Baptism doth confer real Sanctification upon all Infants, as well as upon some Adult Persons who are made Partakers of it.

But here may some say, If Baptism doth not confer a real and internal Regeneration to Infants, who partake thereof, how then is it that the Church hath appointed a Prayer in the Office of Baptism, wherein

we bless God that it hath pleased him to regenerate the baptized Infant with his Holy Spirit ?

To this I answer ; That the Baptismal Regeneration of Infants, is External and Ecclesiastical : They are regenerated, as they are incorporated into the Church of Christ ; for this is called *Regeneration*, *Matth. 19. 28. Ye that have followed me in the Regeneration, shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.* Where (though some read the Words otherwise, *In the Regeneration ye shall sit upon twelve Thrones ;* meaning thereby the Day of Judgment, and the last Renewing of all Things) ; yet I see no enforcing Necessity to alter the common and usual Reading, *Ye who have followed me in the Regeneration, i. e. in Planting my Church, which is the Renewing of the World : And therefore the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 17. saying, that old Things are pass'd away, all Things are become new,* is thought to allude unto the Prophet *Isaiah 65. 17. Behold, I create new Heavens, and a new Earth, and the former shall not be remembered.* And this State of the Gospel was by the Jews frequently called *the World to come* : And so likewise is it called by the Apostle, *Heb. 2. 5. Unto the Angels hath he not put in Subjection the World to come, whereof we speak.* To be  
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admitted therefore by Baptism into the Church of Christ, is to be admitted into the State of Regeneration, or the Renewing of all Things, called therefore *the Washing of Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5.

But how then are Infants said in Baptism, to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, if he doth not inwardly sanctify them in and by that Ordinance?

I answer; Because the whole Oeconomy, and Dispensation of the Kingdom of Christ, is managed by the Spirit of Christ: So that those who are internally sanctified, are regenerated by his effectual Operation; and those who are only externally sanctified, are regenerated by his publick Institution. Infants therefore are in Baptism regenerated by the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Spirit of God appoints this Ordinance to receive them into the visible Church, which is the regenerate Part and State of the World.

That's the second Position, That: Baptism is not so the Means of Sanctification, that all, to whom it is administred, must thereby be made Partakers of the Holy Ghost in his Saving Graces.

*Thirdly*, It is not so the Means of Sanctification, as if none could be internally and really sanctified, who are necessarily deprived of that holy Ordinance: Yea,

indeed all that are converted from other Religions unto Christianity, must first believe and make Profession of that Faith, before they can be admitted unto the Sacrament of Baptism; and doubtless many Thousands were by the Apostles converted, not only to the Christian Profession, but to a Christian and holy Life, before they were baptized. We well know, that in the Primitive Times very many did delay their Baptism till their declining Age, out of an erroneous Opinion, that all voluntary Sins after Baptism were unpardonable; and yet it would be very uncharitable to judge, that none of these were sanctified, and inwardly renewed by the Holy Ghost. Yea, and perhaps to beat down this misgrounded Practice, some on the other Hand held, that Baptism was of absolute and indispensable Necessity to eternal Life; which was to cure a Mistake in Practice, by a most grievous Mistake in Doctrine; yet this their Opinion they grounded on *John 3. 5. Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: Whence they inferred, that Baptism was as absolutely necessary to eternal Life, as the Renovation of the Soul by Divine Grace; so that they pass'd a peremptory Doom of Exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven

ven upon all, both Infants and Adult, that died without the Seal of this Institution, although it were through no Default of their own, but by insuperable Necessity; only they excepted such as died Martyrs, whose Baptism, by their own Blood, they thought might serve instead of Baptism by Water. Thus, as *St. Cyprian* in one of his Epistles relates it, was determined by an *African Council*; to which Determination he also gives his Assent. And *St. Austin* (called therefore, *Durus Pater Infantum*) seems, in many Passages of his Works, to be thus rigid in giving Sentence against all who died unbaptized; although probably afterwards the Severity of his Opinion relented. For, in his fourth Book against *Donatus*, he tells us, That not only suffering for the Name of Christ may supply the Want of Baptism, *Sed etiam Fides, Conversioq; Cordis, si fortè ad celebrandum Mystrium Baptismi in angustiis temporum succurri non potest*; “but Faith also, and the Conversion of the Heart to God, if through “unavoidable Necessity we cannot celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism.” But whosoever were the Authors or Maintainers of this Opinion, it is certainly unwarrantable, and uncharitable, and contrary to the Judgment of the higher Primitive

Times; who, if they had thought that no Person could possibly be sanctified or saved without Baptism, would not certainly have stinted the Administration of it to their *Dies Baptismatum*, two special Seasons of the Year, *Easter* and *Whitsunday*; nor would many of them have deferr'd their own Baptism to the End of their Days: For how could they be sure that no Casualty should in the mean Time intervene, and cut off all Opportunities of receiving it? Baptism then is not of such absolute Necessity as a Means, that none can be saved without it; neither doth our Saviour in those Words so assert it: For we must distinguish between being inevitably deprived of the Opportunity of Baptism, and a wilful Contempt of it. And of this latter must the Words be understood. He that contemns being born again of Baptism, and out of that Contempt finally neglects it, he shall never enter into the Kingdom of God. But for others, who are necessarily depriv'd of that Ordinance, the Want of it shall not in the least prejudice their Salvation; for it is a stated Rule, *Non absentia, sed contemptus Sacramentorum reum facit.*

Fourthly,

*Fourthly*, The *4th* and *last* Position is this, That Baptism is an ordinary Means appointed by Christ for the real and effectual Sanctification of his Church : For this is the great End of all Gospel-Ordinances, that through them might be conveyed that Grace which might purify the Heart, and cleanse the Life. And though I do not affirm, that Baptism doth effect this in all to whom it is rightly applied, (not in Infants, who while such are incapable of that Work ; nor in many Adult Persons, who, though baptized, may remain still in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity ;) yet this I do affirm and maintain, that there is no Reason to doubt the Salvation of any, who, by this holy Ordinance, are consecrated unto God, until by their actual and wilful Sinning they thrust away from them those Benefits which God intends them by it. And indeed, who so doth but seriously consider the Vows that are upon him, and the solemn Engagements he hath made to be the Lord's, will find a pressing Force upon his Soul, unless he be lost to all Modesty and Ingenuity, urging him really to fulfil what he hath so justly and so sacredly promised. No Argument can be more prevalent to enforce an holy Life, than

when the Spirit of God shall bring home to our Considerations the Oath that we have taken to be God's, and to oppose all the Enemies that oppose his Glory, and our Salvation. When we shall be reminded, that as long as we continue in a State of Sin, we live in Perjury, having given our most serious Promise to God to yield Obedience to his Will and Laws, and to live as becomes his Servants and Soldiers.

I beseech you therefore, O Christians! consider seriously with your selves, what Bonds and Obligation lies upon you, that you have vowed and covenanted to be the Lord's; a Vow that is binding upon your Souls, and which, if you do not fulfil, will bind you over to everlasting Condemnation. Sit down, and think with your selves, what you stand obliged to, and either renounce your wicked Life, or renounce your Baptism. Deal ingenuously, rescind the Deed, and profess to all the World, that you look not upon your selves as listed under Christ's Banner, nor engaged to be his Servants and Soldiers, or else live as becomes Christians. What shall your Names be in the Register of Christ, and yet your Souls be in the Hands of the Devil? Will you carry his Ensign

in your Forehead, and yet fight against him in his own Camp? This is not only Hostility, but Treason: And as Rebels and Traitors are more severely dealt with than Enemies, so shall you; and believe it, the Flames of Hell burn the more furiously for being sprinkled with Baptismal Water.

From all this that hath been said on this Subject, I shall draw this one Deduction, and so conclude. Hence we may learn what to judge, and what to hope concerning the State of Infants who die baptized. Certainly, since they are in Covenant with God; since they are the Members of Christ, being Members of his Body the Church; since they are sanctified and regenerated so far forth as their Natures are ordinarily capable of, without a Miracle; we have all the Reason in the World comfortably to conclude, that all such die in the Lord, and are for ever happy and blessed with him. With very good Reason therefore, and upon very clear Evidence, hath our Church determined, that it is certain by God's Word, that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved: *Rubrick after Baptism.* For what should hinder? Actual Sins they are supposed to have none, and  
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the Guilt of their Original Sin is pardoned to them by Vertue of God's Covenant ; wherein he becomes their God, and takes them for his own Children. Baptism is the Sealing of this Pardon, *Acts* 2. 28. Be baptized for the Remission of Sins, and certainly the Grant is made where the Seal is added ; and since they cannot forfeit it either by Hypocrisy or Profaneness, without doubt they enjoy the everlasting Benefits of it. Yea, let me add, that not only Infants baptized, but all Infants of believing Parents, tho' they should unavoidably die before Baptism, yea before they see the Light, are in the same safe and blessed Condition, for they are in the same gracious Covenant. For since the Promise is made to Believers, and to their Children, God will not falsify his Promise where they break no Conditions : Since the Children of believing Parents are holy with all that Holiness that their Condition is capable of, this is sufficient to make them capable of Heaven, into which no unclean Thing can enter. Therefore if they be excluded, it is because they are unclean ; which the Apostle expressly denies, *1 Cor.* 7. 14. And Lastly, Since they are Members of Jesus Christ, being Members of his Church, he will certainly be  
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the Saviour of his Body, and present his Church holy and unspotted to his Father: And since they cannot, either by Hypocrisy, or any other Sin, debar themselves from the Privileges of God's Children; they shall certainly enjoy them in their largest and utmost Extent. We may therefore well comfort our selves for the Death of such: For there is far more Ground to be assured of their Salvation, than of any other Persons in the World, because here can be no Danger of Hypocrisy, nor close Dissimulation, which might make our Charity, or their Souls, miscarry. Upon this account, *David* comforts himself for the Death of his spurious Child, 2 *Sam.* 12. 23. *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.* Did *David* only mean, that he should go to the Grave to him, there were as little Comfort in that, as there is Sense and Enjoyment in Death. But the Consolation was, that he should go to that State of Bliss and Happiness, where the Soul of this Infant was made perfect: And that it was so, he could have no other Assurance, but that his Child was born within the Pale of the Church, born in the Covenant, and had the Seal of the Covenant apply'd to him. The like Consolation may we have when ever God takes from

us any of our Infant-Children, that they dying in the Bosom of the Church, in Covenant with God, and consecrated to him by Baptism, are received to that heavenly Felicity by vertue of God's Promise and Covenant, to which we ought to aspire by a continued Course of Faith, Patience, and Obedience.

*Tertullian calls Fidelium Filios Sanctitatis Candidatos, & Sanctos tam ex Semine Prærogativâ. Lib. de Animâ.*

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JOHN VI. 54, 55.

*Whoſo eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life, and I will raiſe him up at the Laſt Day: For my Fleſh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.*

**T**HESE Words are altogether Metaphorical and Figurative: And to open them, I ſhall enquire,

*Fiſt*, What is meant by *the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt*.

*Secondly*, What is meant by a Chriſtian's *Eating and Drinking this Fleſh and this Blood*: For neither of theſe Expreſſions muſt be taken according to its proper and literal Signification.

As to the *Fiſt*; By *the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt*, we muſt not only underſtand his Natural Body, conſiſting of true Fleſh and Blood; but the Phraſe includes whole Chriſt as the Mediator of Believers, eſpecially in the Courſe of his Humiliation,  
to

to which he was subject by reason of that *Flesh and Blood* of ours which he took unto him, that *so he might in all Things be like unto us, Sin only excepted.* So that Christ, as our Surety and Mediator, is this *Flesh and Blood* which he here speaks of.

And that it is to be taken in this Latitude, will appear from explaining the *Second Phrase, What it is to eat this Flesh, and drink this Blood.* And here,

1st. It is impiously gross to conceive, as the Papists do, that the Words are to be expounded of a carnally real Eating the Natural Body, and a proper real Drinking the Blood of Christ, in their Eucharist; which, besides all the gross Contradictions, and huge Impossibilities that they are forced to swallow down with it, is a Creed fitter for Canibals, than for Christians.

2dly. Therefore there is a real *Eating of the Flesh of Christ,* and a real *Drinking of his Blood,* by Faith. And of this, we must understand this Place. Thus our Saviour expounds himself, *Ver. 35. of this Chapter, I am the Bread of Life: He that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.* As Hunger is satisfied by Eating, and Thirst allayed by Drinking; so here it is Coming unto Christ, this Bread of Life, that satisfies a Christian's Hunger; and Believing on  
Christ,

Christ, *the Fountain of living Waters*, that allays his Thirst. This Eating therefore the Flesh of Christ, and Drinking his Blood, being by Christ himself made one and the same with our Coming unto him, and that being one and the same with our Believing on him, it can be nothing else but an Act of Faith terminated upon Christ.

This Body and Blood of Christ which we must thus eat and drink, *i. e.* which we must believe in, is not to be confined only to the true Natural Body of Christ; but to be extended to whatsoever he did and suffered in his Body, as our Mediator for our Redemption and Salvation. So then his being made a Curse for us, his being made under the Law, in the Form of a Servant, subjected to Humane Infirmities, and exposed to Humane Miseries; his Conflicting and Wraſtling with the Wrath of God, his Stripes and Scourgings, his Mockings and Revilings; the Obedience of his Life, and his Obedience unto Death, even the shameful and accursed Death of the Cross; his Bearing our Sins on his Body on the Tree, and his Eluctating the whole Load of Wrath that the Justice and Power of God could lay upon him, declared to the World by his triumphant Resurrection: Briefly, Whatsoever in Christ tended

tended to the Satisfaction of Divine Justice, and the Salvation of our Souls, that is, this Flesh and Blood of Christ which a Believer's Faith should feed upon.

It followeth ; *He that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood ; i. e.* he that believeth on me as Mediator, hath eternal Life. Now this may be understood,

*First*, That Grace being an incorruptible immortal Seed, he that hath this Life of Grace, hath in this Sense an eternal Life, a Life that shall never fade, nor die.

*Secondly*, If this eternal Life be taken for the Life of Glory, as indeed it seems most congruous, then a Believer is said to have this Life, both because he hath the Seeds and Principles, the Dawn and Beginning of it here, and because God hath assured to him the Possession of it hereafter, by his immutable Word of Promise ; which is as good Security as actual Possession, and gives him a Right and Title to that blessed and glorious Inheritance ; and certainly, what we have a Right unto, we may well call ours. Hence we may observe it, *Mark 16. 16.* It is said, *He that believeth, shall be saved ;* there is Assurance of Salvation for the future. *But, John 3. 18.* *he that believeth not, is condemned already.* Unbelievers are no more actually condemned,

demned, than Believers are actually saved; but only what God threatens or promiſeth, it is all one whether he ſaith it is done, or it ſhall be done. For Damnation is as certain to the one, and Salvation to the other, as if they were already in their final State.

It followeth, *And I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.* Now here the whole Cry of the Schoolmen, taking Advantage from ſome Expreſſions that drop'd unwarily from ſome of the Fathers, do from this Place aſſert, that there is left a Seminal Virtue from the Partaking of the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, (for concerning that only moſt of them interpret theſe Words of our Saviour) which hath a Power to quicken, and raiſe the dead Body at the laſt Day. But this is ſo wild and abſurd a Conceit, as needs no Confuting; eſpecially ſince the Words are not to be underſtood primarily and principally of the Sacrament, but of Faith in the Merits of Chriſt, wrought out for us in his Body, and by the Shedding of his Blood: Therefore, *I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day,* only declares to us Chriſt's Promiſe and Engagement, that he will be the Author, and efficient Cauſe of our Reſurrection. And though all Men ſhall riſe again, as well Unbelievers as Believers; yet Chriſt raiſeth

seth them in a different Manner. Those who are Unbelievers, he raiseth by his Power, as he is the Lord of all Things, both in Heaven and Earth ; and as their Judge, he sends for these Malefactors out of the Prisons of their Graves, to appear before his Tribunal. But he raiseth Believers as their Head, and as they are Parts of his mystical Body, unto a glorious and blessed Immortality. So that tho' Christ's miraculous Resurrection was within three Days after his Death, yet his mystical Resurrection shall not be till the End of the World : For when all the Saints of all Ages of the World shall together rise out of their Graves, then riseth Christ's mystical Body.

It followeth, *Verse 55. For my Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.* What is meant by *the Flesh and Blood* of Christ, you have already heard : And here by *Meat and Drink*, is meant whatsoever the Faith of a Christian pitcheth upon in the Sufferings of Christ, which he underwent by reason of his *Flesh and Blood* ; whatsoever in Christ may feed and nourish his Soul, that is here called *Meat and Drink*.

But why is this Particle [*indeed*] added ? *My Flesh is Meat indeed, &c.* I answer ; We must not be so gross as the  
*Transub-*

*Transubstantiatists* are, to conceive that *indeed* is the same with *carnally*, and *properly*. *My Flesh is Meat indeed*; that is, say they, it is properly Meat, and so to be eaten, even in a corporal Manner in the Sacrament: For the Text only calls it, *Βρωσις ἀληθῶς*, and *πίσις ἀληθῶς*, not *ἰσοδῶς* or *κυβερῶς*. It is Meat and Drink indeed; but it is not Meat and Drink essentially or properly. This [*indeed*] must be taken spiritually. It is Meat indeed, and Drink indeed, but still spiritual; neither the less truly so, for being spiritually so, for all tropical and transerent Speeches, tho' they take away from the Propriety, yet they do not take from the Truth and Reality of the Expression.

Therefore, not to insist longer on the Exposition, take a full View of the Sense of the Words in this short Paraphrase, wherein I will lay aside all that was figurative in them. "Whosoever believeth  
 " on me as Mediator, God-Man, bearing  
 " the whole Weight of God's Displeasure,  
 " and the whole Burden of the Sins of  
 " the World in my Body, pouring out my  
 " Blood for their Remission, and by my  
 " Death satisfying the Justice of God, he  
 " hath an eternal Life of Grace, and the  
 " Seed-plot of an eternal Life of Glory,  
 " Faith giving the Believer a present Pro-  
 " spect

“ spect of it, and by the gracious Promise  
 “ of God, a firm Right and Title to it :  
 “ And such an one being mystically united  
 “ unto me, and incorporated in me,  
 “ I will certainly raise again, at the last  
 “ Day, to eternal Bliss and Joy : For the  
 “ Sufferings which I underwent, by reason  
 “ of that Flesh and Blood which I  
 “ took upon me, are the Food and Nourishment  
 “ of the Soul, inasmuch as they  
 “ are the right Objects for a saving and  
 “ justifying Faith to pitch upon, and to  
 “ terminate in.” This I take to be the  
 genuine Meaning of these Metaphorical  
 Expressions : The Sum of all which, you  
 may take contracted into this one Proposition ;  
 That Christ, represented in his meritorious  
 Obedience and Sufferings, is the right and  
 proper Object of a saving and justifying  
 Faith.

And in handling of it. I shall not speak  
 of our acting Faith on Christ in general ;  
 but, according to my present Design, shall  
 confine my self to the acting Faith upon  
 him, as exhibited in his Body and Blood  
 in that great Gospel-Ordinance of his Supper ;  
 which is in a very special Manner,  
 Meat indeed, and Drink indeed, the Food  
 and Nourishment of a believing Soul.

And

And here we must premise, that all the Use and Benefit of a Sacrament, is comprehended in these two Things :

*First,* In its being a Representation as a Sign.

*Secondly,* In its being an Obligation as a Seal.

Now it is only Faith, as fixed on Christ the Mediator, that makes this Ordinance beneficial to us, either as to its Signifying; or as to its Sealing Office. To dream of any Spiritual Advantage that accrues to the Soul meerly from the *Opus operatum*, the Work done, though Faith signifies nothing, though Faith seals nothing, is so far from Truth, though eagerly defended by the *Romanists*, that the Apostle plainly tells us, *such do but eat and drink Damnation to themselves, who discern not the Lord's Body.*

*First,* It is Faith, as representing the Sufferings of Christ, that gives this Sacrament its signifying Use and Office. One grand End why Christ instituted this Ordinance was, that it might be *Signum Rememorativum*, a Remembrancing Sign, *Luke 22. 19. This do in Remembrance of me. So, 1 Cor. 11. 26. For as often as ye eat this Bread,*

*Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death till he come.* But without Faith, the Administration of the Sacrament is no better than a dumb Shew, without any Signification at all. It is Faith that in this Ordinance acts over the whole Tragedy of Christ's Sufferings, and carries the Soul through them all in as lively Representations, as if Christ were but now undergoing them. We are, I know, ready to wish that we had lived in the Time of Christ's Abode here on Earth, that we had been conversant with him as his Disciples were, to have seen both his miraculous Actions, and his no less miraculous Passion. Why truly, the Disciples Sight of these Things hath no Advantage at all above our Faith. If we can but exercise Faith in this great Ordinance, these Things will be really present to us. There we shall see Christ crucified before our Eyes; yea, and crucified as truly and really to our Faith, as ever he was to the Sense of others. Our Faith can carry us into the Garden, and make us watch with him in his Agony, and observe every Drop of Blood that the Sense of his Father's Wrath strain'd thorough him. Faith can carry us to the Judgment-hall, to hear his whole Tryal and Arraignment. Faith can lead us through the whole Multitude and

Crowd of People to his Cross; and in this Ordinance we may see his Body broken, his Blood poured out, and hear him crying, *It is finish'd*, the Work of Redemption is compleated, and see him at last give up the Ghost. And all this the Faith of a Christian doth as lively represent, as if it were but now doing, and thereby it makes the Sacrament a Sign, and gives it its Significancy.

Well then, briefly to enforce this; Whenever we come to partake of this great and solemn Ordinance, let us be sure to set Faith on work to represent unto us the whole Sufferings of Jesus Christ. A strong Faith can recall Things that are long pass'd, and make them exist again; so that Time devours nothing but to an ignorant Person, or an Unbeliever. And truly, unless Faith do thus recall the Sufferings of Christ, not to our Memories only, but to our Hearts and Affections, they will all appear to us but as a Story of somewhat done long ago, and as an outworn antiquitated Thing. Consider, were there a Sight to be represented, at which Heaven and Earth, and Hell it self, should stand amazed; wherein God himself should suffer not only in the Form of a Servant, but under the Form of a Malefactor; and the everlasting Happiness of

all Mankind, from the Creation of the World, to the final Dissolution of it, should be transacted ; in which we might see the Venom and poisonous Malignity of the Sins of the whole World wrung out into one bitter Cup, and this Cup put into the Hands of the Son of God, to drink off the very Dregs of it ; in which we might see the Gates of Hell broken to Pieces, Devils conquer'd, and all the Powers of their dark Kingdom triumph'd over : I say, were there such a Sight as this, so dreadful, and yet so glorious to be represented to us, would we not all desire to be Spectators of it ? Why, all this is frequently represented to us in the Sacrament. There we may see the Son of God slain, the Blood of God poured out : We may see him that takes away our Transgressions, numbred himself among Transgressors ; we may see him hanging upon the Soreness of his Hands and Feet, all our Iniquities meeting upon him, and the Eternity of Divine Vengeance and Punishments contracted in their full Extremity into a short Space. We may see the Wrath of God pacified, the Justice of God satisfied, Mankind redeemed, Hell subdued, and Devils cast into everlasting Chains. All this is clearly to be seen in this Ordinance, if we bring but Faith to discern

discern it; without which, indeed, all this will be no more to us than a magnificent and exquisite Scene is to a blind Man. Indeed, the Apostle speaks of some who did, in an ill Sense, *crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh*, Heb. 6. 6. But certainly, in a good Sense, the Faith of every Believer ought to crucify to himself the Son of God afresh; and so lively to represent to himself the whole Course of his Sufferings, that the Spectators themselves could not have been better informed of them, nor more affected with them by their Senses, than he by his Faith.

But that in this we may not be deceived by the Workings of a quick and lively Fancy, and mistake them for the Workings of a quick and lively Faith, let us observe, that when Faith gives the Soul a View of the Sufferings of Christ, it will stir up due and proportionable Affections.

*First*, It will excite an holy and ingenuous Mourning: Can you see the Body of Christ broken, and his Blood poured out, and not have your Hearts broken and bleeding within you? All Nature itself felt violent Convulsions when the God of Nature suffered: Heaven put on its Blacks in that miraculous Eclipse, the Bowels of the Earth were rent with an Earth-

Earthquake, the silent Chambers of the Grave disturbed, and forced to resign their Inhabitants, as if the whole Frame of the World suffer'd with the Maker of it. And shall not we be affected, whose Sins caused this sad Tragedy, and whose Interest was so deeply concerned in it? We our selves had a Share in Crucifying *the Lord of Glory*: And what *St. Peter* said to the *Jews*, *Acts* 2. 23. *You have taken, and by wicked Hands crucified and slain him*; may be truly said of us, we have crucified and slain the Lord of Life and Glory. And should not this prick us to the very Hearts, as it did them? What, that we should nail him to his Cross, and throw that Load of Sin and Sorrow upon him which made him cry out, *My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?* How should this cause us to melt in an holy and kind Mourning, and to fulfil the Prediction of the Prophet? *Zech.* 12. 10. *They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his only Son; and shall be in Bitterness, as one that is in Bitterness for his First-born.* And where can we look upon a broken and a pierced Saviour more lively, than in that holy Sacrament which he hath instituted to be a Remembrance of his Death and Sufferings.

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, If Faith, and not Memory, not Fancy only, represents to you the Sufferings of Christ in this Ordinance, it will stir up in you, as an holy Mourning and Sorrow for your Sins, so an holy Anger and Indignation against them. Look upon your Saviour with Sorrow, and upon your Sins with Hatred, as those that were his bloody Murderers, and squeezed so much Gall and Wormwood into the bitter Cup of his Passion. And shall I find Pleasure in that in which Christ found so much Anguish and Horror! Shall I entertain, and lodge in my Bosom, the bloody Murderers of my God and Saviour? Shall I delight and sport my self with those Sins which caused unknown Dolours to him, and must be, if not expiated by his Blood, eternally repaid and reveng'd in mine own?

*Thirdly*, Faith representing the Sufferings of Christ in this Sacrament, will stir up an holy Fear, and reverential Awe of God. When Faith shews us, that the united Force of all that Wrath, which yet would have been unsufferable though parcell'd out among us to whom it was due, met all at once upon him who was not only innocent, but the Son of God himself, it will make the believing Soul fear and tremble under the Apprehensions of  
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this strict and severe Justice of God. How can he but think with himself, Alas! what a just God have I to deal with? A God, who, rather than Sin shall go unpunish'd, will so dreadfully punish the very Imputation of it, even in his own Son. And what if Christ had not stood in my stead, and undergone my Punishment for me? Should not all his Wrath have fallen upon me? Should not I have been swallowed up in eternal Torments, and have lain under the vindictive Justice of God for ever? How can the Soul but be surprized with Fear and Trembling at such Reflexions as these, which Faith ought to suggest to them at their Attendance upon this holy Ordinance.

*Fourthly*, If Faith represent the Sufferings of Christ to us, it will mightily inkindle and inflame our Love unto him. How can the believing Soul, when he is receiving the Bread and Wine, think that now he is taking that Christ whose Love was so great as to undergo no less than infinite Wrath to satisfy the offended Justice of God, and not dissolve into proportionable Love towards Christ again? To think that Christ should lay by his Robes of Glory, wrap his Deity in Dust and Ashes, hide and eclipse himself in our Flesh, and all this Abasement only to put  
him-

himself into a farther Capacity of suffering for us; that he should be *crucified* for those who crucified him; that he should *dye* for love of those who kill'd him, and *suffer* for those whom he still suffers from, if we have any the least Spark of Gratitude and Ingenuity, it must needs constrain us not only to admire the infinite Riches of the Love of Christ towards us, but to return reciprocal Love unto him.

These four Affections, Faith will excite in us when we partake of this Ordinance, as it is a Sign, and a Representation to us of the Sufferings of Christ. For without these, merely to recal to our Minds those great Transactions may be but the Act of Memory, or the Representation of Fancy, no Work of Faith.

And thus I have endeavoured to shew you, what is the Object which our Faith ought to apprehend and pitch upon in this Holy Institution. For as Faith is in every Ordinance the great Purveyor and Steward of the Soul that lays in Provision for the Soul to feed upon, so especially in this. 'Tis Faith alone that can find out any Thing in material Elements that may be suited and accommodated to an immaterial Soul. For there is a kind of holy Chymistry in this Grace that can  
extract

extract Spirit out of visible and sensible Objects. What is there in *the Bread*, and in *the Wine*, that can nourish the Soul? The Body is indeed upheld by such earthly Supports, but these are too gross Feeding for our Spiritual Part. It is indeed said, that *Man did eat Angels Food*, Psal. 78. 25. to set forth the Excellency and Delicacy of that Provision of *Manna*, that God made for his unthankful People in the Wilderness: Yea, but a true Believer hath better and choicer Food set before him on the Lord's Table, than the Food of Angels themselves. To a carnal Eye they appear but mere contemptible Bread and Wine; but yet our Entertainment there, is more refined, more spiritual. The *Bread* and *Wine* are but the Dishes in which this Feast is serv'd up, not the Feast it self. Faith feeds the Soul, not in the vulgar common way, but nourishes it in a mystical Manner. It eats, not *the Bread*, but the breaking of it; it drinks, not *the Wine*, but the pouring of it forth. The Elements may seem lean, poor, and beggarly in themselves; but when a transubstantiating Faith shall turn the *Bread* into *the Body of Christ*, and the *Wine* into *his Blood*, it will make a Believing Soul cry out with the Jews in this Chapter, *Lord, evermore give us this Bread;*

*Bread* ; and with the Woman of *Samarita*, Chap. 4. *Sir, give me of this Water.* 'Tis a Christian's Faith that makes it *Bread incarnate*. And as *Christ*, by a *Miracle of Power*, turned *Water* into *Wine*, so here the Faith of the Receiver turns *Wine* into *Blood*. And thus by eating *the Flesh*, and drinking *the Blood of Christ*, they are incorporated into him, and made one with him, Members of his mystical Body, and shall be certainly raised by him to an incorruptible and glorious Life.

We have thus considered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as it is a Sign ; I shall now proceed to consider it as a Seal. And under this Respect also, it is only Faith in the Sufferings of *Christ* that can make it any Way useful and beneficial unto us : For as the Sacrament represents nothing, so it seals nothing without Faith. Now here I shall briefly enquire into these four Things :

*First*, Why the Sacrament is called a Seal.

*Secondly*, What it seals unto, or to what it is affix'd.

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, Whose Seal it is, whether God's, or ours.

*Fourthly*, That Faith alone in the Sufferings of Christ Jesus, makes its Sealing Office beneficial and advantageous to us.

*First*, Why the Sacrament is called a Seal. A Seal, you know, is added for the Confirmation and ratifying of any Compact, Bargain or Covenant between Party and Party. The Sacrament therefore is called a Seal, because it is annex'd to that Bargain and Covenant that God hath made with Man. For herein God is pleased to be so gracious to our Infirmary, that he hath not only pass'd his Word, but hath also confirmed his Covenant by Seals; that by two immutable Things, wherein it was not possible for God to lie, we might have abundant Consolation. And therefore the Circumcision of *Abraham*, which was then the Sacrament of Initiation, to which, in the Christian Church, Baptism succeeded, this Circumcision is called, *Rom. 4. 11. A Seal of the Righteousness of Faith.* And the Cup in this Ordinance of the Lord's Supper is said by the Apostle, *1 Cor. 11: 25.* to be *the New Testament in the Blood of Christ.* Now what else can be understood by

by that *Synechdoche*, that *the Cup is the New Testament*, but only that it is a Seal set to the *New Testament*, the Last Will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that Covenant which he hath ratified with us in his Blood. Thus therefore it is called a Seal, because it is a Confirmation of the Covenant made between God and Man, even as a Seal is a Confirmation of any Agreement made between Man and Man.

*Secondly*, Therefore let us enquire what the Sacrament seals unto. The Sacrament's Sealing being nothing else but the Confirmation of the Truth of that to which it is set, we may conceive that the Sacrament seals to, *i. e.* it attests and confirms two Things, *viz.* Our Faith, and God's Covenant.

It seals to our Faith two Ways :

*First*, Directly and formally, in that we do by receiving this holy Ordinance attest unto God the Truth of our Faith, that we do indeed believe on Christ Jesus exhibited in it. And therefore, as the Sacrament represents unto us the Death of Christ, and what he suffered for our Redemption and Salvation, as it is a Sign; so, as it is a Seal, it doth witness and attest, that we do indeed lay hold on his Death, and apply those Sufferings by Faith unto our own Souls.



When

Whensoever a true Believer comes to partake of this Ordinance, and sees the *Bread* broken, and the *Wine* poured forth, signifying unto him the breaking of Christ's Body, and the shedding of his Blood, he ought then to lift up his Heart to God, and in the silent Devotions of his Soul to say, *Lord, I believe on thy Son thus broken, and on his Blood thus poured out for me; and to attest and witness that I do indeed believe, behold, I now receive this thy holy Sacrament, and by it do set Seal to the Truth of my Faith, accepting of my blessed Saviour, and sincerely devoting my self unto him.*

*Secondly*, It seals to our Faith consecutively, by way of Effect and Causality, as the receiving of it doth mightily confirm and strengthen our Faith. For there is no Ordinance of God whatsoever that is more accommodated to the Increase of Faith than this; in that it doth as it were set the Death of Christ before our Eyes. For though Faith be evacuated where there is clear and perfect Vision, yet where the Representation is such as doth not fully discover the Object, but only hint it unto us, as it is here in the Sacrament, Faith takes a mighty Advantage from the Type and Resemblance that Sense perceives, to look

into

into these more Spiritual Objects represented by these material Signs, which to the Eye of Sense are altogether invisible. And indeed, when we consider that God hath not only engaged his Word, that *whosoever believeth shall be saved*, but hath also instituted this Ordinance as a Witness between him and us, that he will certainly perform this gracious Promise, if we perform the Condition; we may well have strong Faith, and strong Consolation from that Faith, since he hath been pleased to assure our Salvation to us, both by his Word, and by this Pledge of Truth, and Fidelity of his Word. And in this Sense, our Faith may be said to be sealed by the Sacrament, because it is thereby greatly confirmed and strengthened.

But then, as the Sacrament seals to our Faith; so,

*Secondly*, It seals also to God's Covenant with us. The brief Tenor of this Covenant you have expressly contained in those few Words, *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth, shall be saved.* And to this Covenant the Sacrament is affixed as a Seal. And in it there be Two Things that admit of Sealing:

*First*, The Tenour of the Covenant it self.

*Secondly*, Our Propriety and Interest in the Mercy promised.

The Tenour of the Covenant consists in this, *If I believe, I shall be saved*. Our Interest and Propriety in the Covenant consists in this, *But I do believe*, and therefore *I shall be saved*. Now each of these may be sealed unto the Soul: And accordingly there is a twofold Sealing;

*First*, An External Sealing by the Sacrament.

*Secondly*, An Internal Sealing by the Spirit.

Of these, the External Sealing only respects the Sacrament. For in this Ordinance God seals unto me, that *if I believe on the Lord Jesus, I shall be saved*; and gives me a visible Pledge of this Promise; That as sure as I eat of the Sacramental Bread, and drink of the Wine, so surely upon my Faith, *I shall inherit eternal Life*. And this indeed is the most proper Sealing Use the Sacrament hath.

But the Internal Sealing of the Spirit in our own Consciences, respects our peculiar Right and Interest in this Covenant. For though the Sacrament seals to me; that *if I believe, I shall be saved*; yet it doth not properly seal and attest to me, that *I do believe*, and therefore *shall be saved*. But this is the Work of the Holy Ghost,

*Ghost, the Spirit of Adoption, which seals us up unto the Day of Redemption, and works in the Hearts of many Believers a full Assurance, that Grace is already wrought in them, and that Glory shall hereafter be bestowed upon them.*

And thus you see what it is, that the Sacrament seals to : Principally and primarily, it seals to the Truth of the conditional Covenant, as a Pledge of God's Veracity : But secondarily, it seals also to our Faith, as it is a Means instituted by God for the strengthening and increasing of it.

*Thirdly*, By what hath been spoken, we may easily give a Resolution to the *Third Question*, whose Seal it is, whether God's or ours : For it is both. It is God's Seal only,

*First*, In respect of its Institution. For he hath appointed this Holy Ordinance as a Seal between him and us. And indeed, this is so essential to the Nature and Being of a Sacrament, that nothing can be such, but what hath the Stamp of Divine Institution to warrant it.

*Secondly*, It is God's Seal, as it is affixed to his Part of the Covenant. For in this Sacrament he seals to us, that *if we believe, we shall certainly be saved.* But  
then,

*Thirdly*, It is our Seal, as we do by receiving of it testify and declare the Truth and Reality of our Faith, and that we do *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is exhibited unto us in this Sacrament.

*Fourthly*, These Things therefore being thus clear, I shall come to the *Fourth* General Head propounded, which indeed I principally intended, *viz.* That it is Faith alone, in the Death and Sufferings of Jesus Christ, that makes the Seal of the Sacrament useful and beneficial to our Souls.

*First*, It is true indeed, that whether we believe or no, this Ordinance will still seal the Truth and Stability of God's Covenant, that *if we believe, we shall be saved*: Yet if we do not believe, of what Use or Benefit will this be to us? Yea, it will rather be a fearful Aggravation of our just Condemnation, in that God hath not only given his Word for our Salvation, but hath so far condescended as to set his Seal to it in this holy Ordinance; and yet neither Salvation promised, nor this Promise sealed, can work upon us to act that Faith upon which Heaven and Happiness is assured.

*Secondly*, The Sacrament, without Faith in the Partakers, will be still a Seal; yea, but it will only seal them up to the Day

of Destruction. For as to a believing Soul it seals his Salvation, so to an unbelieving Partaker it only seals his eternal Damnation. This great Ordinance is never empty nor insignificant: It hath its Signifying, it hath its Sealing Office to the unbelieving Receiver, as well as to the Believing. So that I may say, to all those who join themselves in this Communion, what Christ said to the Jews, *What come you hither for to see, or what come you hither to receive? A little Bread and Wine? Nay, I say unto you, more than Bread and Wine; for this is He of whom it is prophesied, That if ye eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, ye shall have eternal Life.* If ye be Believers, here ye may see, as in a Type, the whole Load of that Wrath, which Christ underwent for your Sins. If any of you be Unbelievers, here you may see, as in a Type, the whole Load of that Wrath, which you in your own Persons, must eternally undergo for your own Sins. If you are Believers, here you may receive a firm Pledge and Security for your Salvation. If Unbelievers, here you will receive your Damnation too surely confirmed to your Souls under the Hand and Seal of God himself. 'Twill be in vain to think to plead with God at the Last Day, like those who pleaded in

vain: *Luke 13. 26. Lord, Lord, open un-*  
*to us, for we have eaten and drank in thy*  
*Presence. True; but did not God even*  
 then seal unto you, that unless you would  
*believe, and bring forth the Fruits of a*  
 true Faith in an Holy Life, you should  
 as certainly *perish*, as you did then eat  
 and drink? You had his Seal indeed; but  
 it was only set to ratify your Condemnation,  
 as long as you should continue in your  
 Impenitence and Infidelity. Had you performed  
 the Condition of the Covenant, this Seal had  
 been set to the Promise, and confirmed your  
 Pardon and Justification; but for want of it,  
 you will at last with Horror see it affixed to  
 the Writ and Warrant for your Execution.  
 Now how sad and deplorable a Thing is  
 this, that when this Holy Ordinance is so  
 full of Consolation and ravishing Delights  
 to the worthy Partakers, sealing unto them  
 the Remission of their Sins, and their  
 Acceptation to eternal Life, it should, for  
 want of a true and saving Faith, seal up  
 any Soul under Wrath and Condemnation.  
 This twofold Sealing Office, the Sacrament  
 hath towards all that partake of it; it will  
 seal to them the Certainty of Eternal Life  
 and Salvation, if they believe; or eternal  
 Wrath and Condemnation, if they remain  
 impenitent

tent and unbelieving. Without Faith, the Sacrament can seal nothing to you that is beneficial and profitable. When God holds forth to you in this Ordinance Christ Jesus, and through him Pardon, Peace and Reconciliation, Justification, Adoption, yea, even Heaven it self, and its everlasting Glories; the believing Partaker may boldly and sweetly say, that *all these are his*; for Faith indeed is the Conveyance of these Things to the Soul; and therefore wheresoever it is acted, it must needs make the Sacrament Seal effectually. It is Faith that justifies; and therefore this Sacrament that seals unto you your Justification, if you believe, seals effectually. It is Faith that makes you accepted in the Beloved; for without Faith it is impossible to please God: And therefore this Sacrament which seals your Acceptation upon your Believing, seals effectually. It is Faith that saves you; and therefore this Sacrament that seals unto you your Salvation, if you believe, seals effectually: For it seals to you, that That shall be done, if you believe; which your Believing will certainly do.

But yet all this it doth, by leading the Soul to the Consideration of, and Recumbence upon the Sufferings of Jesus Christ,  
by

by which these Benefits are procured. For it would be utterly in vain for Faith to apprehend, or for the Sacraments to seal to us, that which was never purchased for us. And therefore the Apostle calls it, *the Cup of the New Testament in Christ's Blood*, in the fore-cited Place, *i. e.* it is the Seal of the New Testament or Covenant in the Blood of Christ. This Seal must be dip'd in Blood before it can ratify or confirm any Privilege and Benefit unto us. They are all purchased with Blood; and they all come flowing down to us in a Stream of Blood.

Well then, whensoever you come to this great Seal Office of the Gospel, be sure that you set Faith on Work; else your frequent Communication in this Ordinance, to say nothing worse, will be but the fastening, and annexing of many Seals to a large Grant and Charter, which you have no Title unto. What a sad and wretched Mistake will it be, if after you have had the Covenant so often sealed and confirmed, all those Seals should prove of no more Use nor Value, than if they were set to a Blank: For the Promise is no better than a Blank, if the Condition on your Part be not performed. Will it not be sad and dreadful, when Men at the Last Day, when they

## *the Two Sacraments.*

21

they were arraigned by the Justice of God, shall stand forth and plead, *Lord, here is the Covenant wherein thou hast promis'd me Life and Salvation; here are so many Seals hanging at it, whereby thou hast confirmed that promise to me; and then it shall be said, True, here is the Covenant, and here are the Seals, but where is the Performance of the Condition? What a gross Mistake, what Shame and Confusion of Face will this be, to look no better after the Condition of that Bond, and the Nature of those Seals that were to convey to us no less than an eternal Inheritance!*

Well then, when you have the Elements, the *Bread* and the *Wine*, delivered into your Hands, do but seriously think with your selves, now God is delivering a broken a bleeding Saviour unto me, If I will by Faith receive him, he testifies and seals by his *Bread* and *Wine*, that I shall certainly receive Remission of my Sins and everlasting Life through him. Let us therefore say, *Lord Jesus, I now accept of thee upon thine own Terms, or the very Conditions on which thou art pleased to tender thy self unto me: I take a Broken Christ for my intire Saviour, a Christ crown'd with Thorns for my alone King: He shall be my Prophet whom the Blasphemous Jews buffeted and derided with a Prophecy, Who*  
smote

*smote thee ?* As I reach forth my bodily Hand to receive the *Bread* and the *Wine*, so I reach forth the Spiritual Hand of my Faith to receive that Christ whose *Body* was thus broken, and whose *Blood* was thus poured forth. Now to those only who thus by Faith receive Christ Jesus, who thus *eat* his *Flesh*, and *drink* his *Blood*, this Sacrament doth seal and confirm, that they shall have *Eternal Life* by him, and shall be raised up at the Last Day, to that Glory with which he is invested.

And now, my Brethren, I am sent to you by my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is both *the Lord of the Feast*, and *the Feast it self*, to invite you to come, and to tell you that all Things are ready. Behold, he himself expects you ; and after such Cost that he hath been at in furnishing a Table for you, when he hath provided his own *Flesh* for your *Meat*, and his own *Blood* for your *Drink*, after so many kind and indearing Invitations that he hath made you, he cannot but take it as an high Contempt of his Love, and an Injury done to the Friendship he offers, if you should yet delay, or refuse his Entertainment. Yet, I fear, it will befall this, as it did the *Wedding Supper*, that too many will make light of it, and  
either

either by slight Excuses, or downright Denials, leave this Table unfurnish'd of Guests, which is so abundantly furnish'd with Provision. Must I be sent back with a Refusal? Or shall I have that joyful Answer from you all, that you will come? I hope I shall not return ashamed; that you will not turn your Backs upon your Saviour, who hath given himself for you, and now offers himself unto you, and that you will not damp the Devotion of those who present themselves to this Holy Institution by the sad and discouraging Consideration of the Paucity of their Number.

Suffer me a little to expostulate with you; and I beseech of you only these Two Things:

The One is, to lay aside all Prejudice, and to consider Things nakedly and impartially; weighing them only according to the clear Evidence of Truth, and not by the deceitful Balance either of preconceived Opinions, or former Practices.

The Other is, that in a Matter which you your selves must needs acknowledge to be doubtful and disputable, you would think it possible you might be mistaken. Let not contrary Customs, nor the deep Impressions of any other Perswasion, bribe your

your Judgments to give Vote against the manifest Dictates of Truth and Reason. For otherwise, if we come to the Disquisition of any Opinion with Prepossession and a stiff Adherence to formerly received Principles; though the Proofs be clear, and the Arguments irrefragable, yet the Affections will blindly mutiny and murmur against the Convictions of Reason, and think that still there might be somewhat more said in their own Defence, though they know not what. Therefore, I beseech you, let not your Affections lead your Judgment, but your Judgment them. Take the Byass out of your Minds. Consider Things indifferently, as if you had never heard of them before; and be altogether unconcerned which Side hath the Truth, but only concern'd to follow the Truth when it appears so to you: This is but an equal Request, not only in this, but in all other Debates concerning the Truth of Doctrine. For where the Mind is forestalled with an overweaning Conceit, that the Notions we have already taken up are infallibly true and certain, and that whatsoever can be said against them is but Sophistry and Delusion; this will render us wholly incapable of being convinced of our Mistakes, and reduced from our ~~Errors~~ **Prejudice**

Prejudice is the Jaundice of the Soul, and colours every Thing by its own Distemper. Or as a Man that looks thro' a Painted Glass, sees every Object of the same Colour that the Glass is; so when our Understanding is once deeply tinctured with former Notions, all that we look upon will receive a Colour from them; nor can we ever hope to see Things as they are, until our Judgment be cleansed from whatsoever our Affection to such a Way, or our Admiration of such Persons, or any other Perverter of Reason, have painted and died them with.

Well then, let me argue the Case with you, and I shall do it plainly and freely, and I hope without any Bitterness, or giving Offence to any who will not be offended with Reason that contradicts them. May not most of the Scruples, that have hitherto kept you off from Communion with us in this Gospel-Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, be reduced to these Four Heads?

*1<sup>st</sup>.* Some scruple their own Fitness and Preparedness.

*2<sup>dly</sup>.* Others the Gesture of Kneeling in Receiving.

*3<sup>dly</sup>.* Others, our promiscuous Assemblies, and the Admission of those to the Sacra-

Sacrament who are ignorant, or scandalous, or both.

*4thly.* Others are afraid of giving Offence unto, or grieving their weak Brethren, who are not satisfied in the Lawfulness of communicating with us upon the Accounts before-mentioned.

I think I have faithfully collected the Sum of all that any have to object, under these Four Heads. And if there be any Thing which is not reducible to one of these, I should gladly learn it, and endeavour to give full Satisfaction. Now whether any of these be such Excuses, as may sufficiently justify your rejecting the Invitation I have made you to this Gospel and Spiritual Feast, I shall leave to your own Consciences to judge, after we have particularly examined them.

*1st.* To the *First*, who desireth to be held excused, not because he judgeth the Administration of the Sacrament in the *Way* wherein it is now dispens'd, unlawful, but only because he looks upon himself as unprepared, and therefore is afraid to come. I answer,

*First,* Hast thou not had Time and Opportunities enough to prepare thy self? How often hast thou been warned and admonish'd to fit, and to put on thy  
Wedding



Duty: For this indeed is nothing else, but that thou dar'st not but sin, because thou hast sinned.

But may some say, The Apostle terrifies me in this Matter of the Sacrament, by pronouncing that dreadful Sentence; *1 Cor. 11. 29. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself*: And therefore, because I have sinned in neglecting due Preparation, I dare no more approach unto those holy Mysteries, than I dare eat burning Coals, or swallow whole Draughts of Fire and Brimstone.

'Tis true, the Apostle hath pronounced that terrible Doom upon unworthy Receiving: But is it not as true, that he that prays unworthily, prays Damnation to himself, and he that hears unworthily, hears Damnation to himself? If thou art not worthy to receive the Sacrament, thou art not worthy neither to pray, saith *St. Chrysoft. ad Pop. Ant. Hom. 61.* Now wilt thou, or dar'st thou, omit the Duties of Praying, or Hearing, upon a Pretence that thou art not sufficiently prepared to perform them? Certainly, if to receive unworthily, be Damnation; then not to receive at all, because thou art unworthy, is double Damnation, being double Guilt, unless thou canst sin thy self out  
of

of Debt to God's Commands, and make that to be no Duty upon thy Offence, which was thy Duty before it.

And then as for Preparation, though it be very fit and requisite, that before so solemn an Ordinance as this is, we should allot some Time for a more serious Scrutiny and Search of our own Hearts, and the Stirring up of the Graces of God within us; yet, I must profess, that I look upon that Man who hath endeavoured to serve God conscientiously in the ordinary Duties of every Day, to be sufficiently prepared for this holy and blessed Ordinance, if he be suddenly called to partake of it; and called to it he is, whensoever he hath an Opportunity of receiving. And that a pious and inoffensive Christian Life, was look'd upon as the best Preparation to this holy Ordinance, as this Ordinance it self was look'd upon to be the greatest Obligation to such a Life, appears by the Histories of the Primitive Times; wherein we have Account given us, that the Christians did every Day, and at the farthest every Lord's Day, communicate in the Lord's Supper: Yea, in St. Cyprian's Time, 250 Years after Christ, he tells us, *Eucharistiam quotidie ad cibum salutis accipimus, in Orat.*

*Dom. num. 48.* So that certainly there could be no considerable Space of Time set apart for a particular Preparation, but an holy blameless Life was thought sufficient to qualify them for worthy Receivers; neither do we find that they put such a Mock-Honour upon the holy Sacrament as to advance it so high, that they durst not come near it, and to neglect it out of pure Respect.

And this is all that I shall leave to the Consideration of those who absent themselves, because they are not duly prepared: It is their great Sin, that they are not prepared; but this Sin cannot excuse them from their Duty. That to avoid one Sin, they become guilty of two; to avoid Receiving unworthily, they receive not at all, but most unworthily forbear; and because they sin in not Preparing, they resolve likewise to sin in not Receiving. Which is just as good an Excuse, as if a Servant should therefore refuse to do any Thing the whole Day, because he rose not so early in the Morning as he should have done. But,

*Secondly,* Others scruple the very Lawfulness of Receiving the Sacrament in our Way of Administring it, and say, They are not satisfied as to the Gesture of Kneeling;

ing; for so, and not otherwise, hath Authority commanded us to communicate.

Two Things they object against it :

The One, That it symbolizeth too much with the Idolatry of the Church of Rome.

The Other, That not Kneeling, but Sitting, is a Table-Posture, and that which Christ used when he celebrated his last Supper with his Apostles, whose Example we ought to imitate.

*First,* It is objected, That it symbolizeth and agreeth too much with the Idolatry of the *Romish* Church : For they, according to their absurd and impious Doctrine of Transubstantiation, falsely believing the corporal Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, that the Bread is truly and properly his Body, and the Wine his Blood, do consonantly enough to that Error, fall down and worship him whom they believe to be there bodily present. If therefore we disavow and abhor that Doctrine, why should we imitate that Practice?

To this I answer; *1<sup>st</sup>*. It is well known that the Pope himself, the Head and Prince of that Anti-christian Synagogue, receives the Sacrament sitting, and not kneeling, thinking it be-like the Privilege and Prerogative of his Supereminent Dignity, to be more rude and unmannerly, and, as it were, an equal Fellow with our Saviour, than is allowed unto others, Yet we object it not to our Dissenting Brethren, that they imitate this Man of Sin, who exalts himself above all that is called God, for they disavow it. Let them afford us the same Charity, and be more sober and modest than to object to us, that we imitate his Vassals; for this we equally disavow, and renounce.

*2<sup>dly</sup>*. I answer; That a Gesture abused to Idolatry, becomes not therefore idolatrous. Otherwise, because the Heathens used Kneeling and Prostration to their false Gods, it would now be unlawful for Christians to use them to the true: And why do they not object to us, That the Papists do idolatrously kneel to their Images, and when they pray to their Saints, and that therefore we must not kneel when we worship God, but that we may be at a perfect Distance both from *Rome* and Reason, must sit, as too many  
of

of them most irreverently do in their choicest Devotions?

3dly. I answer; That the End for which all outward Postures of the Body are used, determines them, and makes them either morally good, or evil: For Kneeling being of it self an indifferent Action, it is only the End which we propound to our selves in it, which can render it good or bad. Now lest any should be either so weak, or so ill-natured as to surmise that this Custom is retained as a Relick of Idolatry, and that it will prove an Advantage for it to creep in again amongst us, see what the Church hath most expressly declared in that excellent Caution annexed at the End of the Order for the Communion: "Lest (say they) " that Kneeling should by any Persons " be misconstrued and depraved; It is " declared, that thereby no Adoration is " intended, or ought to be done either " to the Sacramental Bread and Wine " there bodily received, or to any Corporal Presence of Christ's natural Flesh " and Blood: For the Sacramental Bread " and Wine remain still in their very " natural Substances, and therefore may " not be adored; for that were Idolatry, " to be abhorred by all faithful Christi-

“ans: And the natural Body and Blood  
 “of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven,  
 “and not here: It being against the  
 “Truth of Christ’s Natural Body, to be  
 “at one Time in more Places than one.”

A Declaration, let me speak it without Offence, that will be of more Validity to keep out that prodigious and stupid Error of Popery, than all the discontented Clamours of those who cry, *It is coming in:* And if ever God so far abandon us to suffer that pestilent Doctrine again to prevail over us, it must first be by pulling down the Orders and Discipline of the Church, which some, with equal Zeal and Ignorance, are very busy to do, and thereby prove the most industrious Factors for the promoting of that Cause which they pretend most of all to detest. And if ever the Discontents and Divisions of Protestants proceed to effect what the misled Passions, and furious Begottry of so many of them design, then, and not till then, shall the Anti-christian Faction obtain its Ends, and enter upon that Harvest which our Rents, Schisms and Separations, have ripened for them. I speak the Words of Truth and Soberness; you that are wise, judge ye what I say. But then,

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, Others object against Kneeling, That it is not a Table-Gesture; it was not used by our Lord, nor his Disciples, when he instituted this most holy Ordinance: And why should not we be allowed to imitate Christ, and them? And to receive the Sacrament in the same Posture wherein he administred it, that is, Sitting, or some other Gesture correspondent to it, since his Pattern, where we have no express Command, is the best Rule and Guide of our Actions?

Now to this I answer: *1<sup>st</sup>*. It must be proved, that Christ used that Gesture, intending to make it exemplary to us, and obliging us to the Imitation of it: If this cannot be, then he used it as a Thing wholly indifferent: And all know that those Actions of Christ, which were merely indifferent, lay no Obligation upon our Practice to do the like. If all the Circumstances that Christ observed in the Administration of his Supper, must likewise be necessarily observed to us, then must we celebrate it in the Evening, after Supper, in an upper Room, and that leaning upon Beds, with many other Particulars, which long Use and Custom hath made obsolete, if not to us absurd and ridiculous.

culous. But these being all indifferent Things, they lay no Obligation upon us to imitate them.

2dly. We do not condemn Sitting in those Churches whose Laws have not prescribed against it. The Customs of Churches are in this Particular divers, and let each retain their own, as long as there is nothing in it substantially, and materially amiss. Some reformed Churches receive Sitting, others Standing, or Walking. Now, were I cast among those Churches, I would never refuse their Communion because they did not kneel; neither would I kneel my self, to avoid giving of Offence by introducing a Practice, which though as lawful as theirs, and perhaps more commendable, yet would be a Stranger to their Custom. Would any of you, were you in the Reformed Churches of *France*, forsake their Communion rather than receive any other Way than Sitting? I suppose you would conform to their Gesture of Standing, or Walking: And why not then to ours, of Kneeling, unless it be that nothing so much displeaseth, as what we find at Home? For the Surmise of Idolatry in it, I have before proved it vain. This I am sure is the Direction which *St. Ambrose* gaveto *St. Augustin's* Mother *Monica*, when she

he was to travel to other Churches that observed different Customs from that of *Milain* : *If thou wilt not* (saith he) *either give Offence, or take Offence, conform thy self to all the lawful Customs of the Church whither thou comest.*

3dly. I think I may somewhat forcibly retort the Argument : Our Saviour, say they, used Sitting, therefore we ought not to kneel. Yea, let it not seem strange to you if I argue thus ; Our Saviour used Sitting, therefore we may kneel. This Consequence, which may possibly seem somewhat uncouth at first, I make good thus : In the Institution of the Passover, God commanded that it should be eaten in a Standing Posture, with their Shoes on their Feet, and their Staves in their Hands : But yet Time and Custom had at length worn out this Observation : And therefore when the Use of the Nation had brought it to Discumbency, or Leaning on Beds after the *Roman* Manner, though at first there were an exprefs Command for another Gesture ; yet our Saviour so far accommodates himself to the received Custom, as to use it with them. Now could there be as much produced to prove the Necessity of Sitting at the Sacrament, as there might have been to prove the Necessity of Standing at the Passover ; I  
doubt

doubt whether those who plead so much for it, would not mainly triumph in such an Argument, and account it altogether unanswerable: And yet we see the Custom of the *Jewish* Church prevails with our Saviour to do that which seems literally to contradict a Command of God; and rather than he would go contrary to the Observances that were then in Use among them, he chuseth to omit that which was required in the Primitive Institution: How much more then ought we, who have nothing at all left to determine the Gesture, conform our selves to the Usage of the Church in which we live, and whose Members we are; for this is to conform our selves, not indeed to the very Gesture, but what is much more considerable, to the Will and Intention of Christ.

But then again, *4thly*, Whereas it is objected, That Kneeling is a very improper Posture at a Table, I think, if I should pass it over with this short answer, That the Peace and Unity of the Church, is more to be regarded than what some Men account proper or improper, and that it is not the Accurateness of every petty Circumstance and Punctilio that ought to be laid in the Ballance against so weighty and fundamental a Duty as our Participa-  
tion

tion of this Ordinance; and that it is no Extenuation of our Sin to turn our Backs upon these holy Mysteries, because every Thing is not ordered as we fancy, and deem most convenient: If, I say, I should give no other Answer but this, yet, I suppose, this would be enough to satisfy all grave and considerate Persons. But, yet to vindicate this Custom from the Imputation of Impropriety, let us add farther;

*First,* That that can be no unfitting Gesture, which is most significant of our Humility and Prostration of Soul. Should we grovel in the very Dust before our dear Redeemer, to testify our Abhorrence of our selves, and our most bitter Repentance for those Sins which shed that most precious Blood, and brake and pierced that blessed Body which our Lord Christ comes there, to offer us as a Pledge of our Pardon and Salvation, would any be so proudly censorious as to call this an improper Action? Or is it improper for guilty Malefactors, Rebels cast and condemned by Law, to receive their Pardon upon their Knees? Doth not God seal to every penitent and believing Sinner, the Pardon of his Sins, and his Acceptation into Grace and Favour, in this holy Sacrament? And can any Gesture be so humble and reverent, as to be judged improper for the Receiving

ceiving of so great and so ineffimable a Mercy as that?

*Secondly*, Consider that the very Sacramental Action it self is accompanied with Prayer : There is both Thanksgiving, and Petition in it, and both those are Parts of Prayer. And what Gesture more proper for Prayer, than Kneeling? The Sacrament it self is a Sacrifice of Praise, and therefore constantly called by the Ancients *Eucharistia*, or *Thanksgiving*. And the Administration of it is attended with Prayer; “ The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
“ which was given for thee, preserve thy  
“ Body and Soul; and the Blood of our  
“ Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for  
“ thee, preserve thy Body and Soul unto  
“ everlasting Life. ” Now he must have the Knees of an Elephant, and the Heart of an Oak, who will not bow himself, and with all humble Adoration and Worship, cry *Amen* to so pathological a Prayer made by the Minister to God on his Behalf.

And so much for the Second great Objection about the Gesture, wherein I hope I have sufficiently evinced, that Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, is neither idolatrous, nor improper, nor a Deviation from the Example of our Lord and Saviour.

## *the Two Sacraments.*

111

*Thirdly*, Another great Stumbling-block which lies in the Way (which yet, I hope, to remove if you your selves do not fasten it by your Prejudices) is that of promiscuous Receiving; and the Admission of those to the Sacrament who are ignorant, or scandalous, or both. To answer this;

*1st.* Dost thou know any of them to be so? If not; the standing Rule of Charity is, to think no Evil, *1 Corinth. 13. 5.* a Doctrine much to be press'd upon this wildly censorious Age, wherein every one judgeth himself to be holy and godly, according as he can judge and condemn others to be wicked and ungodly. And let me tell you freely, this Whispering and Backbiting, and Entertaining of blind Rumours and idle Reports, screwing and wresting every Thing to the worst Sense, and speaking Evil of others at Random and Peradventure, is, according to the Observations that I have been able to make, a great and reigning Sin in this Corner of the World: And it is a Sin so contrary to the mild and gentle Spirit of the Gospel, a Sin so truly suspicious of Hypocrisy and Pharisaism, that I profess I think I should as soon think a Man a good-Christian because he is proud,  
or

or because he is envious, or malicious, as I should because he is continually accusing, and censuring, and exclaiming against the Faults of other Men; as if it were a certain Mark of his Christianity, to set a Mark of Infamy upon others.

But then suppose thou dost certainly know them guilty, and therefore refusest to communicate with them.

2dly. Let me ask thee, Whether thou hast observed the Rule of Jesus Christ towards thy offending Brother, before thou thus account him an Heathen, and a Publican? The Rule that he hath given us, we find *Matth. 18. ver. 15, 16, 17.* and it is a most observable Place to this Purpose: *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses, every Word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican.* This is a perpetual standing Rule in this Case, from which we ought not to vary: *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee; i. e. not only if he shall wrong thee, but, if he shall wrong either his God, or his Religion,*

gion, by any flagitious Crime that gives Offence and Scandal to thee, and so is a Trespafs also against thee : What then ? Must thou presently forsake the Communion of the Church, because of such an one's Offences ? No, saith our Saviour, first of all it is thy Duty to admonish him privately : If thereupon he reform, thou savest thy Brother : If yet he persist, thou must not as yet break off Communion with him, but try another Course. Take with thee grave and faithful Witnesses, and again admonish and reprove him. Though this Course should not prevail neither, yet still thou must own him as thy Brother, and communicate in all Ordinances with him, till thou hast tried the last Remedy, and that is to tell the Church, *i. e.* the Sanhedrim, who in our Saviour's Time, were both Ecclesiastical and Civil Judges : Inform those of his Miscarriages, who have the Power of the Keys committed unto them. And if he hear not them neither, but still persist obstinately and resolvedly in his Sins, then at last *let him be to thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican* ; that is, after the Church hath excommunicated, and cast him out from the Assembly, and Society of the Faithful (for that is supposed in those

I

Words,

Words, if he hear not the Church, and will not obey their Sentence and Decree.)

But suppose I should tell the Church, and yet the Offender is not cut off by a due Execution of the Sentence of Excommunication, may I not then look upon him as an Heathen, and refuse Communion with him?

By no Means: For our Saviour in this Place bids us to account such a Man as an Heathen and Publican, on Supposition only of Church Censures pass'd upon him. And therefore he presently adds, *Verse 17. Let him be to thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican*; and, *Verse 18. Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, i. e. whatsoever Sins ye shall bind upon his Soul by the dreadful Sentence of Excommunication, they shall be bound upon his Soul by the God of Heaven, and your Deed shall be ratified and confirmed by his Justice.* So then as long as he continues in the Church, so long thou oughtest to account him thy Brother, and to communicate with him in all Ordinances: For though thou oughtest to be his Re-prover, yet thou art not appointed to be his Judge, neither must thou remove thy self, because perhaps thou canst not remove him. What some Mens Opinion

in this Matter may be, I do not know, but I am sure this is the Mind of Jesus Christ, and his express Command. Now thou who refuseth to come to the holy Communion, because perhaps there may be some scandalous Sinner there, hast thou discharged thy Duty first towards him? Hast thou rebuked him privately between him and thee? Hast thou upon Contempt of that private Admonition, rebuked him before select Witnesses? Hast thou upon his continued Obstinacy, complained to the Church of the Scandal and Offence he hath given thee? If not, whosoever thou be, I charge it upon thy Soul, and answer it to God his Judge, and thine, how darest thou to separate from the Communion of the Church? How darest thou contradict the express Order and Command of Christ, and think thy self the more holy and more pure for doing so. Is this Conscience? Is this Religion? Is this strict Piety and Godliness? Let me tell thee, it is a Piece of gross Hypocrisy and *Pbarisaical* Pride to separate, because of their Sins, and yet never to reprove them for their Sins. Never think by this Course to escape being a Partaker of their Guilt. If they profane this holy Ordinance, if they eat and drink Damnation to themselves, thou art the Cause

of it, who oughtest after Admonition to have accused them, and art as much polluted by it, as if thou hadst joined with them; yea, and more, since another Man's Sins cannot pollute me, unless I am defective in mine own Duty. Thou communicatest with them in their Guilt and Sin, but only refuseth to communicate with them in the Worship and Service of God.

But possibly you will say, Tell the Church. To what purpose is that? When is it that we see any cut off for notorious and scandalous Crimes? It may be for disobeying the Orders of the Church in Point of Government and Discipline, some few may undergo this heavy Censure; but fewer for transgressing the Laws of God, and the great Precepts of Moral and Christian and Honesty. To this I answer;

*First*, 'Tis a gross, though common Mistake, to think, that Disobedience against the lawful Commands of Authority, is not as heinous a Sin, as those open Pollutions which abound too much in the World, and appear black and ugly to every Man's Eye and Reason: For sure I am it is as often, and as expressly forbidden as any Sin whatsoever; and the Consequences of it are of more publick

Mischief than those of other Sins which may be more scandalous, but cannot be more damning.

*Secondly*, I answer, That never was there, nor indeed can there be, either in our Church, or any other Church, shape the Government of it after what Model you please, any Person excommunicated, but only upon the Account of Contempt of its Authority. Let his Crime be what it will in the first Instance, yet it cannot be for that, but only for Disobedience that this dreadful Sentence is denounc'd against any. For if the Offender submit and be penitent, there needs no such Censure, since it is appointed only to bring them to Repentance. If he doth not submit either to the Trial of the Cause, or the Satisfaction imposed: In the first Case there can be no Judgment made concerning the Crime of which he stands accused; in the second, he is excommunicated, not because his Guilt is proved, but because he obstinately refuseth to give due Satisfaction for it: So that in both it is merely Contempt and Disobedience that can involve any Person in this Censure. And this holds certainly and universally of all the Churches of Christ upon Earth, of

whatsoever Denomination or Discipline they be.

But, *Thirdly*, If so few are excommunicated, who are guilty of scandalous and flagitious Offences, I beseech you to consider whether a great Part of this Blame may not be laid upon your selves for not doing your Duties in accusing and convicting them. Have you ever made any publick Complaints against obstinate and incorrigible Sinners that were not heard and accepted? If not; why do you accuse the Church, to which you ought to accuse others? But once for all, let me speak it to you who are of this Parish, that if any of you shall duly accuse any of those too few who communicate with us of a scandalous Crime committed by him, and will undertake to prove and justify his Accusation, I will here undertake not to admit such an one, until he hath given Satisfaction according to the Nature of his Offence.

But howsoever, suppose that all the Officers of the Church were negligent in their Duty, that can be no Excuse for not performing yours. If you do your Duty, you leave it upon their Consciences, and have delivered your own Souls. But in any Case you ought not

to separate from Communion with any Church-Member 'till he ceaseth to be a Church-Member, and is cut off by the Sword of Excommunication. Then, and not 'till then, you may look upon him as an Heathen Man, and a Publican: For wicked Mens communicating pollutes the Ordinance only to themselves, and not to you. If they eat and drink unworthily, they eat and drink *Damnation* to themselves, but not to the worthy Partakers. The Virtue and Efficacy of the Ordinances comes not to you, through those who are Communicants with you, (for then indeed it might receive a Taint from their Pollution) but it comes immediately from the Institution and Benediction of Jesus Christ: So that when you have performed your Duty, you may receive a pure Sacrament in the Assembly, whereof some may be impure and defiled.

But here I know, Flesh and Blood will tumultuate, and say, This is the ready Way to run my Head into a Bee-hive. What need I, that may live quietly by my Neighbours, provoke their Enmity and Hatred by turning Informer? For accusing them will prove but a thankless and a troublesome Office. Truly, I know no Necessity for it, besides the strict and ex-

press Command of Jesus Christ. And wilt thou be thought to value the Purity of his Ordinances, who dost not value the Authority of his Commands. Tell it the Church, is his Injunction; and if this be to be an Informer, know that the Name is more honourable than is vulgarly apprehended, and it is far better to be an Informer than a Schismatick.

But the great Place insisted on to invalidate all this that I have said, is *1 Cor. 5. 11.* *But now I have written unto you, not to keep Company; if any Man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat.* And from this it is argued, that if I may not eat common Bread with them, then much less may I eat sacred Bread with them at the Lord's Table.

I am sorry I have so just Occasion to retort the Argument against their Practice. For certainly if our dissenting Brethren would exclude all Fornicators, and Railers, and Drunkards from their Society, their Sacraments would not be such general Musters as they are, but perhaps be as thin as ours. But to pass that by, I return a double Answer.

*First,* That we may well conceive the Apostle here giving Direction to the whole Church

Church of the *Corinthians*, what Method they should use towards those who were profligate and notorious Sinners; and he bids them that they should *not company, nor eat with them*, i. e. that they should cast them out of the Church, not cast themselves out. They should excommunicate them from the Body of the Faithful; but not that any of them should separate from the Communion of holy Ordinances before they were excommunicated. This Sense seems very fair and full: For in the foregoing Part of the Chapter, the Apostle had given them in Charge, to cast out *the incestuous Person*, who was a notorious Example of Wickedness, and a great Scandal to their Church. Afterwards he sets down Rules how they should demean themselves towards others who were likewise guilty of known Crimes. And these he distinguisheth into two Sorts; those who visibly belonged to the World, and were profess'd Heathens; and those who belonged to the visible Church, and were wicked Christians. For the former Sort, he tells them, that they might civilly eat with them, *Verse 9, 10. I wrote to you in an Epistle, not to company with Fornicators; yet not altogether with the Fornicators of this World, or with the Covetous, or Extortioners,*

*sortioners, or Idolaters ; for then must ye needs go out of the World.* That is, I meant not that you wholly abstain from the Converse of Heathens, who are vile and wicked ; for since the greatest Part of the World are Heathens, the Necessity of Humane Life requires that you should have Commerce and Dealing with them. But for the other sort, those who are lewd and wicked Christians, *cast them out ; Company not ; eat not with any Brother that is a Fornicator, or Covetous, or a Drunkard, or the like :* Account them as Heathens, yea, worse than Heathens, in as much as they deny that Faith by their Practice, which they profess with their Mouths. The whole Scope of which seems to be, that the Apostle commands them to deal with such as with *the incestuous Person*, and that the Church ought to cut them off by Excommunication ; but not that any Member of the Church should separate from Communion with them in the publick Ordinances, until that judicial Act were pass'd upon them. But,

*Secondly*, Most likely it is, that when the Apostle forbids us to eat with such, he means only familiar Domestical Eating, and not Ecclesiastical in the Participation of the *Lord's Supper*, if so be they be not cut off by the Censure of Excommunication.

caſion. And that appears, becauſe the Apoſtle forbids them ſo to eat with wicked Chriſtians, as they might lawfully eat with wicked and idolatrous Heathens. *I forbid not, ſaith he, all Converſe with Heathens that never made Profeſſion of the Faith and Religion of Jeſus Chriſt : But I forbid you to company with a Brother that wolketh diſorderly, yea, I would not have you ſo much as to eat with ſuch an one.* Now if they might eat with profeſſed Heathens, but not with licentious Chriſtians, I ſuppoſe it will be evident to every one that hath but Underſtanding enough to name him a Man, that this Eating here ſpoken of, was not Eating at the Sacrament, for what had Heathens to do there, but only of private, friendly, and familiar Eating ?

But ſtill it may be, and it is urged, that if we may not eat with them civilly at their own Table, much leſs then may we eat with them religiously at God's. To this I answer,

*First,* That we have now the ſame Liberty allowed for our Converſe with wicked Chriſtians, as the Apoſtle granted for converſe with wicked Heathens; or elſe truly, as he ſaith, *We muſt needs go out of the World :* And therefore the Circumſtances of Times being ſo much alter'd, we may lawfully eat and converſe with them,

them, since in many Places there are few others to converse with.

*Secondly*, I answer, it doth not at all follow, that if I may not eat familiarly with a loose Christian, therefore I may not eat sacramentally with him; for the one is of mere Choice, the other is my necessary Duty 'till he be cast out of the Church. \* I may chuse my Acquaintance and familiar Friend with whom to converse: And if I chuse those who are wicked and ungodly, I then sin, because I shew I have a Delight in vain Persons. But I cannot chuse Church-Members, nor say I will communicate with this Man, and not with this 'till one of them be cut off from the Body of Christ by Excommunication, unless I intend to make a Rent and a Schism; which certainly they do, who depart from the Communion of the Church upon such a Pretence.

This, I think, may be sufficient in answer to the Third great Objection, That it is unlawful to partake with us of the *Lord's Supper*, because sometimes wicked Men are admitted unto it. For besides, that our Saviour himself admitted *Judas*, whom he calls a Devil; and that the Congregations of the Schism are not so perfectly pure, but that we may, without Breach  
of

\* Calvin. advers. Anabapt. Quod autem vestat cum his cibum sumere qui sunt Vita dissoluta, id ad privatam consuetudinem pertinet, non ad publ. Communionem.

of Charity, tell them, *All are not Saints whom they admit* : Besides this, if you know any scandalous Persons among us, 'tis your own Fault they are admitted ; and will you leave off that which is your Duty, for not doing your Duty ? If when you have done your Duty, yet they are still retained, the Fault ceaseth to be yours, and lies upon them whose Care it ought to be to exclude such ; nor doth your Communion in that Case pollute the Ordinance to you. We are not to eat with them after they are cut off by the Censures of the Church ; but we may eat with them whilst they continue Members of the Church, although perhaps it may be the Sin of others to retain them.

*Fourthly, and Lastly,* Some may think it unlawful to communicate with us, because of the Scandal and Offence that thereby will be given to weak Brethren. Though they have no such great Doubts nor Scruples in themselves that should deter them from coming, yet they are afraid of that Woe which Christ hath denounced against those who offend *any of the Little Ones.*

To this I answer only in brief, That if we are once fully satisfied in our Consciences that it is our Duty, we ought not to take any Notice at all of the Censures

sures and Offences of the whole World :  
 Yea, tho' the Offence they take should  
 not be only an Offence of Contristation,  
 and cause Sorrow in them when they see  
 us do that which is contrary to their pre-  
 sent Judgment: . But though it should  
 prove an Occasion of Sin unto them, yet  
 we ought not to forbear it, nor to sin  
 our selves to keep others from sinning.  
 For as we must not do Evil out of Hope  
 that Good may come thereby, so neither  
 must we forbear what is Good out of  
 Fear that Evil may ensue thereupon.  
 When we approve our selves to God and  
 our own Consciences, we ought not to  
 value the Censures of others who decry  
 our Duties, nor put our selves out of  
 the Way of our Obedience, to put others  
 out of their groundless Offences. If they  
 will be offended at my doing of my  
 Duty, let them be offended. And this  
 shall be my Comfort, that if I have not  
 their good Word, yet I shall have the  
 good Word of mine own Conscience, and  
 at last the good Word of my God, with  
 an *Engè, Well done, good and faithful Ser-  
 vant* ; and then let all the Men in the  
 World think and speak what they will  
 of me.

And

And thus I have gone through those four grand Objections that usually keep Men off from participating of the holy Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper*, and hope I have answered them satisfactorily.

Nothing now remains but earnestly to beseech you, for the Lord Christ's sake, who offers that *Flesh* and *Blood* to you which he offered upon the Cross to his Father, that you would no longer content your selves in your Separation, but come unanimously with us to receive that *Blood* by which both you, and we, hope to be saved. And let not some little Circumstances (which yet you see how defensible they are, and how hard to be gain-said by Scripture or Reason) make you fly off from so substantial and necessary a Duty as this is. Certainly it shews, that we have but little Spiritual Hunger and Thirst, if we cannot endure wholesome Food, though it be not in every Particular dress'd as we could fancy.

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T H E

State and Way

O F

SALVATION.

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H E B R. VI. 9.

*But beloved, we are perswaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, though we thus speak.*

**B***etter Things.]* Indeed, the Apostle had in the foregoing Verses spoken very dreadful and fatal Things concerning some Hypocritical, and unsound Professors. And his Discourse of them may be reduced unto these Three Heads :

*First,* The high Attainments of such Professors.

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*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, The wretched Apostacy of such Hypocrites.

*Thirdly*, The fearful Perdition of such Apostates.

*First*, He discovers their Attainments; and gives us, as it were, the *Ultimum quod sic*, the highest Strain and Pitch that such can reach unto. They may,

*First*, Be enlightned, *i. e.* *baptized*, and have a deep and searching Knowledge into the Mysteries of the Gospel, so as clearly to understand them, and to unfold them perspicuously and demonstratively unto others.

*Secondly*, They may have tasted of the heavenly Gift. They may have some Relishes upon their Spirits, of the Excellency, Sweetness, and Preciousness of Jesus Christ, the greatest Gift God ever gave to the World.

*Thirdly*, They may be made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, in his Gifts, those *χαρισματα* which were poured forth upon the Church: And those both extraordinary; such as were then bestowed upon the Primitive Church, as *the Gift of Tongues, of Prophecy, of working Miracles*: And also ordinary, in Illumination, Conviction, partial Reformation, fluent Elocution, both to God in Prayer,  
and

and to Men in Instruction, which still remain to this Day, and are dispensed in common, both to those who are savingly wrought upon, and to those who are utter Strangers to the Life of Grace, and the Power of true Godliness.

*Fourthly*, They may have tasted the good Word of God, and found so much Sweetness and Comfort in the Doctrine and Promises of it, as to hear it *gladly* with *Herod*, and to receive it *joyfully* with the Stony Ground.

*Fifthly*, They may have tasted of the Powers of the World to come; and have some Prelibations of Eternal Glory in some Ecstasical Raptures and Transports of Spirit, as if they were gotten quite above Mortality. And these Forecasts may entertain them with fair and flourishing Hopes, that they shall for ever drink of those *Rivers of Pleasure that flow at God's Right Hand*.

These, you see, are great and high Attainments, that the Apostle allows to unsound Professors, *Verse 4, 5*. For that they were never otherwise, appears,

*Secondly*, In the Defection and Apostacy of these Hypocrites from all these glorious Attainments. And this Apostacy is not only gradual and partial, such as is too often incident to the best

Saints, who decline from the Spiritualness and Excellency of their first Ways; but total and final, ending in a malicious Renouncing of the Truth, and the Profession of the Name of Christ, which is the very Formality of the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. If such shall *fall away*, it is impossible to *renew them again unto Repentance*, Verse 6. and therefore it is alike impossible that ever they should be pardoned. For this conditional Proposition, *If they fall away*, supposeth a Possibility of it, because the Apostle gives it both as a Caution against Security, and a Motive to a farther Progress and Perfection. They may fall, and *fall away*, and fall away to an utter Impossibility of renewing them again unto Repentance.

*Thirdly*, He discovers the woful Perdition of these Apostates. And that he doth by an elegant Similitude taken from barren Ground, to which such Apostates are compared, *Verse 8*. For if God hath manured them, and caused the Dew of Heaven to fall plentifully upon them from his Ordinances, and yet they bring forth nothing but *Bryars and Thorns*, let them know that they lie under a most tremendous Doom.

*First*, They are rejected of God, reprobated and hated of him. *If any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him*, Hebr. 10. 38.

*Secondly*, They are nigh unto a Curse. The dreadful Curse of God hangs hovering over their Heads ; and would they but look about them, they might see thick and black Clouds gathering, and ready to break upon them and overwhelm them with a Tempest of the Divine Wrath and Fury, and they would live in a certain fearful Expectation of fiery Indignation to devour and consume them. For,

*Thirdly*, Their End is to be burned. They are cut out to be Firebrands for Hell ; ordained of Old unto this Condemnation, who so long wilfully withdraw from God, 'till they fall into the Devil's Arms ; and recede so far backward from Christ, and their seeming Piety and splendid Profession, 'till they tumble into everlasting Fire, and there for ever suffer the most acute Tortures, the most direful Plagues, that either the infinite Wisdom of God can prepare, or the infinite Power of God inflict ; and lie eternally cursing, and accursed, under the Revenges of that God whom they have maliciously despited.

But now, lest any tender-hearted Christian should be discouraged and dejected by this terrible and startling Doctrine; a Doctrine, which might have then, and hath since, caused many sad Fears to seize upon the Spirits of those who are true and sincere, but yet timorous and doubting Saints! The Apostle therefore comforts them in the Words of my Text, and tells them, That though he had spoken so sharply against Apostates, yet they should not apply it to themselves as though he suspected them for such; that his Discourse was directed unto them not as Censure, but as Caution; not as judging them to be such, but forewarning them lest they should be such. As if he should say, Interpret not what I have spoken, as if I thought you forlorn and cursed Apostates from Christ; these do not appertain to you otherwise than as Matter that deserves your Care and Caution. For though I have propounded to you the Danger of Apostacy, yet I have great Confidence of the Sincerity of your Profession, and the Perseverance of your Faith and Obedience; *we are persuaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, though we thus speak.*

From this Coherence of the Words with the Context, we may observe,

*First,*

*First,* That there is great Need to preach rousing and terrifying Doctrines, even to true and real Believers. Thunder is said to purge the Air, and cleanse it from those impure Vapours, with which it is apt to abound when it hath been long serene and stagnant. And truly thundring Doctrine is of great Use, not only to convince the Hypocrite, when the Word shall be applied so critically that he can no longer hide himself from the Evidence of it, nor any longer lurk under the false Disguise of a seeming Sanctity, but his own Conscience will detect him, and deal as roundly with him, as he hath dealt dissemblingly both with God and Man. Nor,

*Secondly,* To rouse and awaken the Secure, and by alarming them with the Terrors of the Lord, make them start out of their supine Recklessness, and stupid Neglect of their Souls, and eternal Concernments, But,

*Thirdly,* It is necessary also to make those who are true and sincere Christians cautious and circumspect, to stand upon their Watch, lest they also draw back unto Perdition, and bring upon themselves all the Woes and Curses which they hear denounced against these wretched Apo-

states. *Let him that thinketh he stands, take heed lest he fall,* 1 Cor. 10. 12.

And whereas he sweetens this terrible Doctrine, by declaring his good Hopes and Opinion concerning them; observe,

That such rousing and terrifying Truth requires a great deal of holy Prudence and Caution in the delivering of them. Ministers ought not always to denounce Wo and Wrath, nor at all Peradventures to fling abroad Swords, Arrows, and Death; nor like a Company of Whiffers in a Shew, spit Fire at every Man they meet. For this indiscreet Preaching of Hell and Damnation, not making a careful Distinction between Persons and Persons, doth but,

*First*, Harden the Wicked, while it puts them into as good a Condition as any others.

*Secondly*, Grieve the Good, and sadden the Hearts of those whom God would not have made sad; while it rattles out the Terrors of the Lord without any Discrimination, and leaves them no Means, nor Advantage, of applying those Comforts to themselves which of Right belong unto them. And,

*Thirdly*, Prejudiceth all, in as much as it is apt to beget only a slavish Fear, and that Fear an Averfation to God, and that

that Religion which is thus imprudently represented as only dreadful and frightful.

But to wave these Things; that which I shall principally consider, is that Clause in the Text, *Things that accompany Salvation*. In which I shall enquire,

*First*, The Meaning of the Phrase.

*Secondly*, What those Things are which do thus accompany Salvation.

For the *First*, The Meaning and Import of the Expression; we must here take Notice, that Salvation may be taken in a twofold Sense: Either,

*First*, For the full and actual Possession of it. Or,

*Secondly*, For our Right and Title to it, and some Initials of it already begun in us.

In the former Sense, it signifies the Glory and Happiness of the Saints in Heaven, when they are no longer *Viatores*, but *Comprehensores*; no longer Travellers thither, but Possessors of their Inheritance. And thus it is not to be understood in this Place: For many Things accompany this Salvation, which cannot be verified of the best and holiest Saints, while they are here in this Life. As the clear and  
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immediate Vision and Fruition of God ; our perfect Immunity from all Sin and Corruption ; our final Deliverance from all Sorrows and Sufferings, and the like : Which the choicest Believers do not enjoy while they are here on Earth, but they are reserved for them 'till they arrive to Heaven to be the Completion of all their Hopes, and their full and eternal Reward.

This *Salvation* then, which the Text mentions, is only Salvation in Right and Title ; For then also are we said to be saved, when we have a Right unto the eternal Inheritance, and the Initials and Beginnings of it wrought in our Souls. This is a Salvation on this Side Heaven, which we may well call a *State of Salvation*, or a certain Tendency unto it, which will at last infallibly end in a full and entire Enjoyment of it. Now all those Things which are previous and antecedent to our eternal Salvation in Heaven ; they are Concomitants, and Associates with this Salvation : And therefore are said to *accompany Salvation*, because they are to be found in all those who have a true Right unto the Glory of Heaven for the present, and shall be brought unto the Possession of it hereafter, Hence observe,

That

That a State of Salvation hath proper and peculiar Things belonging unto it, which are not to be found in any other Condition. Now here,

*First*, These Things are not only external Privileges, nor the Dispensation of the Ordinances of Jesus Christ. Indeed, these are ordinarily necessary as the Means of Salvation, without which none can, according to God's ordinary way of working, come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and be saved : For *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God,* Rom. 10. 17. But yet they are not inseparable Concomitants of this State. Many enjoy the Ordinances and Means of Grace, that yet are utter Strangers to God, and despise that Grace which they were instituted to convey. And therefore, as they prove great Furtherances to the Salvation of some, so they accidentally prove the Occasion of Obduration, and sorer Condemnation to others. As the same Rain from Heaven rots some Trees, that makes others to sprout and grow ; so the same Ordinances do accidentally rot and corrupt some wretched Souls, and make them the fitter Fuel for Hell Fire, which cause others that are Trees of Righteousness, and Plants of Renown, to flourish and spring, and  
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bring forth much precious Fruit unto God. And therefore we find, that God gives a most sad and dreadful Commission to his Prophet *Isaiab*, Chap. 6. 9. *Go and tell this People, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the Heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes; lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and convert, and be healed.* Rest not therefore in Ordinances, that you hear the Word, and receive the Sacraments; that you have the Tenor of the Covenant explained, and the Seals of it applied: These are indeed Means of Grace, but they are not Evidences of it: They are Things that promote Salvation, but they do not necessarily accompany it. And he that hath no better a Title for Heaven, than only that he sits under the Enjoyment of these, will find all his fond Hopes miserably disappointed, when he shall hear Christ pronounce a dreadful Doom, even upon those who have eaten and drank in his Presence, and whom he himself had taught and instructed; *Depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity.*

Nor,

**Secondly,** Are the common Gifts of the Spirit of God, those Things which accompany

company Salvation. These indeed are of great Use and Excellency, but yet they may be found in those who are wholly devoid of true Grace, and the Life of God. Many Hypocrites may be endowed with a great Measure of these, and sometimes much beyond those who are true and sincere Christians. Their Gifts may further the Salvation of others, when they only aggravate their own Damnation. As *Noah* made use of those to build his Ark, who yet were themselves drowned in the Deluge; and *Solomon* employed the *Syrians*, who were Heathens, to prepare Materials for the Temple; so God doth sometimes make Use of the Gifts and Abilities of wicked and ungodly Men for the Benefit and Salvation of his Church. But yet those very Parts and Gifts which help on the Salvation of others, contribute not to the Salvation of the Owners; but rather to the Increase of their future Torments, because their Knowledge, and Gifts, and Parts, render them the more inexcusable before God. Nor,

*Thirdly*, Are the common Graces of the Holy Ghost, those Things that accompany Salvation. There are many previous Works wrought upon the Souls of those who are brought near unto Salvation; but through their quenching of

the Spirit, and resisting his Motions, they provoke him to withdraw, and so they never attain it. Nor,

*Fourthly*, Are inward Joys and Comforts those Things which do necessarily accompany Salvation. Nay, indeed a true Christian may many Times go mourning and heavily, when an Hypocrite shall flaunt and triumph in his Joys, and boast of his Evidences, and Ravishments, and overpowering Consolations, as if he were the only Favourite and Minion of Heaven, whom God delighted to caress and dandle as the Darling of his Affections. See that proud *Pharisee*, Luke 18, 11. *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men are, nor as this Publican.* And that Hypocritical Church of *Thyatira*, Rev. 3. 17. *I am rich, and increased in Goods, and stand in need of nothing.* Thus through the Delusions of Satan, and their own Self-flattery, they may bring themselves into a Golden Dream, that they are rich in Enjoyments, increased in Graces, and stand in Need of nothing that might make them either holy or happy. And so they give themselves the same Applause that the rich Fool gave his Soul; *Soul, thou hast Goods laid up for many Years, take thine Ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* But, alas! these over-weening Conceits prove gross Delusions.

lusions. How many have we seen who have prided themselves in their Joys, and would be still boasting what Sweetness of Spirit, and Soul Ravishments, and other such like melting Things they have felt, turn utter Apostates from the Truth, and the Profession of Godliness!

These therefore are not the Things that accompany Salvation; but a Man may suffer everlasting Torments that hath tasted many delusive Joys and Comforts; he may drink deep of the Cup of God's Wrath and Fury, who hath tasted of the Powers of the World to come: He may go down to Hell with many Church Privileges and Ordinances, excellent Gifts and Parts, with many common Graces of the Spirit, Convictions, many good Wishes and Desires, yea, and many good Duties too, and there suffer the Vengeance of everlasting Fire, and have all these burnt about him. These Things therefore are no firm Support for your Hope, no good Evidences for your future Happiness: And therefore trust not your Souls upon them, they will sink under you and deceive you. They are only common Things, and may belong to any that live under Gospel-Dispensations. Hearing, Praying, Professing, Receiving the Sacraments, though they be absolutely neces-

necessary to Salvation, as Means, yet they are not as Evidences. They are distinguishing Marks of Christians from those of another Religion, but they are not distinguishing Marks of Saints from Hypocrites : Or, if you will have them Evidences, they are rather exclusive Evidences, than conclusive. That is, it is an assured Evidence that they are no true Christians who do neglect, or disown, or despise these Things. Whosoever doth so, is certainly excluded from this Number, and from all Hopes and Possibility of Salvation : But they are not conclusive Evidences. We cannot certainly conclude, that such a Man is a true Christian, or in the State of Salvation, because such Things may be found upon him.

And therefore, in the next Place, let us see what these Things are that do accompany Salvation. And they are of three Sorts :

*First*, Certain Principles of Faith in the Understanding.

*Secondly*, Certain gracious Impressions upon the Heart and Will.

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, A certain regular Obedience in the whole Course of a Man's Life and Conversation.

And here we must upon every one of these discover these Two Things:

*First*, Shew you what those Principles, Habits, and Obedience are. And then,

*Secondly*, Whether we have those Principles, Impressions, and Obedience in a saving Manner.

The *First* Sort of Things that accompany Salvation, are Divine Principles of Truth in the Understanding. And these are of two Kinds; either Doctrinal, or Practical. Those, whose immediate Tendency is Information of the Judgment; or those, whose immediate Effect is the influencing and regulating of our Lives and Practice.

*First*, Doctrinal Principles, are absolutely necessary to Salvation: Such I mean which are the Vital and Fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith. 'Tis true, it is not necessary for every private Christian to busy and beat his Head about the nice and curious Questions of Religion, which have always been disputed, but will never be decided, until our imperfect Knowledge give Place to perfect. Some Things in Christian Religion  
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are Ornamental ; and such are the more abstruse Points that are not so clearly revealed to us in the Scriptures. These, indeed, those that are of Parts, and have competent Leisure, ought to search into, as the noblest Study and Science they can employ themselves about. Other Things are Fundamental and Vital, the Ignorance of which excludes Men from all Possibility of Salvation. And these we ought to know and believe explicitly, as being Truths that are most clearly revealed to us. And such are,

*First*, The Doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity ; that there is One infinite Essence, in Three distinct Hypostases or Persons. A Mystery, which though it be far beyond all the Comprehension of Reason, and far deeper than the longest Line of our Understanding can possibly fathom, yet we are bound to adore and believe what we cannot comprehend. Yea, and thus far Reason it self teacheth us, that such a Being cannot be God, which may be comprehended by Man. This Mystery of *Three in One*, the Scripture hath expressly declared to us, *1 John 5. 7. There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ; and these Three are One. They are One, not only in their Record and Testimony, as*  
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some Hereticks would gloss the Place to evade the clear Force of it, but in Essence, Being, Power, Nature, and all the Divine Attributes and Perfections. For were this Unity only in Testimony, it might well be wondred why the Apostle should in the very next Verse alter the Phrase, and there tell us, that *the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood, agree in One*. Here it is evident from the Manner of Expression, that these are One only in Testimony. But when it is said, that *the Father, and the Word*, that is Jesus Christ, that *Word* which was made *Flesh*, and the *Spirit*; not that they agree in One, but that they are *One*; it can bear no other Signification, but that they are one infinite, eternal, ever-blessed Essence, having all the same essential Properties and Perfections. How far the express Belief of this great Truth was necessary before the Incarnation of our Saviour, I will not now dispute; though there want not sufficient Evidences that it was known to the *Jews* then. But since our Obligation to believe a Truth, is proportionable to the Evidence that can be produced for it; therefore now, since the Scripture is express in this Particular, an explicit Belief of it is necessary to us, whatsoever it were to them: Yea, so far

necessary in order to eternal Life, that he who denies and opposeth it cannot worship the true God, who is *Three in One*; cannot worship the Lord Jesus Christ, who is as truly and verily *God* as he is *Man*, and therefore cannot be in any Capacity of obtaining Salvation: For it is the highest Idolatry in the World to worship that for our God which is not so. Now our God is *Three in One*; and therefore they who pretend to worship him, whom yet they deny to be so, do but worship an Idol of their own fancying, and not the true God. Yea, our Saviour Jesus Christ makes this to be a Fundamental Article of our Faith, *John 17. 3. This is Life Eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* So that if we know not God, as he is the true God, we cannot have Eternal Life; but as he is the true God, so he is Three Persons in One Nature and Essence. But some may say, this seems rather to make against it: For if the Father be the only *true* God, then how can Jesus Christ be the *true* God too? To this I answer, That the Particle [*Only*] refers not to the Father, but to the *true* God. Now the Word *God* is an Essential, and not a Personal Attribution, and so both God *the Father*

is the *only true* God, and God *the Son* is the *only true* God, and God *the Holy Ghost* is the *only true* God, because they are all one and the same *only true* God. Our Saviour saith not that only the Father is the *true* God, but the Father is the *only true* God; and so also is each Person in the ever blessed Trinity. For the Godhead is not divided with the Persons, and therefore there is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, but these are all the *only true* God. This is the first Doctrinal Principle.

*Secondly*, Another Principle consequent upon the former, is the Knowledge and Belief of that great Mystery of the two Natures united in one Person of our Lord Christ. This is likewise a fundamental Truth, Truth as to both Parts of it; both that he is God, and that he is Man. This we find most clearly asserted by the Apostle, *Rom. 1. 3, 4. Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the Seed of David according to the Flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holiness by the Resurrection from the Dead.* His Divinity is most irrefragably proved, past all the cunning Evasions of Socinian Perverseness in many Places of Scripture, but especially in the First to the *Hebrews, Ver. 8, &c. Unto the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

And, *Ver. 10.* speaking of the same Son, *Thou, Lord, in the Beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth; and the Heavens are the Works of thy Hands: They shall perish, but thou remainest; they shall change, but thou art the same, and thy Years shall not fail.* Not to mention *Ver. 3.* *Who being the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Father's Person, and upholding all Things by the Word of his Power: Nor Ver. 2.* *By whom also he made the Worlds.* Where, I think, we may challenge all the Wit of Hell to evade the Force of this Argument: He certainly is the only true God, who is God the Creator; *For he that made all Things, is God,* saith the Apostle, *Heb. 3. 4.* But so is the Lord Jesus Christ, as these Places do abundantly testify; and therefore he is true God, a God by Nature and Essence, and not only by Authority and Donation. Again, If Jesus Christ ought to be served and worshipped by us, then certainly he is a God by Nature; but none that acknowledge the Name of Christ, excepting that accursed *Blandatra*, and a few of his Adherents, will deny that he ought to be worshipped, whom all the Angels in Heaven are commanded to worship, *Heb. 1. 6.* *Let all the Angels of God worship him:* Therefore he must needs be God by Nature, and not by

by Office only. See for this, *Gal. 4. 9.* where the Apostle tells the believing *Galatians*, that heretofore when they were *Gentiles*, they *did Service to them, who by Nature are no Gods*; implying, that they were guilty of most gross and stupid Idolatry in so doing. But now if Christ be not a God by Nature, either the Apostle commanded these Believers to worship him, or not: If not, then they ought not to worship him; and very choice Christians they are who should be driven to this: If he did, then he commanded them to be guilty of Idolatry like their former; for he tells them, *They were Idolaters in worshipping those, who by Nature are not Gods.*

And that the Owning of both Natures in Christ is a fundamental Article of Faith, appears,

*First*, In that the Denying of the Humane Nature in Christ, is expressly sentenced as damnable, *1 John 4. 3.* *Every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is not of God; and this is the Spirit of Antichrist, of which you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the World.* The Apostle doth not say, Every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come into the World, to prevent the Evasion of those Hereticks that pre-

tended he was revealed in the Spirit, or in the Conscience, or in the Gospel; but he saith, *Come in the Flesh*, in the Assumption of a true Humane Nature; those who deny this, are not of God. And;

*Secondly*, For the Denying of his Divine Nature, that also is in it self damnable; 1 *John* 2. 22. *He is Antichrist that denieth the Father, and the Son.* And certainly, if it be so damnable an Heresy to deny the Humanity of Christ, much more then his Divinity; for it was his Divine Nature that put Worth and Value into all the Actions and Sufferings of his Humane; and made them truly meritorious: And therefore, if there be no Salvation attainable, but through Faith in the Merits of Jesus Christ; they are utterly excluded from all Possibility of being saved, who destroy the very Belief of those Merits through which alone they can be saved. That is therefore another fundamental Truth of the Gospel.

*Thirdly*, Justification in a free gratuitous Way, in Opposition to the Works of the Law, is a fundamental Article of our Faith: And in confirming this, the Apostle spends Eleven whole Chapters in his Epistle to the *Romans*. The Denying this Doctrine, is utterly inconsistent with a State of Salvation. See for this, *Gal.* 5. 4.

*Whoso*

*Whosoever of you are justified by the Law, Christ is become of none effect to you ; you are fallen from Grace.* Indeed, many learned Men are at Variance concerning the Manner of obtaining Justification by the Righteousness of Christ ; some taking one Way, and some another ; and it is no easy Matter to reconcile, and accommodate them : But as long as they hold this Foundation, that none can be accepted of God, but only through the Merits and Righteousness of Jesus Christ ; though some may build Hay or Stubble upon this Foundation, they may be safe, though they suffer Loss in their Superstructure. Only to me, that seems the best and safest Way which makes most for the Honour of our Lord Christ ; for we cannot easily err in ascribing too much unto him, who is the Author of our Salvation : And therefore certainly, to make the Merits and Righteousness of Jesus Christ the very Matter of our Justification, and the Imputation of them to us the formal Cause of it, seems more honourable to him, and, I think, more consonant unto Scripture, than only to make it a remote procatartical Cause, moving God to accept of our Faith and Obedience, as our Righteousness, and thereupon to justify us.

*Fourthly,*

*Fourthly*, The Doctrine of Sanctification, and of the absolute Necessity of a thorough Change and Renovation of our Natures; is a fundamental Truth, without the acknowledging of which, we can never be saved: For our Saviour hath told us, *John 3. 6. Except a Man be born again of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* And certainly, if our undergoing such a thorough and universal Change be of such absolute Necessity, the knowing and believing of it must needs be; for if we believe it not necessary, we shall never be engaged heartily to endeavour it. And therefore,

*Fifthly*, The Doctrine of our Fall; the Knowledge of our lost Estate and Condition, is of indispensable Necessity to eternal Salvation. Our Saviour tells us, *that he came to seek and to save those that are lost, Luke 19. 10.* And unless we are conscious of our Sin, and Misery by reason of Sin, that we stand forfeited to the Divine Justice, liable to his severest Wrath, exposed to all the dreadful Curses of the Law, we shall never submit to the Methods of our Physician, when we are not sensible of our Disease.

*Sixthly*, The Doctrines of the Resurrection, Judgment to come, Heaven and Hell, and eternal Rewards approporioned  
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to our present Works ; these are fundamental Articles, and of absolute Necessity to be believed : For he that shall deny these, destroys all Hopes and Fears, and turns himself loose to follow his own Lusts, without any Check or Controul. He cannot be in a Possibility of Salvation, that believeth none ; that expects nothing at God's Hands, whether Rewards or Punishments. For such a damnable Doctrine as this, will necessarily engage him in a wicked and profligate Life. It is impossible in this our corrupt Estate, wherein we are so naturally prone to Sin, it is impossible that Men should be holy *gratis*. Besides, it plucks up all Religion by the very Roots ; and the whole Doctrine of Christ falls to the Ground, if the Immortality of the Soul, future Judgment, and eternal Rewards, be once denied : For both our Religion, and all Religions in the World, are founded upon these Principles. Thus you see some of those fundamental Truths, that are necessary to Salvation : And therefore, tho' Heresy look not so foul and ugly, as some vile and scandalous Impieties in Life and Practice, and we are apt to have good Opinions of Men whatsoever they hold ; if so be we see them just and honest in their Dealings, sober and temperate in their

their Converse ; though we think it no great Matter what their Notions and Tenets be, so long as their Lives are blameless and inoffensive ; yet believe it, Heresy is altogether as damnable as Profaneness ; those Poisons are as deadly that work upon the Head, as those that work upon the Heart ; and we ought as much to shun an Heretick, and to refuse Converse with him, as a wicked Monster ; as we ought to shun a Murderer, a Thief, a Drunkard, an unclean Sensualist, or the vilest Sinner that can be named. Yes, and rather more, inasmuch as there is more Danger of being corrupted by the fair Speeches of erroneous Persons, than there is of being inticed by the lewd and hateful Actions of notorious and debauched Wretches. And therefore St. *John* gives us this Command in his 2d Epistle, *Ver. 10. If there come any unto you, and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your House, nor bid him God speed : For he that biddeth him God speed, is Partaker of his evil Deeds.* And thus much for Doctrinal Principles. But then,

*Secondly,* There are Practical Principles of Truth, whose immediate Influence is only to guide the Life and Conversation. Many such there are, which I shall only reckon

reckon to you in the Heap : That the Word of God is the best Rule of Life : Godliness is the greatest Gain : Sin the worst of Evils : God in Christ the chiefest Good : An holy Life the securest and sweetest : That we ought to look only to Duty, and leave Successes to God : The best Peace, is Peace of Conscience : Self-Denial is the greatest Self-Interest : That we ought to chuse the greatest Affliction, rather than to commit the least Sin : That whatsoever we lay out, or lose for Christ, shall be repaid us with abundant Use and Advantage. These, and many other such like, are Practical Truths ; which unless we are fully perswaded and convinced of in our own Consciences, will never be able to influence and govern our Lives and Actions. And unless we live according to such Rules as these are, it is utterly impossible that ever we should be saved. And thus I have shewed you, what are the Principles of Truth which accompany Salvation.

The *Second* Enquiry was, How we shall know whether these Principles, both Doctrinal and Practical, are imbraced by us in such a Way, as may give us good Hopes that we are in a State of Salvation. Indeed, it is not enough merely to know these

these Things, or to believe that they are great and precious Truths : For there are not many who have lived long under the Dispensation of the Gospel, but have gotten a Notion of these Things, and their very Reason forceth them to subscribe to the Truth of them ; but yet we see that Multitudes even of these are profane and impious, and such ungodly Persons, that as the Psalmist speaks, *Salvation is far from them.* Therefore I answer,

*1st.* Then these Principles are Things accompanying Salvation, when they are leading Principles : When a Man sails by this Compass, and steers his Course according to them : When they lie not floating and swimming in the Brain, but soak and sink into the Heart, and influence the Life.

*2dly.* When they are determining and conquering Principles : When Christ and our Interest come into Competition, then see what thou art determined by. A carnal Man may discourse by Scripture-Principles ; but when a Time of Trial and Temptation comes, and he and Christ must part, or he and the World must part, he then determines his Choice by worldly Principles ; and whatever he had speculatively talked before of preferring  
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the Peace and Purity of Conscience before all worldly Enjoyments, yet now he chuseth Sin rather than Affliction.

3<sup>dly</sup>. When they are quieting Principles: When they have determined your Choice, and then can satisfy and quiet your Minds; then are they saving. It may be, that sometimes Conscience hath well determined, and doth sway a Man to a good Choice; but yet he is angry with it, and could curse his Conscience for being so tender, and forcing him to forego his earthly Interests.

4<sup>thly</sup>. When they are fixed Principles, not only in the Assent of the Judgment, but in the Consent of the Will: When they become habitual to us, and grow up in us as another Nature: That as the great natural Principle of all our natural Actions is Self-preservation; so the great swaying Principle of all our Actions, is likewise these holy Maxims which naturally lead us to the Preservation of that which is our dearest Self, even our precious Souls, and their eternal Interests and Concerns.

Thus we have shown you the first Sort of Things which accompany Salvation, *viz.* The Principles of Belief, both Doctrinal and Practical: As likewise, what is necessarily

necessarily required to make these Principles saving.

Let us now proceed to the Second general Head; To consider those Impressions that must be wrought upon the Heart, Will, and Affections. And herein I shall (as before) make these two Enquiries:

*First*, What these Impressions are that accompany Salvation. And,

*Secondly*, What are the Evidences by which we know them to be saving.

*First*, What these Impressions are. To this I answer in the General: They are those Habits of true and Divine Grace infused into the Will and Affections, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, whereby they are wholly renewed, and of Earthly and Sensual, become Heavenly and Spiritual. They do indeed comprehend all the Lineaments and Features of the Image of God: So that, when we speak of the Graces of Faith, Love, Hope, Patience, Humility, Self-denial, &c. these are those Impressions and Habits, wrought in the Heart, that accompany Salvation; and the whole System and Complexion of them taken together, is that which the Scripture calls, *the new Man, the new Creature, the Image of God;*

God, the Divine Nature, Conversion, Sanctification, effectual Calling, and the like. And this great Change must of Necessity pass upon the Soul, before it can be brought into a Capacity of obtaining Heaven and eternal Salvation: For that God, whom the Prophet describes to be *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, will not certainly behold it in Heaven, his own Throne and Palace. But, as all that were unclean, and leprous, and ulcerated, were to be removed out of the Camp of *Israel*, because God walked in the midst of it; so shall all such spiritually unclean Persons be excluded out of Heaven, the Palace of the great King, the Camp of innumerable Hosts of Angels, in the midst of whom the holy God walks, and converseth only with pure and holy Spirits. Now these holy Habits of Grace, which are infused into the Soul in its new Birth and Renovation, accompany Salvation two Ways:

*First*, As Preparations unto it.

*Secondly*, As Parts of it.

*First*, As Preparations to it. For as God hath prepared an Inheritance of Glory for us hereafter, so by Grace he prepares us for that Inheritance: And therefore the Apostle, *Colos. 1. 12.* Gives Thanks to God

*who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance with the Saints in Light.* And this Meetness is twofold :

1<sup>st</sup>. In the Nature of the Thing : Holiness is naturally required unto eternal Happiness. As all the Goodliness of Fruits and Flowers must first spring from some seminal Virtue ; so Glory springs from Grace, Salvation from Conversion, as the Flower from the Seed. Whence the Psalmist expresseth it, *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart, Psal. 97. 11.* And as naturally as a small Seed, when it is received into good Ground, and watered with the Dew, and refreshing Showers of Heaven sprouts up, and spreads it self into the Beauties of a Flower ; so this Seed of Grace, when it is watered with the Dew of Heaven, and call'd forth by the quickening Influences of the Spirit of God, begins to bud forth, spreads its Branches, and will at last display all its Glories when it is perfect and consummate in Heaven. And,

2<sup>dly</sup>. By the Divine Appointment, God hath by his Promises intail'd Happiness and Salvation upon the Graces and Holiness of his Saints : It is a Reward due unto them by Vertue of his Promise and Covenant. So that they are meet to be

be Partakers of this Inheritance, not only because Grace doth naturally tend to Glory, as naturally as the Dawning of the Morn tends to a Noon-day Brightness; but because also it is a meet and just Thing with God to recompence unto them Joy and Refreshing, and everlasting Peace and Bliss, having obliged himself so to do by the Tenour of his unalterable Word of Promise.

And as Holiness is thus preparatory to Salvation, so,

*Secondly*, It is Part of Salvation. It is Happiness in this Vale of Misery; it is Heaven on this side Heaven. Grace and Glory differ not in Nature, but only in Degrees. Grace is Glory begun; and Glory is but Grace elevated to its Achme and Perfection. *St. John*, in his First Epistle, *Chap. 3. Ver. 2.* tells us, that all we can know of the State of Glory, is, *that we shall be like God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* And this Resemblance unto God, the Saints do here in some measure bear upon them. There are some Strictures, some Lineaments and Proportions of their Father's Image, drawn upon them: And as the clear and immediate

diate Vision of God in Heaven is a transforming Vision, where by the bright Reflexions of God's Purity and Holiness cast upon the Blessed, they are made perfectly holy, and therefore blessed; so here on Earth, those more obscure and glimmering Discoveries that God vouchsafeth of himself, when he passeth before them in his Ordinances, though they see him but darkly through a Glass; yet even this Sight of God is also transforming, and changeth the Soul into the Likeness and Image of God, as the Apostle speaks, *2 Cor. 3. 18. We beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* So that you see there is very little Difference between our present State of Grace, and our future State of *Glory*; but only in Degrees and Measures. *St. John* speaks of it as the *Glory of Heaven, that we shall see God.* *St. Paul* tells us, *that we do now see him, though more dimly and obscurely.* *St. John* tells us, *that the Glory of Heaven consists not only in seeing God, but in being made like unto him.* *St. Paul*, *that the Sight of the Glory of God doth now transform us, and make us like unto him, for we are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory; i.e. from one Degree of Grace to another.* Thus I have shewn you how these

these Impressions and Habits do accompany Salvation, both as they are Preparations unto it, and Parts of it.

And now, though this be most true in the general, concerning all the Graces of God's Spirit, that they do thus naturally and necessarily accompany Salvation; yet give me Leave to single out some few of the more choice and eminent Ones, upon which the Scripture seems to set a peculiar Remark. For though all the Graces of the Holy Ghost are alike necessary to Salvation, yet they are not all alike eminent and conspicuous. Now with divers of these, that most excellent Sermon of our Saviour upon the Mount will furnish us. Therefore,

*First*, Inward Heart-Holiness is a gracious Disposition of Soul that doth accompany Salvation: So we have it, *Matth. 5. 8. Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God.* Now as all Holiness signifies nothing else but a Separation from profane Uses, to the Service of God; so this Holiness of the Heart, it is the Alienation and Separation of it from Sin, to the Service of God. The Apostle, *2<sup>d</sup> Cor. 7. 1.* distinguisheth Sins into two Sorts; There are Filthinesses of the Flesh, and such are those wherein the Body is engaged; as Drunkenness, Riot, Unclean-

ness, Murder, Oaths, and Blasphemies, &c., which require the Service of the Body as the Instrument to perpetrate them; And there are other Filthinesses of the Spirit, and those are more refined and invisible, though not less pernicious and damnable Sins; and such are, wicked Thoughts, evil Concupiscences and Desires, Atheism, Unbelief, Hypocrisy, and the like. The former Sort are the Sins of lewd and profligate Wretches; these latter, are the Sin in which formal Hypocrites, and all those who are devoid of the Power and Life of true Godliness, may indulge themselves, though they carry a fair Shew and Outside to the World. Now examine yourselves; of which Kind is your Holiness and Sanctity! Do you content yourselves that you are pure and clean from the gross and scandalous Acts of Sin; that you are no Drunkards, nor Swearers, nor Adulterers, nor Murderers, nor Thieves, nor Extortioners? It were to be wish'd that more could say, they have wash'd their Hands in Innocency from these Wickednesses. But do you rest in this only, and look no farther than that your Lives, and outward Demeanour, be fair and inoffensive; when all the while these, and many other Swarms of Lusts crowd thick about your Heart, and cluster there?

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Though thou never imbrewedst thy Hands in the Blood of thy Brother, yet dost thou harbour any malicious and revengeful Thoughts against him? Dost thou please and delight thy self in wishing and fancying his Ruin, and rejoicest in his Sufferings? Though thou never spokest a blasphemous Word against God and his Truth; yet is it the Employment of thy Mind to rend God's Attributes from him, and to tear them off one by one, sometimes denying his Wisdom, sometimes his Power, sometimes his Goodness, sometimes his Providence, and sometimes with the Fool, denying the very Being and Essence of God it self? Is this the Sport and Recreation of thy Mind, thus speculatively to assassinate the great God? Darest thou prostitute thy Soul to the Imbraces of any unclean and impure Thoughts, and stuprate the Images of thine own Fancy? Is thy Heart vain, worldly, sensual; or dost thou suffer unclean, covetous, and revengeful Thoughts to estuate there without controul? Believe it, though thy Life were as clear and spotless as an Angel's, yet this Impurity and Filthiness of thy Heart will keep thee for ever from the beatifical Vision of God: For that God who sees all the inward and lurking Filthiness of thy Heart as apparently as if

every Thought and Motion of thy Soul were written on thy Forehead, he hath sentenced thee that thou shalt never see him. It may be thou darest not outwardly commit those Wickednesses which thy Heart prompts thee to, for fear of Punishment, or Shame; but God hath no Interest at all in these Restraints. If thou fearedst him, thou wouldst no more harbour any Abomination in thy Heart, than thou wouldst visibly act it in thy Life; for God sees every Flushing of thy Thoughts, and of thy Desires, as clearly as he doth the most publick and conspicuous Actions of thy Life. It is not therefore for his Sake, that thou art not, notoriously and infamously wicked, but for thine own. Thou compoundest between thy Reputation, and the Temptation. To satisfy thy Credit, thou darest not commit the Sin; and yet to satisfy the Devil, thou wilt inwardly harbour and cherish it. And believe it, he is well enough content that thou shouldst thus compromise, knowing that such Repercussives will never cure the Disease, but only drive it to the Heart; and so that he may rule that, will let thy Credit, or Safety, rule thy Life. But now a true Christian rests not contented with this external Sanctification; not that he hath beaten Sin within its Trenches;

Trenches; not that he lays a close Siege to it, and keeps it from foraging Abroad; But he especially labours with his Heart, knowing that it is but in vain to lade out the Streams, unless he can withal dry up the Fountain. And if he sees but the least Stirring of an evil Thought, the least Breathing of any sinful Desire, he presently endeavours to suppress it, knowing that if he can but keep his Heart pure, his Life will be pure by Consequence. And this inward Purity is that which is an infallible Concomitant of Salvation. Indeed, he cannot altogether keep himself from the Mutinies and Rebellions of his corrupt Part; his Thoughts and his Affections will sometimes make an Insurrection, and buzz strange Things to him; and sometimes also the Devil casts in a fiery Dart, some black and hideous Suggestion, and that old Serpent seems audibly to hiss within him. But then,

*First*, It is the Grief and Anguish of his Soul when it is thus with him: He could even shake off his very Being, and run away from himself, to be freed from them.

*Secondly*, He labours to the very utmost of his Power to quell these rebellious Motions: He commands his Thoughts  
never

never again to propose such Matters to him, turns away in Indignation from hearkning to their Overtures ; and, as other Commanders use to do with seditious and mutinous Armies, presently busies them about other Work and Employment. Whereas on the contrary, a wicked Man diverts and recreates himself with all the filthy Dalliances of his impure Thoughts, sets up a Theatre in his Imagination, brings forth every Lust to act its Part, sports himself with them ; and when he hath done, applauds himself in the Secrecy of his Invention, that he can be a Spectator where none can behold him, and enjoy both his own Lusts, and other Mens Esteem, without ever considering that the All-seeing Eye of God is upon him ; of that God who will draw the Curtain, detect the Scene, and openly expose all his Secret Sins to everlasting Shame and Reproach. That's the First Thing.

*Secondly*, Poverty of Spirit is another Grace that accompanies Salvation. *Matthew 5. 3. Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* And what a rich Portion, what a glorious Inheritance is this for those who are thus poor ! There is indeed a Spiritual Poverty, which is far from having a Blessing annexed

nexed to it ; such was that of the Church of *Laodicea*, Rev. 3. 17. *And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* This Spiritual Poverty is always joined with Ignorance and Presumption, and those who are most indigent and necessitous, usually flatter themselves with proud Conceits of their Fulness and Abundance. But this blessed Poverty of Spirit, is that Grace whereby a Man is convinced of his Wants, and mourns under them, sees his own Emptiness and Vileness, and loaths himself for it. And therefore continually renounceth himself in all that is really virtuous and commendable in him, and daily prays that his own Righteousness may not damn him. He maintains the Performance, but abjures the Merit of good Works. He trusts not to his Duties, but dares not neglect them. He knows they are but as broken Reeds ; and that therefore, though he must walk with them in his Hand to point him out the *Way* unto Heaven, yet he must not lean upon them. He is continually in Want, and still complaining and craving. He sees nothing in himself but Wants ; want of Wisdom, want of Grace, want of Holiness, want of Comfort and Assurance. Ever since the strong Man was cast

cast out, and his Goods spoiled, he hath lived in great Want and Necessity : And therefore is a most constant and importunate Beggar at the Throne of Grace for Supply ; and makes out to the Fulness and All-sufficiency of Jesus Christ, as his only Relief ; and whatsoever he finds defective in himself, fetcheth it Home by an appropriating Faith from him. This Poverty of Spirit is a most excellent Grace, that puts the Crown wholly upon God's Mercy ; ascribing nothing to it self, but its own Failings ; and is such a sweet, ingenuous, and obliging Grace, that it wins Favour in the Sight of God, and he will certainly crown it at the last with Glory. This, above all others, hath learnt the true Art of ingratiating it self with God ; while those who are spiritually proud, and haughty, and self-confident, are like your great Mountains, high, but barren, they are swollen up with their own Arrogance, but are usually empty of every Thing but only Noise and Tumour.

*Thirdly*, A mourning Frame of Spirit is another Disposition ; that accompanies Salvation. *Matth. 5. 4. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* An holy Mourning for our own Sins, and for the Sins of others.

1st. For

1<sup>st</sup> For our own Sins. And this is one great Part of Repentance, without which no Remission can be granted, and therefore no Salvation obtain'd. It is true, Repentance is no Satisfaction to the Justice of God; we cannot weep our selves out of Debt. Were our Heads *Fountains of Tears*, and could our Eyes pour out *Rivers of Water*, yet all these could not wash away the Guilt or Stain of any *the least Sin* that ever we committed. But yet without this, the Satisfaction that Christ Jesus hath made can never be applied to us. For his Blood comes flowing to us only upon a Stream of our own Tears: And that Soul that can thus melt down before the Lord in *an holy, ingenuous Mourning*, and godly Sorrow, may with comfortable Evidence conclude, That as he hath bathed himself in his own Tears, so God hath sprinkled him with the Blood of Christ, which alone can take away Sin. And,

2<sup>dly</sup>. A Spirit of Mourning for the Sins of others, the Sins of the Times and Places in which we live. For as our own Sins lie upon us 'till we humble our Souls before God; so the Guilt of other Mens Sins will likewise be imputed unto us, and the Wrath which is due to them may fall upon us, unless we lament them before

God,

God; and testify by our Sorrow for them, that we gave not our Consent to them. This is another gracious Impression that accompany Salvation.

*Fourthly*, Another is a meek and a patient Spirit: *Matth. 5. 5. Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.* Where the Promise I suppose doth not only refer to Temporal Blessings, tho' they only are express'd, but is to be carried higher, unto the heavenly Inheritance. Now this Meekness is a Fruit of holy Mourning. He that deeply humbles himself for his Sins before God, will not be much exasperated by the Offences of others against him. If God hath forgiven him *Ten Thousand Talents*, he will not think it any great Matter to forgive his Brother *a few Pence*. Nothing makes a Man so untractable and rugged, as Sin that lies upon the Conscience unrepented; and therefore unpardoned: And therefore we find that *David* was never so cruel, as when he had for some Time lain under the Guilt of his two foul Sins. Then he puts the *Ammonites under Saws, and Harrows, and Axes of Iron; and makes them pass through the Brick-kilns.* A fearful and sad Havock! Some he burnt, and some he sawed, and some he tare in Pieces, which was a strange Execution,  
and

and possibly more than became him to inflict. But afterward, when he had truly repented, and deeply humbled himself for his Sins, though he had a far greater Provocation, yet he meekly passeth it by: And when *Shimei*, in the Madness and Distraction of his Rage, pelts him with Stones and Curses together, Repentance had so humbled and tamed his Spirit, that all we now hear from him, is, *Let him curse; for God hath said unto him, curse David.* It is a most beautiful and excellent Grace, when we can bear Affronts and Injuries petulantly done against us, without any great Disturbance and Emotion. And this Grace God hath promised to crown with Salvation, *Psal.* 149. 4. *The Meek will he beautify with Salvation.*

*Fifthly*, An holy Hungring and Thirsting after Grace; *Matth.* 5. 6. *Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled:* When we do earnestly desire both the Righteousness of Christ's Merits to justify us, and the Righteousness of his Spirit to sanctify us. Which vehement Appetite will arise in us, if we have but a deep and due Sense of our Want of Christ, and our Want of Grace. And certainly the infinite Mercy of God will not suffer him to refuse

use the Breathings of an Heart that thus amorously pants after him; but he will, according to his Promise, *fill the Hungry with good Things*, when as for the Rich, and the full, those that are full of Self and full of Pride, *he will send them empty away.* Again,

*Sixthly*, A merciful Frame of Spirit, *Verse 7. Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy*: When we are merciful both to the Souls and Bodies of others, shewing our prone and ready Charity both in instructing the one, and relieving and supplying the other. Again,

*Seventhly*, An holy Awe and Dread of God, is another Grace that accompanies Salvation. This possibly is look'd upon by some now a-days as a mean Grace, unworthy of that near Relation we stand in to God, and that Freedom we may use towards him. But yet the Scripture doth lay so much Emphasis upon this, that it often sets forth the whole Work of Grace upon the Soul by fearing of God.

*Eighthly*, So also Love to God; Love to his People, Love to his Ways and Ordinances, and whatsoever bears the Stamp of his Holiness printed upon it. These, and many more, are such holy Impressions upon the Heart, that wheresoever they

they are truly to be found, they are most certain Evidences of a State of Salvation, and do always infallibly accompany it. Thus much for the first Enquiry.

The *Second* Enquiry is, If I find any such like Impressions upon my Heart, as these are, how shall I certainly know whether they are such as accompany Salvation. For there is abundance of counterfeit Grace abroad in the World; how then shall we discover what is true and genuine, from what is false and spurious? I answer,

*1<sup>st</sup>*: These Impressions are then Saving when they are Social; when they accompany one another, then do they likewise accompany Salvation. Many possibly will pretend to high Raptures, and some kind of Ecstatick Efforts of their Love to God: Many will boast much of their overflowing Joys, that their Souls are even distended with Comforts, and as full of Peace and Satisfaction as they can hold: Many may possibly be as confident of their Election, as if God had unclasp'd the Book of Life to them, turn'd them to the very Page and Line, and shewed them their Names written there from all Eternity. But if you would not be deluded, be sure you look how these Things are accompanied in  
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you. If ever your Love cast out an holy and filial Fear of God ; or your Confidence and Rejoycing supplant an holy Trembling before him ; if your Assurance scorn Poverty of Spirit, Meekness and an holy Mourning, as too mean and poor Associates ; if your Faith reject good Works, as too legal ; or your Works supersede Faith as unnecessary : Believe it, these are not Things that accompany Salvation in you ; but they are glaring Delusions of the Devil, who hath transformed himself into an Angel of Light, to impose false Hopes and deceitful Confidences upon you. When they are separated one from another, they are separated from Salvation.

*2dly.* They are then Saving when they are grown as it were natural to us, and make up a Frame of Spirit. That Man cannot safely conclude, that he is in a State of Salvation, who only now and then feels some violent Impulses, and passionate Motions towards that which is holy : For Men may hurry apace at first setting out, but then they quickly tire. But where Grace is true and genuine, there it is ordinarily digested and turned into our very Nature ; so that it will in some sort be as natural to us to serve and please God, as ever formerly it was  
too

too natural to us to sin against and provoke him. Indeed, the very best are subject to much Instability. Many Times it is with them as with the Sea, the highest Spring-Tides have the lowest Ebbs. Sometimes their Souls are like the Chariots of *Aminadab*, and anon they drive on heavily. But then they are sensible of their Abatements, Fluxes and Changes, and when they cannot find that Vivacity and Quickness of Spirit, that sometimes carried them forth in the Performance of Duties, they mourn under their present Dulness and Stupidity, and endeavour again to recover their former Excellency.

3dly, Where these Impressions are Saving, they are thriving and improving. *The Light of the Righteous is as the Dawn that waxeth brighter, and brighter unto the perfect Day.* Declining Christians have great Reason to suspect themselves; and if they quickly repent not, and recover themselves to their pristine State, and do their first Works with their first Zeal and Alacrity, they may sadly suspect that their Graces are not true; for *Growth* in Grace is the best Evidence of *Truth* of Grace. Indeed, in young Converts there may be a great deal of Heat and Fervour, which afterwards when they are more

establish'd Christians may abate; and they may think this a Decay in their Graces, when indeed it is not. For we must distinguish between a passionate Love of God, and a sedate, serene Love of God. Our Passions do in our first Conversation mingle more with our Graces, than afterwards. And then we are like a Torrent, very swift and rapid, but neither so deep nor strong. And as little Brooks and Torrents, though they run very fiercely, yet they stop and purl, and murmur at every small Pebble that lies in their Way; but great Rivers that seem to move with a slow and grave Pace, yet they bear down all Mounds and Dams, and whatsoever is in their Way to oppose their Passage: So is it here, grave and settled Christians may seem to move more slowly, without any Noise or Tumult, but they have a great Depth and Strength in them, and are able to bear down before them those Temptations and Oppositions, at which young Novices that are more fierce and noisy, are forced to stop, complain, and murmur. And we must estimate the Growth of our Graces, not only, nor indeed so much by the Violence of its Efforts, as its Prevalency and Effectualness, which proceeds from its being more radical and habitual in us.

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We have thus dispatch'd the two first general Heads: The *Third* remains to be yet considered; and that is, a regular Obedience in the whole Course of our Lives and Conversations. The Course of a Man's Life and Actions, is often in Scripture said to be his *Way*: And certainly such different Ends as Heaven and Hell, cannot but have as different Ways to lead to them. That there is a peculiar Way of Salvation the very Devil acknowledgeth, *Acts* 16. 17. where the *Pythoness*, or possessed Damself, cryed after *Paul*, and the Disciples, *These Men are the Servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the Way of Salvation.* Now here let us inquire,

*First*, What this Way is.

*Secondly*, How it may be known whether we walk in a Saving Way, or no.

*First*, What this Way of Salvation is. I answer, The Scripture hath given us many Characters and Descriptions of it. And as those who direct us in a Road which we have not travelled, tell us what Marks we shall find in it; so the Spirit of God hath set down in his Word many observable Marks that we shall

meet with in this *Via Regia*, the Highway that leads to the *New Jerusalem*, the City of the Living God. I shall only indigitate some of the most eminent and conspicuous.

1<sup>st</sup>. It is a Way of Holiness ; *Isaiab 35. 8. And an High-way shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness ; the Unclean shall not pass over it.* This Way, though it be full of Briars and Thorns, and those that pass through it must expect to encounter with many sharp Tribulations which will pierce them to the Quick, and draw Tears from their Eyes, and Blood from their Hearts ; yet it is a Way that hath no Mire, nor Filth in it, a clean Way wholly separated from the Defilements and Pollution of the World. Holiness is the proper Badge and Cognizance of all those that are in a State of Salvation. The Sentence is irreversibly pass'd, That *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* Sin, and the Curse, are inseparably link'd together ; so that he who leads a wicked, impure Life, must needs be a miserable, damned Wretch, though God should not put forth his Almighty Power to destroy him : His very Guilt would be his Hell ; and his Crime, his Punishment. As it would be inconsistent with  
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the Justice of God not to punish an incorrigible Sinner, so it is inconsistent in the Nature of the Thing, that such an one should be otherwise than miserable. That habitual Pravity, which is rooted and confirmed in him by many repeated Acts of Wickedness, renders him as necessarily and as fatally wretched, as the dreadful, but righteous Judgment of God. Nor is it a Thing possible in Nature that such an one should escape Hell, who carries so much, nay, the worst Part of it about him; Malice, Rancour, Enmity against God and Goodness; and expresseth in his Actions, the same Things that are done in Hell it self. So, on the contrary, an holy Life doth by a natural Consequence infer Blessedness; since it is not only inconsistent with the Righteousness and Veracity of God, but with the Nature of the Thing, that those Ways should not end in Salvation, that have so much of Salvation in them; that those should not lead to Heaven, that represent the choicest Excellencies and Perfections of Heaven, *viz.* Purity and Holiness, which indeed are more genuine and noble Parts of true Happiness, than all those additional Glories, which we expect besides. What is an holy Life, but a Life resembling the Life of God; when

we keep our selves from all gross and scandalous Sins, and indulge our selves in none ; but with the greatest Care and Conscience endeavour to regulate our Actions according to the Will of God, And certainly wheresoever this Purity is to be found, it is an infallible Companion of Salvation ; for God will never condemn his own Likeness ; his Justice will never punish his Holiness : For it is the Holiness of God that shines forth in the Conversation of a true Christian. And those who thus live the Life of God here on Earth, in their Graces shall have this Life perpetuated to them, and for ever live with God in Glory.

2dly, It is a strait and narrow Way ; *Matth. 7. 14. Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* It is strongly fenced in with the Authority of the Divine Law and Commands ; so that we cannot turn aside either to the Right Hand or to the Left, without committing a Trespas. Indeed, the Psalmist tells us, *Psal. 119. 96. That God's Commandments are exceeding broad.* How then is the Way of Salvation thus strait and narrow ? I answer, They are indeed exceeding broad, as to the Comprehensiveness of their Obligation ; but yet exceeding narrow in respect of  
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any Latitude of Allowance or Indulgence. They are exceeding broad in prescribing us our Duty, and so large in this, that they extend either directly, or by Consequence, to every Action of our Lives, yea, to every Cogitation of our Hearts. But they are exceeding narrow in giving us any Scope or Licence, any Permission or Liberty, to walk after our own Desires and Inclinations. Now, O Christians! what Kind of Life is that which you lead? Is it a strict and accurate Life, a Life shut up within the Compass of God's Laws? Dare you not grant yourselves those Allowances, which most Men in the World take to themselves? This is an Evidence that you indeed walk in that Way, which leads to the heavenly City, the Palace of the great King, when your Path is thus enclosed, and all that you do circumscribed, and bounded in by the Will and Word of God. Thus to keep our Eye upon our Rule, and to direct our Lives according to these Three Maxims:

*First,* That Things forbidden must of Necessity be eschewed.

*Secondly,* That Things commanded must of Necessity be performed.

*Thirdly,* That Things neither forbidden nor commanded, may yet have their Circumstances

circumstances so determined, that either we may be obliged to perform, or to eschew them. When, I say, we direct our Lives and Actions according to these Three Principles; doubtless we may conclude, that we are in the safe and strait Way to Heaven; when we are hedg'd in so close on every Side that we dare not, we cannot, take that Scope and Liberty to fly out and range, as too many do.

3dly. And because it is so strait and narrow a Way, therefore is it so unfrequented: *Few there are that find it, and fewer that walk in it.* Thou mayst almost know it by the few Tracts that are to be found in it. Indeed, a Christian's Life is a singular Life: Not that he is a Man of singular and unusual Notions; or of singular and affected Phrases and Expressions; or of singular Form and Mode of Religion. These Things have deluded many, and made them believe they are in the Way of Salvation, only because they chuse out By-Paths of their own to walk in: Whereas we know that Bats and Owls, and all the impure Birds of the Night, make their Solitary Flights in Deserts and Wilderesses. But the Singularity of a true Christian consists only in his exact and critical Obedience: He is the only Man that walks by Rule; when

when the rest of the World walk after their own Lusts : He differs from others, only because they differ from God : He conforms not to the Customs and Practices of Men, only in those Things wherein they contradict the Commands of God : He affects no Way, merely because it is solitary and untrodden ; but had rather, if it might be, go to Heaven, as *David* desired to go to the Sanctuary, with a Multitude, than single and alone. But yet because the Way of Salvation is so generally baulk'd, and few there are who can be perswaded to decline the broad Way that seems all strewed with Roses, and tempts with all the alluring Charms that may bewitch the Senses ; therefore, rather than perish with them, he is forced to forsake their Ways. He dares not be a Partaker of their Sins, lest he partake of their Plagues ; well knowing that if he lie in the same Wickedness with the rest of the World, he must for ever lie in the same Torments with them. Now, O Christians ! consider your Ways : Dost thou not see what an Universal Sway and Empire Vice hath gotten in the World ? Profaneness and Impiety have overflowed it, and covered the whole Face of it, as the Waters cover the Sea : So that there is scarce Room left  
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for Innocency to rest the Sole of her Foot in. Through Swearing, and Lying, and Killing, and Stealing, and committing Adultery, they break forth until Blood toucheth Blood. How many Swinish Drunkards are there, wallowing in their own Vomit? How many Goutish Sensualists are become brutish in their filthy Lusts? How many Earth-Worms are there crawling up and down in the Muck of the World, and loading themselves with thick Clay? Now, is your Way the Way of these ungodly Sinners? Can you drink with the Drunkard, and blaspheme with the Swearer, and lye and steal, and commit all Manner of Abominations and Filthiness, which you see Patterns and Examples of Abroad? Is this the Way of Salvation? Or while you accompany them in their Wickedness, can you think you have those Things in you that accompany Salvation? What, shall all the World then be saved, and no Distinction made between him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not; between him that sweareth, and him that feareth an Oath? Must Heaven then be laid open in common for all Intruders; and nothing more be required to have Right to that eternal Inheritance, but only confidently and pre-

presumptuously to hope for it? Are such wicked and impure Wretches likely to be of the Number of those few that shall enter in at the strait Gate? Of that little Flock for whom the Kingdom is prepared? Never deceive your selves; Salvation is not Attainable upon such Terms. God will maintain Heaven against you, as long as there is one Curse to discharge at you: And believe it, while you live as the most live, lewdly, profanely, carelessly, in the Practice of known Impieties, and the Prosecution of your Sensual Lusts; you must also perish as the Most do, eternally and irremedilessly.

*4thly.* The Way of Salvation, is a Way of universal and unreserved Obedience. Indeed, under the first Covenant of Works, our perfect legal Obedience was required as the Condition of the Continuance of that blessed and happy Estate; an Obedience absolutely perfect both in Parts and Degrees, fully extended to the utmost Latitude of God's Commands, and commensurate to the farthest Bounds of Duty; and wound up to the greatest Intenseness of Love and Delight in performing it. But we are fallen from all Possibility of living in this Consummate Obedience to the Will of God; and therefore now under  
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the Covenant of Grace, God requires from us Obedience, as a necessary Concomitant of Salvation, not legally, but evangelically perfect; which he is pleased then to account such, when we endeavour to the utmost to fulfil the whole Law, and to please him in all Things. If we unfeignedly desire to submit our Souls unto the Authority of God's Commands in all Things, without excepting or reserving to our selves any beloved or darling Lust, this is such a Course of Life as doth infallibly accompany Salvation; And tho' it be likewise accompanied with many inevitable Failings and Infirmities, yet these should only cause us to walk the more cautiously and mournfully, but not despondently. For such an universal Obedience as this, shall not fail of its Acceptation and Reward. *Psal. 119.6. Then shall I not be ashamed when I have Respect unto all thy Commandments.* The whole Law is contained in Two Things; the Duties which immediately concern God, and those which immediately concern Men: And that Obedience which is saving, will equally respect both. Now examine what is the Course of thy Life, What is thy Religion towards God? Is not the most that can be said of thee, Peaceableness, and good Neighbourhood?

Is it not the best Character can be given of thee, that thou art a quiet, friendly Man? Or if thou hast taken up a splendid Profession, and art frequent in the Duties of God's Worship, what is thy Demeanour towards Men? Art thou not turbulent, proud, heady, disobedient and untractable, unjust and oppressive, self-seeking, greedy and covetous? If thou art defective either in the one or in the other, and dost not to the utmost endeavour to keep a good Conscience *void of Offence both toward God, and toward Men*, let me tell thee, that all thou gloriest in, or trustest unto, is far from being that true and genuine Obedience which God requires from those whom he intends to save. If thou indulgest thy self in the Neglect of any one known Duty, or in the Commission of any one known Sin, nothing of all that thou hast done is such as doth accompany Salvation, or will ever bring thee unto it. *For he that thus offends in one Particular, though the Command be never so contrary to his Humour, Interest and Inclination, he is guilty of all,* James 2. 10, 11.

5thly. The Way of Salvation is a Way of Truth, *Psal. 119. 30. I have chosen the Way of Truth.* 1st. Of Truth in Opposition to Lying; *Psal 119. 29. Remove from me the Way of Lying.* For into the

New Jerusalem shall in no wise enter what so ever defileth or maketh a Lye, Revel. 21. 27. And without are Dogs, and Whoremongers, and Murtherers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a Lye, Revel. 22. 15.

2dly. Of Truth in Opposition to Error. The Apostle speaks very dreadfully concerning some whom God should give up to strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lye; that they might be damned who believed not the Truth, 2 Theff. 2. 11. 12. And,

3dly. Of Truth, in Opposition to Rottenness and Unsincerity. Then is your Way the Way of Truth, when you direct the main Course of all your Actions, so that the Glory of God may be advanced by them; when you do them, not to be seen or applauded of Men, but to be accepted of God, and would still persevere to do your Duty, tho' all the World should decry and condemn it. This is the Way of Truth, and of Salvation; whereas the Hypocrite is only so far good, as others will countenance him: He is only good in good Times, and though he accompanies them that are going towards Salvation, and his Duties may seem to keep Pace with theirs, and his Life to be as strict and exemplary as theirs; yet believe it, theirs shall be rewarded, when his shall be exploded, as being performed

in the Falshood and Diffimulation of his Heart, and done rather to Men than to God.

And thus I have shewn you what *this Way* and *this Life* is that doth accompany Salvation. It is a Way of Holiness, a strait and narrow Way, a singular and unfrequented Way, a Way of universal and unreserved Obedience, and a Way of Truth and Uprightness; which *Way*, if it be ours, will infallibly bring us to the Possession and Enjoyment of that Happiness and Glory that is laid up for us in Heaven.

The *Second* Inquiry was, How we may know whether we walk in this Saving Way or no. And to this, all that I have said before in describing this Way, may well be recollected as an Answer: And therefore I shall but add a Word or two more.

1<sup>st</sup>. It is an Evidence that this Way shall be saving to thee, when it is the Way of thy Choice: *Psal.* 119. 173. *I have chosen thy Precepts.* When you take not up your Course of Life only by Imitation, or Tradition, or upon Compulsion. For many there are who may walk in a  
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right Way, but not with a right Heart ; and may serve God, not for God's Sake, but because they see that such and such Duties have been customarily performed in their Families, and by their Ancestors Time out of Mind ; and so they keep up the same as a Relick of Antiquity, rather than a Piece of Devotion ; and bear the Badge of their Christianity, only as they do their Coat of Arms, because derived down unto them by their Ancestors.

2dly. When thou walkest uniformly in thy Obedience, then is thy Way and Course of Life such as *accompanies Salvation*. When thou art not pious only by Fits and Starts ; but keepest an even and constant Tenor and Temper.

3dly. When thou walkest forward in these Ways ; when thou goest from Strength to Strength, still gaining Ground towards Heaven, and art nearer to Salvation than when thou first believedst ; not only in Time and Years, but in Fitness and Disposedness for it : *Prov. 4. 18. The Path of the Just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day : While thou thus addest to thy Faith, Virtue ; to Virtue, Knowledge ; to Knowledge, Temperance ; to Temperance, Patience ; to Patience, Godliness ; to Godliness, Brotherly-kindness ;*

*to Brotherly-kindness, Charity :* One Grace unto another, and to all thy Graces farther Measures and Degrees of Perfection, thou mayst be well assured while these are in thee, and abound, increasing with all the Increases of God, that he will add Glory to Glory for thy Reward, and that an abundant Entrance shall be administered to you into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*To whom, with the Father, &c.*

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P R O V. III. 17.

*Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness,  
and all her Paths are Peace.*

**W**Hosoever would effectually plead the Cause of Piety and Religion, must not only recommend the Principles of it to the Understanding, as most true and certain; but the Practice of it to the Will and Affections, as desirable and delightful. For we find it verified by daily Experience, that it is much easier to conquer the Arguments of Atheism, than the Prejudices of Profaneness; and when we have master'd the Judgment, to yield to

the Reasonableness of the Christian Doctrine, and the infinite Advantages of its Rewards, yet still we must encounter with a strong Reserve of Prejudices and Mistakes, ghastly Spectres, and hideous Apparitions, that fright the Will from embracing a Religion that is represented so dismal and unpleasant. Pleasure is so sweet, and potent a Charm, that neither Reason, nor Rewards, can prevail against the Insinuations of it. And therefore nothing would tend more to the Advancement of true Godliness, than if we could clearly demonstrate, that it hath not only the Advantage above Sin and Vice in respect of future and eternal Joys, but in respect of present Pleasure and Satisfaction; and thereby convert Temptation into Motive, the Snare of the Devil into a Cord of Love, and turn the most destructive Engine of Hell against its own Gates. For whilst Mens Minds are possess'd with a false Opinion, that the Ways of Virtue are all strewed with Thorns and Galthrops, that Piety is a sowre ill-natured, fetrical Thing, a sullen Matron that entertains her Followers only upon Sighs and Tears, sad Reflexions, and doleful Regrets: That to obtain the Joys of the next Life, we must bid an everlasting Adieu to the Contents of this, and never  
more

more expect a chearful Hour, a clear Day, or a bright Thought to shine upon us; it will be utterly in vain to bring them Tidings of the heavenly *Canaan*, that *Land which flows with Milk and Honey*; for the Dread of these *Anakims*, and fenced Cities, will make them murmur against their Guide, and resolve rather to die in *Egypt*.

I thought therefore, that the best Service I could do for Religion, would be to pluck off this deformed Visor, and to represent true Piety and Holiness in its genuine Beauty and Sweetness; and to convince the voluptuous World, that they are wofully mistaken in their Estimate and Pursuit of Pleasure; that they seek the Living among the Dead, that they neglect the Fountain of living Waters, and seek for Refreshment at those Cisterns that hold no other but the tainted Waters of *Marah* and *Meribah*, Bitterness and Strife. To this End, I have chosen these Words of the wise Man, *Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*.

That Relative Particle, *Her Ways*, leads us back to the 13th Verse, *Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Man that getteth Understanding*: From whence he proceeds to demonstrate the Happiness of this Man in the following Verses, by the Ex-

cellency of Wisdom, *Verses 14, 15. She is more precious than Rubies; and all the Things thou canst desire, are not to be compared to her: Then by the Rewards of it in three of the choicest Blessings humane Nature doth most covet, Long Life, Riches, and Honour: Length of Days is in her Right Hand, and in her Left Hand Riches and Honour. And lastly, By the Pleasantness of it in the Words of my Text, Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness: So that if Life, if Riches, if Honour, if Pleasure, if the Confluence of all Good can make a Man happy, he might well pronounce, Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom.*

Well, but what is this Wisdom that is thus profitable, thus pleasant? Is it a subtle Management of our own Concerns, or a politick Negotiating the mighty Affairs of States and Kingdoms? Alas! the Cares, Perplexities, and Disquiets that attend these Things, do evidently prove, that they are not *Ways of Pleasantness*; but sometimes unsafe, always intricate and intangled. In a Word therefore, that Wisdom whose *Ways are Pleasantness and Peace*, is nothing else but true Religion, solid Piety and Holiness; *The Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from Evil, that is Understanding, Job 28. 28.* And therefore we find, that throughout this

this whole Book of the *Proverbs*, wherein *Solomon* doth so often chastise the Fool, he means no other Person but the wicked Man. Wisdom and Folly are synonymous Terms with Holiness and Impiety; and do very well express them both in their Causes, and their Consequents: For as Folly is the Cause of Sin, and the Consequents of Sinning do very evidently prove them Fools who commit it; so Wisdom is the Origine of Piety, and the Consequents of Piety do clearly prove them wise who follow it. So then you see that these Ways of Wisdom, which are recommended to us as pleasant, are the Fear of God, Holiness, and true Piety.

I know that this will seem a grievous Paradox to as many as have not seen the Beauty, nor tasted the Sweetness of an holy Life; but have degraded themselves to a brutish State, and have nothing left to relish Pleasures but their Senses: And yet even to such, (if their Sensuality hath not quite extinguish'd their Reason, and they have but Understanding enough to name them Men) I doubt not to prove, that the Pleasures of an holy Life are far more considerable than the Pleasures of Sin, and that the Rigours and Severities  
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of it are less grievous, than the Trouble and Uneasiness of being wicked.

To this End I must first premise, that all Pleasure ariseth from an attempted Suitableness and Harmony that there is between the Faculty, and the Object. For where there is any Disagreement either in Contrariety, or Excess, the Result is not Pleasure, but Torment. Light, when it is just proportioned to the Strength of the Eye, is the Pleasure and Beauty of the whole Creation : *It is a pleasant Thing, saith Solomon, to behold the Light.* And Sounds, when they are modelled to the Capacity of the Ear, cause a sweet Melody and Consent. And so it is likewise with all other Objects ; when they are adapted to the Powers which are to receive them, Pleasure and Sweetness is the Offspring. Now Man is *ὄργανον δίχορον*, a *two-stringed Instrument* ; his Soul is one, and his Body the other. And as he receives smooth Touches upon either, according to the various Objects that are fitted to them, so springs up Suavity and Delight. Now here,

*First*, The Pleasures that Religion brings, are not such as do immediately affect the Body, the drossy and earthy Part of Man.

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It never spread the Glutton's Table, nor fill'd the Drunkard's Cup, nor was Taster to either. These Offices are too mean, and sordid for it. And if thou canst relish no other Delights, go herd thy self among Beasts. The Dog, and the Swine are fit Company, as well as Comparisons, for thee ; and thou wert made a Man, a rational and intellectual Creature, to no Purpose, unless to be eternally punish'd ; since the Soul of a Brute can as well tast the Pleasures of Sense, as thy immortal One.

But yet, if any think these such considerable Delights, that they cannot easily forego them ; let me add,

*Secondly*, That Religion and Piety, as it doth allow, so it adds a Sweetness and Relish to the lawful Comforts of this present Life, which Debauchery and Intemperance corrupts and vitiates. Let me here boldly appeal to your Experience, whether Sobriety and Temperance be not more true Pleasure (I had almost said Voluptuousness) than Excess and Riot. And I dare say, that those who come to their natural Refreshments, and have Moderation both for their Carver, and their Skinker, find a much better Guest in their Entertainment, than those whose continued

nued Luxury, by seeking to please, only cloyes and stupifies their Senses.

Besides, a constant Fear of God, and a conscientious Obedience unto him, give such a Seasoning to all our earthly Enjoyments, that they are all received by us as Expressions of his Love, and Fatherly Care towards us; which is such a Pleasure, that Excess and Epicurism could never afford. A good Conscience is a continual Feast; and that poor Christian who hath his dry Morfel made favoury with the hidden Manna, fares more deliciously every Day than *Dives* himself; whose Guilt not only poisons his Dainties to his Soul, but sowres them to his Palate. God is the great Housholder of the World: We are all entertained as Guests at his Table, and his Bounty provides for us: But as the wise Man saith, *Prov. 15. 17. Better is a Dinner of Herbs where Love is, than a stalled Ox, and Hatred therewith;* so truly where the Love of God is enjoyed, the slenderest Provision is far more sweet and comfortable, than the greatest Variety of Delicates, where the Hatred and Wrath of God mingles Gall and Wormwood with them. What Pleasure can there be in any Estate, where a Man is not well pleased with himself? Where Guilt gnaws, and Fears boad, and Conscience brawls,

as certainly they must do, more or less, in every wicked Man? What more Pleasure can he take in his Possessions, than a wretched Malefactor can in that Prison-Provision which is allowed him to maintain his Life, till he be dragg'd forth to Execution?

But though Godliness doth thus sweeten our outward State and Condition, and be profitable for this present Life; yet,

*Thirdly*, The chiefest Joys that Religion and Piety give us, are internal and mental, and those are incomparably beyond the Delights of Sense. Even natural Speculations have entertained inquisitive Minds with such Raptures, that some have been, as it were, wholly abstracted from the Body, and have neither regarded Pain, nor Pleasure of Sense, whilst they have been employed about them. But certainly the Joys of Religion much needs be much more refined and spiritual, than those which proceed only from a Problem, or Demonstration of Science.

Now this pure and spiritual Pleasure, ariseth in the Mind from three Things:

*First*, The Conformity of pious Actions to the Rules and Principles of right Reason.

*Secondly*,

*Secondly*, The peaceable Reflections of a Man's own Conscience upon them.

*Thirdly*, The Hope and Expectation of an eternal Reward.

*First*, There is a Congruity and Suitableness in holy and religious Actions, to the Rules and Principles of right Reason. There are Three general Principles of natural Religion imprinted in the Mind of every Man, which are the Dictates of pure and untainted Reason.

The *First* is, That God is to be loved and feared above all; and the Revelations of his Will to be credited and obeyed.

The *Second* is, That we ought to govern our selves with all Temperance and Sobriety, in the Use of the Comforts of this Life.

The *Last* is, That we ought to demean our selves towards others, with the exactest Justice and Equity; the true Measure of which is, *Whatsoever you would that Men should do unto you, do ye likewise unto them.* This indeed is the Sum of all Religion, *To live*, as the Apostle declares it, *soberly, righteously, and godly*: *Soberly*, in respect of our selves; *righteously*, towards others; and *godly*, in the Performance of those Duties which immediately concern the Divine

**Worship.** And these are the general and primary Dictates of right Reason. Now as it is impossible, but that where a suitable Object strikes and affects the Sense, there must arise sensual and corporal Delight and Pleasure; so is it alike impossible, but that where our Actions do correspond with these Principles of Reason, there must arise an intellectual Joy and Complacency. No Man ever took true Joy and Delight in doing that which is unnatural: And truly every Sin is in a Sense unnatural, as it contradicts those Principles of natural Light and Understanding which God hath so deeply implanted in us, that they can never be totally rooted out. And therefore there must needs be Jarring and Discord in the Mind of a wicked Man, whose Actions are contrary to those first Principles of his Reason, which he always opposeth, but can never overcome. And this of Necessity must make his Life very uneasy, and uncomfortable: Whereas an holy Man, who squares his Actions according to his Principles, finds such a just Proportion between them, that there is no Dissonance, no Contest; but the sweet Touches of them mutually, one upon the other, strikes a perpetual Harmony in his Soul;

Soul ; and the Result of this, must needs be Peace and Pleasure.

*Secondly*, Unspeakable Pleasure must needs spring up in the Soul, from the comfortable Reflections of our own Consciences upon holy and religious Actions. Be the Difficulty of performing them never so great, yet this Joy that diffuseth it self in the Heart after we have broken thro' all the Reluctancies and Oppositions that our Corruptions, our Sloth, or our worldly Advantages make against them, doth more than compensate the Pains and Trouble we have undergone. There will indeed, in this our imperfect State, be Strivings and Lustings of the Flesh against the Spirit, even in the best of Men: But yet certainly the Delight which the Soul enjoys after it hath conquered its sinful Inclinations, is infinitely beyond all Comparison above the Delight it could have reaped by consenting to them. What a calm and sweet Repose is upon the Face of the Soul, after it hath perform'd a Duty, and can reflect upon it as perform'd sincerely ; after it hath wrestled with a Temptation, and overcome it ? How sweetly then doth he enjoy himself ! How sweetly doth he enjoy his God ! His Prospect into Heaven is clear,  
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and he can discern a pleased God, a loving Father accepting his Service, and preparing his Reward. Let others please themselves in the bitter Sweets of Sin; yet certainly the least Relish of such pure, such unexpressible Joy, is infinitely to be preferr'd before all the washy Pleasures of Vice and Luxury, though Conscience and Condemnation were abstracted from them. Here believe it is true Joy; it is not clamorous nor noisy, but a calm sedate Joy, that ravisheth the Heart with a secret, but powerful Delight. The Pleasures of Sin are but for a Moment, like the empty Crackling of Thorns under a Pot, that make a short-liv'd Blaze, and presently expire in Smoke. But the Pleasures of Holiness are permanent and abiding, and entertain the Soul with a most delightful Remembrance, whensoever it shall look back, and review its Actions. This is a Pleasure that never cloyes, never tires us: Neither can the frequent Repetition, nor the long Continuance of it, weary us. Whereas all earthly Pleasures grow either dull, or distastful, if they are not often changed. But a pious Soul need not invent Variety of Diversions, to entertain himself comfortably. Let him but look within Doors, retire into his own Breast, and he shall there find

abundant Joys, which though they are still the same, are ever fresh. But now this Self-reflexion, which is so sweet and comfortable to a true Christian, is a Rack and Torture to wicked and dissolute Wretches. They carry an hated Monitor about them in their own Breast, a Witness and a Reprover of all their Lewdness; and when they seek for Pleasure in Sinning, it is their Trouble and Vexation that they cannot sin more quietly. There is a busy Conscience of their own, which dogs them at the Heels wherever they go, scourgeth them with Scorpions, and threatens them with the Vengeance of everlasting Fire. And this imbitters their Delights; and though it cannot withhold them from Sinning, yet makes their very Sins their Punishment and Torment. So that if it were only upon the Account of the Reflexions of Conscience, an holy and pious Life is infinitely more pleasant, than a lewd and wicked one.

*Thirdly*, The Hope and Expectation of the eternal Reward of our Obedience, makes an holy Life to be pleasant and joyful. The Psalmist tells us, that *in the keeping of God's Commandments there is great Reward*, Psal. 119. 11. Our very Work is  
 Reward

Reward for it self; and if God should never give us other, yet we should be abundantly recompensed in the inward Peace and Satisfaction of our Consciences, which can no other way be enjoyed: Yet our gracious God both gives us such Work as is Reward for it self, and promiseth us an infinite Reward for doing of that Work. Were there really as many Difficulties in Religion as our Sloth is apt to imagine, yet methinks when such an excessive Recompence as that of Eternal Life and Glory is propounded to us, this should remove all Obstacles, facilitate all Enterprizes, and make the utmost Pains and Labour to attain it, pleasant and delightful. We see with what Pleasure Men strive and contend for a Prize. The poor pitiful Reward of a mouthful of Praise, or the Gain of some Honourary Trifle, makes them account that but a Sport and Recreation, which else were a Toil, and difficult Labour. And what, shall we, who are running a Race in the Ways of true Wisdom, and see the Crown of Glory and Immortality hung up at the Goal, faint and shrink at it as an uneasy and laborious Task to intend our Nerves, and press still on towards the Mark? Certainly there can be no greater Pleasure

in the World than to strive in this Race, to gain Ground towards Heaven, to make, and to observe our Progress in our Holy Course, to have the Crown still in our Eye, 'till we come at last to reach it with our Hand. And he that cannot account this pleasant, hath not a Soul capable of true Delight; nor a Spirit brave and gallant enough to be a Christian.

Thus I have demonstrated to you, that the Pious is the only pleasant Life, both from the Suitableness of it to the Principles of our Reason, the comfortable Reflections of our Consciences, and the Hopes of Eternal Life. Let me add one Demonstration more.

*Fourthly*, That must needs be most pleasant which calms all our Perturbations and Disturbances, and fits us to enjoy both God and our selves in a sedate Composure; but this is the Effect only of Religion and true Piety. Our Disquiets proceed chiefly from the Hurries of our mutinous Passions: Grief, Anger, Fear, and the rest, do oftentimes break forth upon the Soul, like so many violent Winds upon the Sea, and ruffle it into a Tempest, so that our Reason is in Danger to be toss'd and shipwreck'd. Now it is only the powerful Command of Religion that  
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can say unto these Winds, *Peace, be still.* Certainly that Man can neither enjoy Peace, nor Pleasure, where these unruly Passions tyrannize. What a troublesome vexatious Life doth he lead, that is a Slave either to Envy, or Fear, or Wrath? When he shall be continually fretting himself at another's Prosperity, raging and studying Revenge for every petty Injury, grieving and desponding under every cross Providence; frightened beyond the Succours of his Reason at every Shadow, and suspected Danger? Certainly, if there can be any Pleasure in such a Man's Soul, there may be Pleasure and Peace where Fury dwells. But now Religion, and the Fear of God, settles and composeth all these Perturbations, and by its Majesty and Authority binds them all to the Peace, that we shall not dare immoderately to grieve or fear, not at all to Envy, or meditate Revenge. And although the curbing of our Passions seems so difficult a Matter, and is one of those Things which makes Religion uneasy, and unpleasant to those who are rap'd away with them; yet without Doubt he that checks and restrains the Exorbitancies of his Passions lives a much more pleasant and easy Life, than he who lets them fly out into all Extremities. I leave it to you

to judge, whether it be not more for the Peace and Comfort of a Man's Life to forgive Wrongs, than to perpetuate them by Revenge? Besides the intolerable Torment of a malicious Spirit. Is it not far better to rejoice at thy Neighbour's Prosperity, than to vex and fret at it? For by the one, thou enjoyest a Share of his Blessings; but by the other, thou dost not enjoy thine own. And to resign up thy self to the Will of God with Patience and Contentedness, suppressing thy immoderate Grief for any Affliction brought upon thee, is certainly much more for the Comfort of thy Life, than to languish in Sorrow, and unfruitfully consume thy self for what was not at thy Dispose: So that, I say, Religion is the best Means to quiet all the Tumults of your Passions to make your Minds serene and calm, than which there is scarce a greater Pleasure imaginable.

Well then, to conclude at present: See here the woful Mistake of the World in Point of Pleasure. They all pretend to it; but they seek it in those Ways that are the Causes of all their Disquiet and Trouble. True Pleasure consists not in Noise and Laughter; that's *the Mirth of Fools*; And it is a Sign that all is not quiet

quiet within, when they are so loud and clamorous to drown it. No; true Pleasure consists in clear Thoughts, sedate Affections, sweet Reflexions, a Mind even and stay'd, true to its God, and true to it self. There is indeed a little sordid brutish Pleasure in Sin; but it vanishes like smoke, and if we be not utterly hardned, like Smoke, it will leave us nothing but Tears in our Eyes. Or if customary sinning hath made us unsensible, it is but like giving Drink to an Hydro-pick Person, which though it please his Palate for the present, afterwards sadly increaseth and intrageth his Thirst. Compare the Pleasures that a true pious Christian enjoys, with the muddy Delights of a Swinish Sensualist, who gratifies all his carnal Desires, and you will find so vast a Difference between them, that the very Argument of Pleasure, which usually lies as a main Prejudice against an holy Life, if it be rightly stated, will prove the most advantageous Motive to induce us to embrace it. For consider, whilst thou gratifiest all thy Propensions and Desires, what exquisite Pleasure canst thou find, but such as are common to the very Beasts as well as thee? Yea, and thou shewest thy self more Irrational than the Brute Creatures; for they keep within

the Compass of their Nature, but thou transgressedst the Laws of thine: And either Shame or Conscience will give thee many a Secret Twitch and Gird, and whisper sad Things to thee, which will in Spight of thee make thy Heart heavy, when thy Face perhaps runs over with a Counterfeit Laughter. It is impossible, if thou hast any Remainers of a Man left within thee, to debauch away the natural Impressions of a Deity, of Death, Judgment, and future Punishments. These cold and shivering Thoughts will come in, and be like Water cast upon all thy Delights, when they flame highest; and in the midst of thy Cups and Jollity, and frolick Extravagancies, be like an Hand, not upon *the Wall*, but in thine *own Conscience*, writing bitter Things against thee. Well, when thou hast run through all the Shapes of Voluptuousness, what remains but only a Damp and Dulness upon thy Spirits, a Sting and Anguish in thy Soul, a grating Remembrance of them, and dire Presages of Eternal Vengeance? Dost thou not, when the Phrenzy is over, and the Rage of thy Lusts somewhat abated, dost thou not a Thousand Times call thy self Beast and Fool for them? Hast thou never seen a Drunkard the next Morning spewing

spewing out his Shame, and his Repentance together? Hast thou never observed the Glutton to sigh and groan under the Load of his crude Surfeits, and endeavour to disburden his Conscience, as well as his Stomach? These who do not eat and drink that they may live, but live only that they may eat and drink, will then acknowledge, that Temperance and Sobriety are the only true Voluptuousness; and whilst their Breath is still unfavoury with their undigested Fumes, belch out a Prayer to God to pardon them. And are these the bewitching Pleasures of Sin? For these, will any be perswaded to provoke his God, stain and wound his own Conscience, dishonour his Body, and ruin his Soul? Certainly, there is nothing wherein the Sorcery of Sin doth more plainly appear, than in perswading Men that there is any Pleasure in being wicked; whereas their own Experience can abundantly attest, that it is a very Hell above Ground, and a Damnation beforehand. Are these the Men that are frightened from Religion, because of the Irksomness and Difficulty of its Duties, because it will expose them to Sadness and Melancholy? Whereas I dare avow to them, that the most melancholy and gloomy Day that a true Christian spends

spends in the most rigorous Parts of his Religion, with Sighs breaking from his Heart, and Tears running down his Cheeks, hath a Thousand Times more true Pleasure, and more true Joy in it, than all the Days of Mirth, and Laughter, and Excess, and Riot of voluptuous Sinners.

But here common Observation and Experience will be cited, to disprove all these Speculations concerning the Pleasure of Religion. For what will the Voluptuary say! Can we believe that there is any such exquisite Pleasure in an holy Life, when we see those who are its Votaries so pensive and melancholy, as if Rust and Soot were the only Ingredients of their Complexion? Their Looks are sower and dejected, their Discourses interrupted with Sighs; still they are lamenting themselves, and the Iniquities or Calamities of the Times, and are fit for no other Converse but with Tombs or Ghosts; Whereas the rest of the World are gay and frolick; Mirth and Laughter are the Employment of their Lives; not a Thought lies heavy on their Hearts, nor a Day on their Hands. And therefore certainly, whatever Advantages a pious Life may have for the future, it cannot have that of Pleasure for the present.

**This**

This is a common Prejudice ; and it is but a Prejudice. For though I must confess, that the morose Temper of too many Christians hath brought this Scandal upon Religion, who by an affected and whining Sadness, and a querulous Humour, occasion the Ways of God to be evil spoken of, and affright others from them ; yet if we nearly examine the Matter, we shall find that (abating the Complexional Infelicity of some) it is altogether as fallacious to judge of Mens Joys by their outward Appearances, as of their Thoughts and Intentions.

And therefore, *First*, I grant that the Joys of Religion are not loud and tumultuous, but grave, solid, and serious. It is a true Saying, *Res severa est verum gaudium* ; True Joy is a severe Thing. 'Tis not so light and frothy as to float upon the Superficies of the Face : It lies deep and recondite in the Centre of the Soul, and fills it with calm Thoughts, sedate Affections, an uniform Peace and Tranquility, and diffuseth such a Sweetness through all the Powers of it, that a true Christian who loves his God, loves likewise himself, and the Entertainment that he finds at Home in his own Bosom. And this ravishing Joy so wholly possesseth him, that if he seem less affected with

with the ludicrous Follies of this World, it is but as grave and wise Men are, not much pleased with the Play-Games of Children, because they have nobler and more generous Delights of their own. The Mirth and Jollity of slight Persons is too trivial, and their Laughter it self too ridiculous to recreate him. The soft and peaceful Whispers of his dear Conscience are a Thousand Times more diverting to him, than all the Wit and Merriment of those pleasant Companions, whose whole Life is but a Jest and a Tale. And if at any Time he seem reserv'd and retir'd in their Company, it is that he may listen to the more chearful Discourses of his own Heart; or that he is really concern'd that the Noise and Din about him hath disturb'd that secret Communication; Or, *lastly*, that he is cautious, lest he should be betrayed to any thing that might grieve a better Friend, than any of them. And now can you really think, that such a Person is melancholy and displeas'd, who carries himself thus, only lest he should be so? The Mirth of the sensual and debauch'd World would violate all his Delights: 'Twould be but like a dirty Torrent tumbling into a clear River, troubling its pure Streams, and leaving nothing but Defilement, Mud,  
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and Disturbance behind it. And shall we think that Man's Life sad and disconsolate, because he seems less merry and jovial than others; whereas in Truth he is so wholly addicted to Pleasure, so much a Servant to his own Content, that he had much rather displease all the World than himself, and studies nothing more, than how he may keep his Joys free from Mixture and Abatement.

But, *Secondly*, If at any Time he be really sad and dejected, the Cause of this is not to be imputed to Religion and Piety, but to the Want of it; either in himself or others. The Irreligion and Impieties of the Age in which he lives, often draw Tears from his Eyes, and Sighs from his Heart: And when the Flood-gates of Wickedness are opened, and a Deluge of Sin and Profaneness overspreads the Face of the whole Earth, can you think it an unreasonable Melancholy, that he should wish with the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that *his Head were Waters, and his Eyes Fountains of Tears, that he might weep Day and Night for the Stain of his People*, for so many Thousands that fall, and are slain by their Vices and Debaucheries? Were but the World more holy, there would not be so great Occasion for Grief and Sadness as there is; neither

neither would the Godly lament so mournfully, nor all smart so sorely as they do: But whilst wicked Men are merrily sporting themselves to Death, and plucking Vengeance upon their own Heads, his Charity and Compassion move him to mourn for those who do not, who will not mourn for themselves, and to deprecate those Judgments which they are defying. And therefore for them to object Melancholy and Pensiveness, to abuse their Gravity, and turn their Seriousness into Ridicule, is both disingenuous and ingrateful. Disingenuous it is to upbraid them with that Sorrow and Sadness, of which they themselves are the Cause. And it is ingrateful to upbraid them with it, since it many Times averts those Plagues and Judgments, which else would soon turn their Rautes and Frolicks into Roarings and Howlings. But as they have too much Cause to mourn for the Sins of the Times and Places in which they live, so likewise for the Sins of which they themselves are guilty. They often weep over the Review of their own Faults and Follies, and with the holy Apostle cry out, *O wretched Men that we are! who shall deliver us from this Body of Death?* And indeed it is but fit and just, that whilst the Heart is a Fountain of Sin, the Eyes

Eyes should be *Fountains of Tears*. But what, shall we therefore be so unreasonable as to charge their Holiness with their Grief and Sorrow, whereas were they not in part unholy, they would have no Cause for it? It is not their walking in the Ways of Wisdom, but their deviating from them, that makes their Lives unpleasant: It is their wanton straying into the World's Common, and seeking the foreign Delights of Sin, that disturbs their Peace, fills their Hearts with Heaviness, their Eyes with Tears, and their Face with Shame. Whereas had they kept themselves within the Limits of their Duty, and the Boundaries that God had prescribed them, their Peace had been as secure as their Innocence. Did you ever hear any of them complain that they had been too holy and strict, too circumspect and consciencious? This is the Complaint of the World against them, but it was never theirs: Whereas there are Thousands and Ten Thousands who sadly lament their former Ways of Sin and Wickedness, (for Sorrow and Shame are the necessary Consequences of Guilt) either here on Earth to True Repentance, or else in Hell to Everlasting Despair. So that it is not Holiness and Piety, but the Want and Defects of it,

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which are the Cause of all that Sadness which so much discourageth the World, and makes them wrongfully accuse Religion for it.

But, *Thirdly*, Even the Tears and Sorrows of a true pious Christian have a more solid Joy in them than all the Noise and extravagant Jollity of wicked Men. There is a Sweetness even in Mourning when it is filial and ingenuous; Tears are a Solace, and Grief it self an Entertainment. Sometimes the very Delicacy of a Man's Spirit will make him dissolve into Weeping; and the Love of God, as an heavenly Flame inkindled in the Heart, will distil Tears through his Eyes. The Tenderness of his Affection will engage him to a sweet Mourning over his Faults and Miscarriages. And whilst the Spirit of God *moves* upon the Face of these Waters; the next Thing to be created in that Soul, is Light, Peace, and Joy. Those who have experienc'd it can tell you, that the most transporting Consolation of the Holy Ghost, are then given in when they are most retired and pensive. They can rejoice that they are sad, because such a Kind and Child-like Sorrow is to them a most certain Evidence of the Favour of God, and the Remission of those Sins for which they

mourn. Whereas on the contrary, *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 14. 13. Even in Laughter the Heart is sorrowful, and the End of that Mirth is Heaviness.* Such indeed is the Mirth of all wicked Men. Let them dissemble it never so artificially, yet they do but with the *Spartan Boy* laugh and smile, while the Fox which he had stolen, and kept conceal'd under his Coat, was all the while tearing out his Bowels: So these put on a counterfeit Laughter, when yet all the while Guilt and Fear, Terrors and Anguish, are corroding and gnawing their very Bowels.

So that hence you see, the Sadness and Mournfulness of the true pious Christians, is but a conceived Prejudice, no real Objection against the Ways of Religion and Holiness.

But what, you will say, Is there then nothing unpleasant, nothing grievous and irksome in them? Can it be possible that this strait and narrow Way should have no Thorns, no Rubs in it; nothing that is rigorous, severe, and uneasy? What then shall we think of Mortification, and Self-Denial; of plucking out our Right Eyes, and cutting off our Right Hands; a patient induring of Injuries, and requiting them with Kindnesses; forgiving our most malicious Enemies, and praying

for them; a Willingness to sacrifice our dearest Enjoyments, yea, our Lives themselves, for the Name of Christ, and the Testimony of a good Conscience? Are not these main and essential Parts of our Religion? And is there nothing in them that is difficult to be done, and grievous to be born? If not; why then are we so often commanded to strive, to watch, to fight, to wrestle, to run, to endure and hold out unto the last? All which Expressions do certainly import, that there is much Pains and Hardship to be undergone in a Christian Life; especially also since it is represented as such a difficult and admirable Thing to persevere in it unto the End. What Pleasure can there be in crossing a Man's own Inclinations and Appetites? In the Self-cruelty of cutting off what is as dear to us as the Limbs of our Body? What Pleasure in losing all for the sake of our Religion? In rotting in a Prison, or frying at a Stake? What Pleasure in bearing Affronts and Contumelies, without either Reply, or Revenge? Certainly, he that can find out Pleasure in these Things, is fit to advance what Paradoxes he pleaseth to the World, but will be much puzzled to find either Reasons to maintain them, or Persons to believe them.

To this I answer, *First*, That there are many Things in Religion, which are indeed difficult and laborious, but this doth not presently argue them to be unpleasant and grievous. Some of the greatest Pleasures of this Life are so; and that is scarce held a Pleasure which is not heightned and commended by Labour. The Pleasantness of Religion and Piety consists not in supine Sloth and Negligence. There must be earnest Endeavours, Strivings and Strugglings to the uttermost. To a generous Mind, as a Christian's is, nothing can be more pleasant than Victory and Conquest, which cannot be atchieved without contending for it. The whole Life of a Christian is a continual Warfare. Now that which makes the Name of War so dreadful, is only the Uncertainty of Success. Who is there so cowardly and faint-hearted, that were he sure of Victory and Triumph would be afraid of the Encounter? Why, Victory it self is listed under a Christians Command. Other Conquerors have found it very fickle and unconstant. When they have levied Armies, and shaken Nations, yet they could never make Success take Pay under them. But herein a Christian is more than a Conqueror, because he is alway sure of Conquest, if

himself will. And whensoever we go forth to the Combat, if we be not extremely base and perfidious to our own Souls, we may be sure to return adorned with Wreaths, and loaden with Spoils. The Mortification of our Lusts is confessedly the most uneasy, as it is the most necessary part of our Religion: And yet what are they but Shadows cast upon your Fancies, flitting, airy, and empty Nothings? We are to conflict with our own Desires, our own Passions, our own Wills; and what more is required to a Conquest over these, besides a firm and undaunted Resolution. That Man shall certainly be Master of himself, that will but dare to be so. What though it may cost Pains, and Striving; though it may make the Heart pant, and the Soul run down with Sweat: Yet to see your Enemies fall by Heaps before your Sword, to tread upon the Slain, and to dip your Foot in their Blood; this Certainty of Conquest will make the Combat pleasant, though it be laborious. And he who cannot think this an incomparable Pleasure, hath not Spirit enough to be a Christian.

*Secondly*, Since all Pleasure ariseth from the Suitableness of Objects and Actions to our Natures, we must consider that  
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there is a twofold Nature in every Christian, his Corrupt, and his Divine Nature : He is not all of a Piece, but hath two contrary Parties struggling within him. There is the Flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh ; and what is pleasing to the one, is a Vexation and Torment to the other. Now all those rigorous Duties of Religion that have been objected, are only so to thy corrupt and sinful Inclinations ; but they are a Joy and Pleasure to thy renewed and sanctified Nature. Thou must therefore of Necessity grieve and displease one Part of thy self ; and why then should it not be that which is thy vile and fordid Part ? Give thy Noble and Heaven-born Self the Pleasure and Divertisement of thwarting and over-ruling thy Sensual Desires : Yea, this indeed, if thou art a Christian, is thy true and proper self ; the other is but thy Slave and Vassal. Grace is that which gives a Christian his Individuation and Denomination ; and the New and Divine Nature, of which thou partakest, ought to be the commanding Principle within thee, as being a Participation of God, and therefore cannot without the highest practical Blasphemy be subjected to thy

Lusts and Corruptions, which are the Portion of the Devil. And therefore the Apostle distinguisheth between his unrenewed Part, and himself, *Rom. 7. 17. It is no more I, but Sin that dwelleth in me.* So that those which are accounted the greatest Rigours and Severities of Religion; and which fright so many from embracing it, are really the Pleasures and Entertainments of a pious Soul: Yea, I will be bold to say, that a true Christian more indulgeth himself by Mortification, more gratifieth himself by denying himself, enjoys more true Pleasure and Satisfaction in those Things which are look'd upon as the Austerities of an holy Life, than all the Voluptuaries of the World can, in abandoning themselves over to all the profuse Delights of a sinful and wicked Life. For even where there is no true Grace to make a conquering Resistance, yet there is a natural Conscience to make a murmuring and a troublesome one. All the Disturbance that a true Christian finds, is only in the Conflict; and when that is ended, he sits down, and enjoys the blessed Fruits of his Victory in Peace and Satisfaction. But in wicked Men, the Pleasure of Sinning makes many sowre Returns upon them; and there are  
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not only some Stings mingled with their Honey whilst it is yet in their Mouths, but afterwards it turns all to Sting in their Consciences, and Gall and Wormwood in their Bowels. Now let me leave it to you to judge; which enjoyeth a more pleasant and quiet Life, either they that cross their Corruptions, and afterwards rejoice that they have done it; or they that cross their Consciences, and are afterwards vex'd and tormented for it? The one indeed conflicts with his Lusts, buffets his Slaves when they rebel against him, but afterwards finds that Peace and Joy which more than compensates his Labour: The other conflicts with his Light, and after he hath offered horrid Violence to his natural Sentiments, is tormented with such Pangs and Horrors, that he becomes a Burden and Executioner to himself. And this puts him upon far greater Abominations, that he may quite extinguish that glowing Spark within him; that he may murder that troublesome Monitor, his own Conscience, and, if it be possible, may attain to the highest Perfection both of his Pleasure, and Misery, even to sin quietly.

## The Beauty

*Thirdly*, Consider that the Severities of Religion, as Mortification, Self-Denial, &c. are far more difficult and distastful at our first Entrance upon an holy Life, than they will be when we are confirmed, and habituated in it. Indeed, those who are early pious, whose Virtue grows up and increaseth with them from their tender Years, they escape the Pangs and Molestations that others endure in rooting out inveterate Habits, and changing the whole Course of their Lives at once. It must needs appear irksome at first to check those inordinate Desires, and put a Stop to the Current of those Vices which have got Authority by Prescription, and never knew what it was to be opposed, or denied before. But whatever Difficulties we may find in this, ought rather to be imputed to the Novelty and Unusualness, than to the real Hardship of the Undertaking. And perhaps, were a Man resolved, from a long continued and habituated Virtue, to turn debauch'd and profligate, he would at first find not much less Trouble in the Ways of Vice, than a new Convert meets with in the Ways of Piety. Custom and Continuance will facilitate all Things; and when the Roughness which is upon the

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the Soul is well worn off by Use, it will the more easily and sweetly move it self in a strict und religious Course.

*Fourthly*, Consider, That the Severities of Religion are no more nor greater than what we are content to undergo in Things of another Nature. Nay, many Times the Sinner meets with far more Trouble in the Ways of Sin, than the most strict and holy Christian can do in the Ways of Obedience. What strange Artifices must he oftentimes use, intricate Methods, sometimes to commit his Sins, but most commonly to conceal them! It requires a Piece of Subtilty and Stratagem to be wicked; whereas Piety is an open, plain, and simple Thing. We need not lay Plots for it, nor study to find out the Methods of it. There needs no other Skill, besides an honest Heart, and a firm Resolution. And therefore it is said, *Isaiah 35. 8. An High-way shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness.* The Wayfaring Men, though Fools, shall not err therein: Nay, were we but content to undergo as much Hardship and Difficulty in the Ways of Religion for the obtaining of Heaven and eternal Happiness, as the Men of this World do,  
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for the gaining of some poor, sordid, secular Advantages, we should be most unreasonable to complain of them as rough and uneasy. What Christian is there that takes so much Pains to be saved, as many Thousand Artificers do, who drudge Day and Night at some poor Manual Employment to get a little Pelf? And yet it is far more certain that an industrious Christian shall be saved, than that an industrious Tradesman shall grow rich. Men are contented to rise up early and to go to Bed late, and to eat the Bread of Carefulness, to bear many Disappointments, and undergo many Hardships, only in Hopes to gain some Temporal Advantage. And yet they murmur and complain of it as an insupportable Burden, if they are put upon any Difficulties for the gaining of Heaven, and eternal Salvation, although the Gain of this latter be as infinitely more certain, as it is infinitely more precious than the gaining of the former. So that in Truth all the Complaints against the Rigours of Religion, proceed only upon Mistakes and Prejudices, and there is no Course of Life, shape it which way you will, that hath so much Ease, Sweetness, and Delight in it, as the truly pious and holy.

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Let me then persuade you, not to give Ear to the Lying Suggestions of the Devil, and your own Sloth. They are but Slanders cast upon the Ways of God, on Purpose to deter you from walking in them. Do but make the Trial; enter upon them, and you shall find incomparably more Sweetness and Satisfaction, more Joy and Peace in them, than ever you found in the Ways of Sin and Folly. Possibly some, who only as Spies have entered upon the Borders of this Land of *Canaan*, have brought up an *Evil Report upon it* when they have returned back again to the Wilderness. But, I beseech you to believe the concurrent Testimonies of all good Men who have search'd it throughout, and have neither Interest, nor Design to deceive you. Believe the Testimony of a *Caleb*, of a *Joshua*, rather than the Reports of those, whose Sloth or Cowardise represents all Attempts difficult, and all Difficulties insuperable. Believe the Testimony of God himself, who assures you, *it is a Land flowing with Milk and Honey*: Let me therefore encourage you in the Words of *Caleb*; *Let us go up and possess it, for we are able to overcome it*. All imagined Hardships

ships shall vanish before us, and instead of rough Encounters, we shall certainly enjoy our selves in Pleasure and Peace. This is the only Way wherein we can enjoy either God or our selves. And this Way, which is Joy and Peace throughout, will infallibly bring us to that Blessed Presence, where there is *Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore.*

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**V I R T U E S**  
 WHICH ADORN  
**R E L I G I O N.**

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TITUS II. 10.

*That they may adorn the Doctrine of  
 God our Saviour in all Things.*

**R**elative Duties are, of all others, both the most difficult to perform, and when performed, the best and surest Trials of true Christianity, and the Power of real Godliness. Difficult they are, because most of the Temptations that assault us are chiefly bent against the careful and conscientious Discharge of these : For they so often come to be put in Practice, that the Devil can never want either Matter or Occasion for his

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**Suggestions.** They are so interwoven with our Lives, and mingle themselves with all our Actions and Concerns, that it must needs be much harder not to miscarry here, than it is in other Duties of Religion, which do not so frequently call upon us; inasmuch as it is far more difficult not to do that negligently, which we are to do always, than that which only now and then requires our Care and Attendance. And our own Experience, I believe, can sufficiently testify, that it is a greater Task, and that we are fain to use more Force and Violence upon our selves, to demean our selves as Christians at Home in our own Families, in our Shops, in our Trades, and daily Employments, than in the Church, and the more solemn and immediate Worship of God.

And as Relative Duties are the most difficult; so are they the most certain and infallible Evidences of true Grace that can be given. For as Persons usually wear Masks and Vizards Abroad, but lay them aside when they come Home: So the Hypocrite, however he may be mask'd and disguised in Duties that are beside his ordinary Course of Life; yet when he returns to his Domestick and Ordinary Converse, he will certainly lay  
**aside**

aside his Vizard, and appear in the Management of his daily Affairs, to be what indeed he is unjust and unconscionable. For truly it is almost impossible to lay such a Violence upon Nature, as to personate and counterfeit that which must be perpetual and customary. And therefore it fares with such as with Players; who, though upon the Stage they act the Parts of Kings and Nobles, yet strip off all their Pomp and Ostentation in the Tiring-Room, and return Home to their abject and sordid Life again.

Now upon both these Accounts, both because they are difficult, and because they are the surest Testimonies of our Sincerity, we find the Apostle so often inculcating the Practice of these Relative Duties upon Christians; neither do I know any one Subject, on which he is either so large, or so pressing. We have ample Directions given us concerning our Demeanour in them, 1 Cor. 7. throughout the whole Chapter; Ephes. 5. from the 22d Verse to the End; Ephes. 6. from the 1st to the 10th Verse; Colos. 3. from the 18th to the End of the Chapter; and Colos. 4. 1. and 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2. Nay, there is scarce any Epistle wherein the Duties of our Relations are not press'd upon us as  
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the greatest Part, and best Evidence of true Christianity. So in this Chapter of my Text, the Apostle exhorts *Titus*, who was constituted Overseer of the Church of *Crete*, both to a sedulous Care of performing his own Duty towards them, as standing in that Spiritual Relation; and likewise earnestly to urge upon them the Performance of their Relative Duties, according to the Capacities and Stations wherein they respected each other. And that he might rightly divide to each their Portion, he directs him what Instructions he should give the Aged, *Vers. 2, 3.* *That the Men should be grave, sober, temperate, sound in Faith, in Charity, in Patience: To the Women; that they should not be False Accusers, or Make-bates, sowing Strife and Dissention by idle Tattle, and groundless Rumours; that they should not be given to much Wine, but should be Teachers of good Things.* To the Younger; *Vers. 4, 5, 6.* *that the Women should be sober, and love their Husbands, and their Children; that they should be discreet, chaste, Keepers at Home, and obedient to their own Husbands.* That the Men should be sober-minded, not puff'd up with Vain-Glory, and Self-Conceit, the Sins usually of that Age. And then in the 9th *Verse* he descends to the Duties of Servants, and lays an Injunction

Injunction upon him to exhort them, that they be obedient to their own Masters, pleasing them well in all Things; not answering again when they are reprov'd; not to purloin from them, but to be faithful in the Trust which is committed to them. These are the Duties which St. Paul gives in Charge, to so great a Pastor as Titus who was set over the whole Island of Crete, as the chief Pastor in Dignity, and I think in Authority and Jurisdiction too: These, I say, are the Duties that so great an Apostle enjoins so great a Pastor earnestly to press upon them. But, alas! have we not many so superciliously proud, and puff'd up with a vain Conceit of their greater Perfection, who would account that Minister flat and dull, that should insist upon such low Things as these are? Nothing now adays is thought worthy an Auditory, but some high mystical Speculations, which too often are as far from being intelligible, as they are from being practicable. And for these common and daily Duties of a Christian Life, they undervalue them as below their Attainments, and leave them to honest, moral Men, as fit for such only whom they despise and undervalue too. Let me tell such *Pharisaical* Spirits; that it is not their sublime No-

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tions, nor their refined Phrases ; it is not any affected, new fangled Way of expressing the awful and tremendous Truths of the Gospel ; it is not their contemning the Weaknesses of some, nor their judging the Miscarriages of others : But it is the careful and conscientious Practice of these mean and slighted Duties of a Christian Life, that gives a Lustre to Religion, and makes the Face of it look beautiful and amiable. And therefore the Apostle, after he had given such a strict and particular Charge concerning these sundry Duties, subjoins the Reason why he would have him so instant in exhorting them to these ; and that is in the Words of my Text, *That they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things.*

Now here I shall,

*First*, Consider what is meant by the *Doctrine of God our Saviour*. And then,

*Secondly*, What it is to *adorn* this Doctrine.

To the First briefly. Though God be an essential Name, and therefore common to each glorious Person of the ever-blessed

bleſſed Trinity, yet that Addition of [*our Saviour*] ſeems to reſtrain it to the *Second Perſon*, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is God our Saviour in a moſt eſpecial Manner. And this Doctrin*e of God our Saviour*, here ſpoken of, is nothing elſe but the Goſpel of Chriſt; containing, both thoſe Truths which Chriſt himſelf immediately taught, and thoſe alſo which he by the Holy Ghoſt inſpired the Apoſtles and Penmen of the Scripture to reveal unto the World.

Now the whole Sum of this Doctrin*e of Chriſt* conſiſts in theſe Two Things:

*Fiſt*, In Principles, containing the Myſteries of Faith.

*Secondly*, In Precepts, enjoining the Duties of Obedience.

Some Things in the Doctrin*e of our Saviour* we are to know and believe, which could never have been diſcovered to us, but by Divine Revelation. Such are, the *Myſteries* of the Trinity, the *Incarnation* of the Son of God, the *Redemption* of the World by his Death and Paſſion, the *Way* of obtaining Juſtification and eternal Salvation by believing; and ſuch other profound Truths, which neither Reaſon, nor the Works of Creation and Providence could ever have diſcloſed to us, but are now made known only by the Goſpel.

Other Things in this Doctrine, we are commanded not only to know and believe, but to practise: And those are, not only all the Duties of the Moral Law, respecting both God and Man, which are now taken into the Pale, and within the Protection of the Gospel; but also the Duties that immediately belong unto the Covenant of Grace; such as our Believing on Jesus Christ, Accepting him in all his Offices, and Relying upon him alone for Life, and eternal Happiness. This in Sum is the Doctrine of God our Saviour: And by this, we may the easier give a Resolution to

The *Second* Thing propounded; What it is to adorn this Doctrine: And that I shall do both Negatively, and Positively.

*First*, Negatively: It is not to add any new Beauty or Excellency unto it, which was not in it before: For this Doctrine is every Way perfect and compleat. And so it is affirmed to be, *Jam. 1. 25. Whose looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty.* There is nothing superfluous, nothing defective in it, but a perfect Symmetry, and Harmony of Parts, each of them (as it is in a beautiful Body) lovely in it self; and all of them taken together, mutually setting

ting off, and making each other more beautiful and lovely. Here need no unwritten Traditions, to which the *Romanists* give an equal Veneration with the Scriptures: For either their Traditions are consonant to Scripture, and so are unnecessary; or contrary to Scripture, and so are pernicious. And if it be said, They may be divers from Scripture, and yet not contrary to it; as delivering down to the World those Truths, and those Duties, concerning which the Scripture hath made no mention: I answer; This is not to be divers only, but contrary; for the Scripture it self hath said, *2Tim. 3. 16, 17.* that *it is all given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: That the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furnish'd unto all good Works.* There can therefore be no unwritten Traditions joined in Commission with the Scriptures; but if they speak according to that Word, they may be received as Truths rightly collected from it; but if they lay down Doctrines repugnant to Scripture, or teach any Thing as necessary to be believed and imbraced which is not contained in those sacred Oracles, they ought to be rejected as old Lies, and Tales forged by the old Father of Lies,

only to deceive the Minds of the Simple. And those that think their Religion beautiful because of these, take Trash and Dung for Ornaments, and Monstrousness for Beauty: And in their Opinion, that Giant mentioned 1 *Sam.* 21. 20. that had six Fingers on each Hand (more than Nature intended), must pass for the most comely Person. Certainly the Doctrine of Christ is so entire and perfect, that it needs no new Additions to eek it out, nor any of the Paint of the Antichristian *Jezebel* to beautify and adorn it.

*Secondly*, To adorn the Doctrine of Christ, is not to dress it up in any new Fashion, or new Mode of Religion. Truly, there is a kind of Garb of Religion now Abroad: We must not speak, and I am sure we do not act like the Christians of elder Times. Their Simplicity and Plainness, both of Speech and of Conversation, is now worn as much out of Request, as their Cloaths are: And those Truths which warm'd their Hearts, and sav'd their Souls; those Truths by which they liv'd, and for which they would have died; are now look'd upon by the sprucer Christians of our Age, as old-fashion'd Things, and so laid aside. Some trim it up in uncouth Phrases, and never think they speak like the Oracles of God, unless

unless they speak that which cannot be understood by the Wit of Man; and, like the Priests of *Apollo*, are then inspired when they utter unintelligible Riddles and Ambiguities: As if to adorn the Doctrine of Christ, were to veil it, and it were then most beautiful when most obscure. Others think they adorn it, when they are still altering and changing it; casting out this Way, and bringing in another; and then finding Fault with that; as if Religion were designed not to reform us, but still to be reformed it self; and were made to no other Purpose in the World, but only to be mended. This is not to adorn the Doctrine of Christ, but abundantly to disparage it, when either we think to add any new Excellency unto it, which before it had not; or to dress and trick it up in new Fashions, and new Modes of Religion. It is not to be done by old Traditions, or new Opinions, or any fantastical and affected Way of Delivering and Expounding the Truths of the Gospel.

*Secondly*, But Positively: To adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, is to live conformably unto it: For the Doctrine of Christ consists, as I told you, in two Things; The Mysteries of Faith, and the

Duties of Obedience. And we adorn this Doctrine, when we live suitably to both of these.

1<sup>st</sup>. When we endeavour to live according to the Belief of those Mysteries of Grace and Mercy that are revealed in it. In this Doctrine it is, that we have the Glad-tidings of Happiness and Salvation restored unto Mankind by a Mediator; that the Forfeiture we had made of our very Lives and Souls to the Justice of God, is now redeemed by our Surety Jesus Christ, who hath undertaken the desperate Work of reconciling Sinners to an holy and jealous God, and hath himself fill'd up that *abyssus*, that vast and unpassable Gulph, that was between Heaven and us, laying his Cross for our Bridge, and Himself for our Way to pass over into eternal Bliss and Joy. Now we are said to adorn this Doctrine of God our Saviour, when we live answerably to the Obligations that the Grace of the Gospel lays upon us. What Obligations they are, the Apostle tells us in the two next Verses after my Text; *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, we should live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present World.* It is the greatest Reproach that can be cast upon

upon the Doctrine of Christ, that it makes Men Libertines, or gives them Indulgence to Sin. Some may possibly so argue, that if Christ procured Happiness and Salvation for them, there lies no Necessity upon them to exercise Holiness and Strictness, but they may live at Random, for Christ hath done all. This is that cursed Inference which the Apostle, all along in his Epistles, confutes and abhors; *Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound? God forbid.* And this is the greatest Reproach that can be cast on this Doctrine, that it should hold forth Christ as a Patron of Licentiousness, who was the greatest Pattern and Example of Holiness and Purity. No certainly, he never intended by satisfying the Justice of God, to encourage the Wickedness of Man; nor, that the Promises of the Gospel should be produced to invalidate the Precepts of the Law. But, as the Apostle tells us, *Ver. 14. of this Chapter, He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* The proper Influence that Divine Mercy should have upon us, is to conform us to the Divine Purity: So saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 7. 1. Having these Promises, (the Promises of Heaven and Glory through Christ) let us*  
*cleanse*

*cleanse our selves from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God. And 1 John 3. 3. Every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself even as God is pure.* Now when the Grace which is exhibited to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is suffered to have this kindly Effect upon us, by a sweet and genuine Attractiveness to engage us to an holy and blameless Life, then is our Conversation such as adorns the Doctrine of God our Saviour.

*2dly.* To adorn this Doctrine, is to live conformably to the Commands of it; requiring from us the Duties of new Obedience in order to our eternal Salvation. Now these Commands of the Gospel, are the whole Moral Law, which is taken in, to the Protection of it, and fenced about with the super-added Authority of Christ's Sanction. It is only through the Grace of the Gospel, that the imperfect Obedience of a Believer is at all available to his Salvation, since the Law of Works accepts not of any Obedience under the Degree of most perfect and absolute. So that when we endeavour, according to the uttermost of our Power and Ability, to conform our Lives to the Commands of the Gospel; when by our universal Holiness and Obedience, we strive in all Things

to please God, then do we adorn the Doctrine of Christ. We credit our Profession, and set it off to the Esteem of others, when our Practices answer our Pretences. This is in the General, to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour; To live suitably to the Grace revealed in it, and to the Duties enjoined by it.

Ornaments serve for two Uses and Intentions: The One is, to cover the Nakedness of those that wear them: The Other, to beautify and set them off to the Esteem and Acceptance of others. Now such an **holy** Gospel-life, adorns the Doctrine of Christ both these Ways:

*First*, It hides the Nakedness, and takes away the Shame of Religion: For nothing is a greater Blemish and Reproach to our Profession, than the unsuitable Lives of Professors. I need not tell you, what a Discredit Christians have brought upon Christianity it self, by their disorderly Conversation. It were not so much to be lamented, if the Shame of it lighted only upon those who were guilty: But the Name of Christ is blasphemed thro' their Miscarriages; and every one is ready to cast the Dirt and Mire into which a Professor falls, into the very Face of Religion  
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it self; and to upbraid Christ with the Crimes of those who pretend to be his Followers, and of his Retinue.

There is a twofold Shame and Reproach, that befalls Religion by the loose Lives of those who profess it :

*First*, Wicked Men are hereby induced to think that it is but Fabulous, and a meer Mockery.

*Secondly*, That it is but Frivolous, and altogether unnecessary.

*First*, They think that Religion is but Mockery, and all that profess it are but a Company of Dissemblers and Hypocrites. Indeed, there is nothing that can convince the World that there is any Reality in Religion, but the Conforming our Lives strictly according to the Rules and Precepts of it. And we may well impute the Increase and Growth of Atheism that is now Abroad, to those strong Arguments that Men have drawn from the Lives of Christians, to confute the Doctrine of Christianity : For may they not justly conclude, that it is impossible that such Men should believe what they profess, while their Lives are so down-right contradictory to their Creed. Did they think  
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It true, that there were eternal Rewards, and eternal Punishments prepared to be dispensed to Men, according to their Works? Did they think it true, that Hell, and Wrath, and Flames, and Chains, and intolerable Torments, must be the eternal Portion of those who reject the Faith, and disobey the Commands of their Gospel? Could it be possible they should live at such a Rate of Vanity, Looseness and Profaneness, as they do? And upon this, they conclude all to be but a well-couch'd Fable, and give the holy and everlasting Gospel of Christ, the Lie; and what Shame can be greater than this? It is a sad Accusation, *Rom. 2. 24. The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.* How so? Because (as in the former Verses) *they rested in the Law, and had a Form of Knowledge; and were confident, that they were Guides to the Blind, and Lights to them that sit in Darkness.* Eminent Professors it seems they were, like the Men of our Days. Well, but mark; *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that makest thy Boast of the Law, through breaking the Law, dishonourest thou God? Thou that professest the Gospel, dost thou transgress the Law? Thou that pretendest to near Communion, and Acquaintance with God, dost thou*

thou live as without God in the World !  
 Thou that preacheſt a Man ſhould not  
 ſteal nor lie, nor ſwear, nor be drunk,  
 nor commit Adultery ; Doſt thou lie, and  
 ſteal, and ſwear ; art thou unclean ; art  
 thou intemperate, and as vile as the worſt  
 and vileſt ? Tremble at it ; the Name of  
 the great God is blaſphemed among wic-  
 ked Wretches through you. Thoſe ~~who~~  
 were before Profane, you make Atheiſti-  
 cal, ſcorning and deriding the Goſpel of  
 Chriſt as an idle Whimſey ; and becauſe  
 they ſee ſo little in their Lives, conclude  
 that there is no Difference at all between  
 thoſe that are called *Saints*, and thoſe  
 that are called *Sinners* ; but only, that the  
 one have their Tongues a little better  
 hung, and their Fancies a little higher  
 ſcrewed up, than the other. And truly, I  
 cannot but with Shame and Sadneſs, re-  
 flect upon it, that the Men of our Profeſ-  
 ſion are herein extreamly guilty, who by  
 the Unſuitableneſs of their Converſation,  
 to the Purity of their Doctrin, make too  
 many in the World believe, that it is their  
 Trade only to gull and cozen Men ; and  
 perſwade them to believe, what they are  
 wiſer than to believe themſelves. Let us  
 beware, leſt theſe their Blaſphemies be  
 not at laſt charged upon us, who through  
 a worldly, looſe, and carnal Converſa-  
 tion,

tion, have made Religion even to stink in their Nostrils. It is only the Strictness of a Gospel-life that can convince the World, that Religion is any Thing real. And if ever you would redeem its lost Credit, show by the Strictness and Holiness of your Lives, that you do indeed believe the Doctrine which you profess, and that you look upon it as that Doctrine by which you expect to be judged at the Last Day.

*Secondly,* The disorderly Conversation of Professors, as it tempts wicked Men to think Religion to be a false, and cunningly devised Fable; so at least, it tempts them to look upon it as altogether needless. Now what Disgrace can be more foul than to impute Frivolousness to a Doctrine which calls it self the Oracles of God, the only Rule of Holiness, and the only Way to Happiness; and to make that superfluous and unnecessary, whose chiefest Excellency consists in its Usefulness and Tendency to our Salvation? And yet this Reproach upon the Gospel, through the Licentiousness of those who profess it, will be almost unavoidable. For if we compare the strict Precepts of Christianity, with the loose Lives of Christians, we shall be shrewdly tempted to conclude, that certainly these Men have  
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found out an easier Passage to Heaven, than by the strait Way, and the narrow Gate. And questionless, this very Thing hath been a Stumbling-block, at which many have fallen, and dash'd themselves to Pieces. For what can they think, when on the one hand they hear Holiness and Purity so much recommended, so earnestly press'd upon us by the Doctrine of Christ; and on the other, see it so generally neglected and despis'd by those who pretend themselves to be most studied and vers'd in that Doctrine; but that doubtless these Men do know somewhat, which perhaps they are loth to divulge, that gives them a Dispensation from the Practice of that Godliness which they profess? And so they think that God useth them, as some Tradesmen do their Customers; that he asks high for Heaven at first, but when it comes to the Issue, will fall of his Price, and let them have it at a far easier Rate than his first Demands. And this, I am confident, is the very Reason, why those very few that walk strictly and holily, and demean themselves inoffensively both towards God and Man, are yet so despis'd and hated in the World. Some despise and scorn them, as a Company of poor silly Souls, that have less Wit, and more Honesty by half than needs. Others

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hate them as a Company of impertinent Busy-bodies in Religion, that serve only to raise the Market for Heaven, and readily give God all that he asks. But generally the World looks upon them as too precise, and making too much ado about that Salvation, which else would come at an easier Rate. Look to it, lest this Disrespect, and Villifying of the Power of Godliness, and Practical Holiness; lest the Contempt and Obloquy that is cast upon a severe and mortified Life, be not charged upon you, who by a vain, carnal, frothy, and light Conversation, have perswaded the World, that Christ was a more strict Preacher, than he will be a Judge, and that his Laws serve rather to shew what Holiness is, than to exact it.

And thus I have shewn you, How that by the unsuitable Lives of Professors, this twofold Shame will befall Religion it self; that wicked Men will be ready to account it either false or frivolous.

And upon both Accounts, consider what dreadful Consequences will follow :

*First*, To bring this Blemish upon Religion, that it is either false or unnecessary, is in a great measure to evacuate the Death of Christ, and to frustrate one of the great

Ends for which he suffer'd. There were Two great and important Reasons of Christ's Death :

The One was, The Satisfaction of Divine Justice as a Redeemer.

The Other, The Attestation of the Truth of his Doctrine as a Martyr : He hath sealed to the World by his own Blood, both the Certainty and Necessity of the Doctrines which he taught : And therefore Christ himself tells *Pilate*, *John* 18. 37. *To this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear Witness to the Truth.* And the greatest Testimony he gave to the Truth of the Gospel, was upon the Cross, laying down his Life, and shedding the last Drop of his most precious Blood, rather than he would disavow or recant the least Article of that holy Doctrine which he had delivered : And therefore we have that Expression, *1 John* 5. 8. *There are Three that bear Witness in Earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood.* Which, I think, may be congruously enough expounded if we here take the first of these Witnesses, *the Spirit*, for the Spirit, or Soul of Christ, which he breathed forth when he gave up the Ghost : And the *Water and Blood*, to be that mix'd Stream that flowed out of his Side, when the

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the Soldier's Spear opened unto us that Fountain of Life and Salvation. These Three bear Witness on Earth to the Doctrine of Christ, that it is both true in it self, and necessary also to eternal Salvation. Now consider, you who by a loose and wanton Conversation, give Occasion to the World to suspect either the one, or the other, what do you less than invalidate the Death of Christ; and bring Men at last to believe, that he died for that which is either false or frivolous? Which is the greatest Affront and Indignity that can possibly be put upon our Lord and Saviour. Must not the World think it very strange, that Christ should willingly submit himself to so cruel and ignominious a Death as that of the Cross, for the Confirmation of a Doctrine, which few of those who profess the Truth of it, will yet be perswaded by all the Rewards it propounds, to put in Practice? Must they not needs judge it a most absurd Thing, to spread a Religion, and then die for it too, the Rules and Precepts of which are either impossible, or unnecessary to be observed? And if they look into the Lives of Christians, and take Notice how vastly repugnant their Actions are to the Rule which they profess; what else can they think but that Christ lost his very Death,

as well as his Life, when he died to confirm such a Religion, whose Laws are so rigorous that they cannot be kept, or whose Indulgence is so large, that it cannot be out-sinned? Is this a Doctrine worth such Pain and Shame, worth Martyrdom and the Cross, that hath so little Influence upon those that imbrace it, to conform their Lives to the Principles it teacheth? Are the Rewards it promiseth so inconsiderable, or the Punishments it threatens so easy and gentle; or the Evidence it gives of the Certainty of both, so glimmering and obscure, that it cannot prevail with those who own it, to abandon their Vices, or their present Pleasures, for future Fears and Hopes? And what! Shall we think such a Religion can ever bring its Followers to Heaven, when as it cannot bring them to Virtue? Believe it, this reflects highly upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and lays an Imputation either upon his Sincerity, or his Wisdom, in dying for a Doctrine, which ordinarily hath no more Power over those who profess and own it, than only to name them Christians.

*Secondly*, Consider that the Profession of Religion, without a suitable Practice, tends only to harden the Hearts of wicked Men, and to strengthen their Hands

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in their Course of Sin and Profaneness : For such is either the Weakness, or Corruption of Humane Nature, that we are sooner led by Examples, than by Precepts ; and follow the Herd, rather than the Guide ; accounting nothing a surer Mark of the right Way, than the Tracts of others that go before us. Now when wicked Men shall see thee, who art a Professor, live unanswerably to that Religion thou makest Shew of, will they not be ready to bless themselves in their Ways, and to cry, Peace, Peace, to themselves ; since thou who thinkest well of thy self, and whom others perhaps think well of too, art in Reality no better than they ? Do not I see ( may such an one say ) that those who are taken for Saints, are proud, and impatient, and covetous, and revengeful ? And if such Men get to Heaven, as they pretend they shall, why may not I ? 'Tis true indeed, they talk of Self-denial, and Contempt of the World, and Communion with God, and great Spiritual Enjoyments ; but look into our Lives, and mine is as harmless and innocent as theirs. If they let themselves loose to the Pleasures of the World, drink till Wine inflames them ; discourse lewdly, and lasciviously by Tropes and Metaphors ; cozen and cheat in their Bar-

gains, and over-reach the Simplicity of those that trust them for their Profession; why may not I; and yet be altogether as good a Christian, and in as safe a Way of Salvation as they? They talk indeed of Experiences, and Acquaintance with God, and ravishing Joys, and melting Desires, and a Road of Words that I skill not. But certainly, if God will not condemn them, tho' they do nothing more than I, but only talk; neither will he condemn me, for not talking as they do. And so they give themselves the Reins, and boldly fly out into all manner of Impieties; neither taking up the Profession of Religion, which they rightly judge to be of no Worth without the Practice of it; neither will be brought to the Practice of Religion, judging that needless, because they see it neglected by you who profess it. And so you make them seven-fold worse than if you your selves were profligate, and avowed Sinners, *denying the Form of Godliness, as well as the Power of it.* For a wicked and debauch'd Sinner, though he may prevail upon others to draw them into the same Excess of Riot with himself; yet his Example is not so likely to harden Men in Sin, and to seal them up under Impenitency, as the loose Examples of an hypocritical Professor.

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Natural Conscience will struggle and tumultuate, and draw back, when we follow those who pretend no other, but to go to Hell; They cannot but with Remorse reflect upon it, that ever they should suffer themselves to be lead by such whom they know to be in the ready Way to Damnation. But when they see those who pretend highly to Heaven, and entertain flourishing Hopes of Glory and Salvation; such who stand fainted in every Man's Kalendar, and whom all conclude to be of those few that shall be saved, when they see such as these indulge themselves in any Way of Wickedness, they presently take heart by such an Example; and if they think not, they may do the same with a good Conscience; yet they conclude, they may do it without any Prejudice to their Salvation: And so sin quietly without Regret, and perish, and go down to Hell with good Company. Well, beware, lest their Sins be not at last set upon thy Score; for though *they shall die in them*, (as the Prophet speaks,) yet certainly God *will require the Blood of their Souls at thy Hands*; who by encouraging them through thy loose Example, covered over with a dissembled Holiness, hast only made their Crimes thy Guilt; and shalt be punish'd eternally in Hell, both

for thine own Hypocrisy, and their Profaneness.

*Thirdly*, The unsuitable and unholy Lives of Professors, must needs induce wicked Men to think that their Ways are better than God's : What else can they conclude, but that certainly Religion and Piety is some sowre, morose Thing, when they see those that pretend most to it, steal away to refresh themselves with the Pleasures of Sin ? Hath not Holiness Delights enough within it self to content you ? Is not Peace of Conscience, Calmness and Serenity of Mind, the Love of God, the Performance of Duty, the Consolations of the Holy Ghost, are not all these Joy enough for you, but you must needs break the Hedge, and stray into the World's Common ? As if you wanted Pasture, or those Pastures wanted Verdure and Refreshment. Is not an whole *Eden* sufficient for you, but you must likewise tast of the forbidden Fruit ? What is this, but to give a most wretched Occasion to wicked Men to applaud their Choice, and to think it much better and wiser than yours ? What a Disparagement is this to Religion, that those who imbrace it, must be beholding to Sin and Wickedness, for all the pleasant Hours they enjoy ? As if to sigh and weep, to  
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be sad and melancholy, were the only Employment of a Christian's Life : Or as if, indeed, there were not more true Content and Pleasure to be found in Tears and Sighs, in sad and serious Thoughts, than in all those impure and muddy Delights, for which you forsake them. No, if ever you would adorn the Gospel, and win over others unto the Profession and Obedience of it, live so, that the World may see a Christian can live upon the Allowance that God gives him ; and that you do not belong to so hard a Lord and Master, as that you must be necessitated for your Work, to serve him ; and for your Recreation, the Devil. While you seek your Divertisement in the Pleasures of Sin, wicked Men cannot but think Religion a mere Drudgery, and themselves the only happy Men, when they see those who pretend much to enjoy God in the Ways of Holiness, forced to come over to their loose and sinful Ways, that they may enjoy themselves. For Shame Christians, cast not such a Disparagement upon Religion ; but let it appear, that it can maintain its Servants upon its own ; and hath enough not only to employ, but to delight them too.

*Fourthly,*

*Fourthly*, The unholy and unsuitable Lives of Christians, imboldens others to sin more deeply and desperately, than else they would have done: For always those who are led by Examples, make them lose somewhat of their Rigour and Severity. So that whatsoever Scope and Allowance thou givest thy self, others, who observe thy Course and Manner of Life, will be sure to enlarge it to themselves: And so, by a wretched Improvement, a small Sin in thee, shall become a great and heinous one in them, and thou too be guilty of it, who by thy Miscarriages hast given them Encouragement to imitate, and exceed thee. Thou who art an eminent and glorious Professor, the Eyes of the whole Place are upon thee, to observe and watch thy Demeanour. They conclude, that thou aimest at nothing less than the highest Pitch and Degree of Glory: And therefore, if thou canst indulge thy self such a Liberty, certainly they may allow themselves a larger Scope; and though they fall short of thee, yet hope they shall not fall short of Heaven; wherein, if they may shine but as Stars, 'tis all they expect, while thou shinest as the Sun in the Firmament. This is our wretched Temper, that we are not ambitious for Heaven and Happiness, but content

tent our selves if we think we may have any Share and Portion in it: And while we mark the Failings of those, who yet we think shall be highly advanced in Glory, we are apt to conclude, that tho' we allow our selves a greater Freedom than they take, yet we may be safe at last, altho' not so glorious. Thus a foolish vain Word in the Mouth of a Professor, may come to be an Oath of another Man's; an Equivocation in him, may improve to be a gross Lye in another: If he speak but slightly of Religion, and the Things of God; others will be emboldened openly to scoff and deride them. If he carry on his Affairs by underhand Craft, and cunning Dealing, not shewing that downright Sincerity and Plainness in his Affairs, as a Christian, and an honest Man ought to do; others that observe this, will be thereby encouraged to cheat and defraud: For in following of Examples, we always bate something; and those Examples that give us any kind of Liberty, we shall soon turn into Licentiousness. It is a sad Thing to be exemplary, unless we are also most strict and severe, so that the World can find no Flaws, no Defects in our Conversation: For otherwise, we must answer for their Sins, which  
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our Miscarriages have emboldened them to commit.

And thus I have at large shewed you, the great Disgrace and Discredit which Professors bring upon Religion, by the Unsuitableness of their Lives to their Principles and Profession. They make the World believe it to be either false, or needless: And so they do in a great measure evacuate the Death of Jesus Christ; make wicked Men secure and impenitent in their Sins, induce them to think that their Ways are better than God's; and encourage them to sin more daringly and desperately, than else they would. And yet notwithstanding these great Mischiefs, Mischiefs which strike at the very Life of Piety and Religion; notwithstanding these, which follow upon an unholy Conversation, what is the ordinary Rate at which Professors live, but vain, frothy, sensual, and worldly? Yea, as far removed sometimes (I speak it with Shame) from the Honesty of common Men, as they would be thought to be from the Pollutions and Impieties of the World. Now, must it not needs be a Stumbling-block to many, when Men shall speak at such a Rate of Spiritualness, as if  
some

some Angel sat upon their Tongues, and yet live at such a Rate of Vanity, and it may be of Profaneness too, as if Legion possess'd their Hearts? What shall we judge of such Men? If we judge the Tree by the Leaves, what else can we think of them, but that they are Trees of Righteousness, and Plants of Renown? But if we look to their Fruits, Envy, Strife, Variance, Wrath, Pride, Worldliness, Selfishness, what can we think of them, but that Heaven and Hell are now as near together, as these Mens Hearts and Mouths? May we not use the same Speech that the Apostle doth, concerning the *Corinthians*, *1 Corinth. 3. 3. Ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you Envyng, Strife, and Divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as Men?* If the Apostle could have laid in a Charge against these *Corinthians*, not only of Envy, Strife, and Division; but of Hatred, Bitterness, and Implacableness of Spirit; of Brain-sick Opinions, and Self-seeking Practices, joined with the utter Neglect and Contempt of the Glory of God. as justly as we can against the Men of our Times; certainly his Reproof would not have been so mild as to tell them they walked as Men, but rather that they walked as Devils. Such are a Reproach to Religion; a Grief and a Shame

Shame to true Christians who are jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, and cannot, but with bleeding Hearts, observe the Dishonour that is cast upon the Ways of God, by those who will be Saints in spight of Holiness. They are so many Stumbling-blocks laid in the Ways of others, imbittering their Spirits against the Profession of Holiness, accounting it no better than Hypocrisy, and gross Dissimulation; or else encouraging them, by their evil Examples, to continue in their Wickedness and Profaneness.

Thus now I have shewn you the first Use of Ornaments, which is to hide Shame and Nakedness; and that it is only an holy Life and Conversation, that can hide the Shame of Religion: For where the Life is unsuitable to the Profession, it reflects this twofold Shame upon Religion, that it is either Fabulous or Frivolous, either Untrue or Unnecessary: And have shewn you the sad Consequences that will follow upon these.

*Secondly,* Another Use of Ornaments, is to beautify the Person that wears them, and to set him off to the Acceptance and Esteem of others. And thus also it is only an holy and strict Life, that can adorn the

**the Doctrine of God our Saviour.** Nothing doth make Religion so lovely and taking in the Eyes of others, as the holy Lives of those who profess it. And to this, must we impute the wonderful Growth of Christianity in the Primitive Times, when it gained more Nations and Countries in its persecuted State, than it can now gain Persons in its flourishing. And the Reason of its Success was, that it had all the attractive Charms, that are fitted to work upon the Minds of Men not altogether brutish: For though it still retains the same innate Beauty, the Sublimeness of its Mysteries, the Purity of its Commands, the Majesty and Authority of its Word, the Excellency of its Rewards, and the Dreadfulness of its Threatnings, and the clear and infallible Evidence of all these; yet that which added a mighty Grace and Lustre to it, was the Holiness and Innocency of the Professors of it; their Meekness, Patience, Love, Charity, Single-heartedness; and in every Respect, a blameless Demeanour, which made Religion wonderfully successful in the World; Mankind being rather affected by the Eye, than the Ear; and more taken by what they saw, than by what they were told of the Excellency of Christianity. And therefore we find,

*Acts*

*Acts 2. 45.* that when they charitably supplied the Necessities of others, when they lived together with one Accord, *in Singleness of Heart*, they had *Favour with all the People*, and many were added to the Church, *even as many as should be saved.* This is the Way to set off Religion, and to make it amiable to the World. It is not to dress it up in uncouth Expressions; nor to speak of the Things of God in a singular and affected Phrase; no, nor only to discourse of them in Scripture-Language, and to make it only the Business of the Tongue. The holy and everlasting Gospel which you profess, is not an Art of speaking, but of living well.

*First*, The blameless Life of a Christian, gives Life to Religion; adds as much Beauty to Religion, as natural Life doth to a Man. Take a dead Corps, and though it hath the same Features, the same Lineaments, and Proportion that it had before, yet how ghastly and frightful a Spectacle is it? And that very Face which was beautiful and pleasing while living, yet terrifies and scares us, when the Life and Soul is departed from it. So is it here: The Doctrine of the Gospel in it self consider'd separate from Practice, is but a dead Letter; and though there be a great Excel-

lency in it, as there is in the Frame of a dead Body; yet it hath not those Charms and Allurements, which it hath when the Lives of Christians put Life into it. The Strictness and Severity of its Rules and Precepts, would rather fright and deter Men from imbracing of it, than invite them, until they see the Beauty of Holiness in the Practice, and good Example of others.

*Secondly;* An holy and suitable Life adorns and commends the Doctrine of Christ our Saviour, as it testifies the Energy and Efficacy that it hath upon the Consciences and Conversations of Men. The Excellency of a Doctrine is chiefly seen in the Power that it hath to work upon the Hearts and Affections of those that profess it. Now when it shall appear to the World, that this Doctrine of Christ hath been effectual to the Opening the Eyes of the Blind; the Taming of stubborn and refractory Sinners; that it hath been able to rend Rocks in Pieces, and to draw Rivers of Tears out of stony Hearts; when it shall appear what a mighty Change it hath wrought upon those who seemed most boistrous and untractable, bringing them upon their Knees to grovel in the very Dust, before that God whom they have daringly offended;

and that a few Words of it should be able for ever after to keep them in such an Awe of his dread Majesty, that they would rather die a thousand Deaths, than willingly do any Thing which it forbids; when it shall calm all their Passions, subjugate their very Thoughts, govern all their Actions, that they shall not dare to think, but by a Law and Rule; nor to speak, but under the Controul of their Religion; nor to fear, nor rejoice, nor grieve, nor be angry, but upon Permission from this; how mightily will this exalt and magnify the Power of Christ's Doctrine, and set it forth as triumphant in the World, and over the World! It is the Number, not of Professors, but of Converts, that is the Glory of any Doctrine: And this Glory is peculiarly due unto the Doctrine of Christ. All other Doctrines of the World, though there be too many that own them, yet how few are converted by them to a sober and holy Life? All the grave and elaborate Precepts of Heathen Philosophy, which taught Virtue with a great deal of Skill, and all possible Advantages of Wit and Reason; yet, as *Origen* against *Celsus* observes, never converted but \* Two, from a vicious and debauch'd Life. And for all other Ways of Religion, it is generally

\* *Phædon*  
 & *Palemon*,  
*Orig. cont.*  
*Cels. lib. 1.*

rally and truly observed, that the most zealous in them were usually the most lewd and dissolute. It is true of them all, what Christ speaks of the *Pharisees*, *Matth. 23. 15.* *They compass Sea and Land to make one Profelyte;* and when he is made, they make him seven Times more the Child of Hell than before. But it is the peculiar Glory of the Doctrine of Christ, that those whom it makes true Profelytes, it makes truly pious. Envy not, I beseech you, this Glory to it; but let it appear, that it is the only Divine Doctrine in the World, by having such a powerful Influence into your Practice, as no other Doctrine hath, or can have. Raise your Actions to such a Divine Heighth, that Moralists, with all their Civility, may be forced to confess, there is somewhat more in your Lives, than Nature, or any other Instruction can possibly bestow.

But this is only in the General.

Let me now commend to your Practice, some particular Duties; wherein, methinks, the true and genuine Spirit of the Gospel doth most eminently appear. And, Oh! that you would for ever remember to honour the Doctrine of Christ, which you have imbraced, and to adorn your Pro-

session by the constant Practice of these following Graces.

**First, Love, and Brotherly Kindness** one towards another. This is the very Badge and distinguishing Character of a Christian; *John 13. 35. By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one towards another.* Love is a most beautiful Grace, and that which sets a great Lustre upon Religion, and makes it beautiful too. It was that which the Heathens took most especial Notice of in the Primitive Christians, when they would not only communicate their Estates one to another, but even expose their Lives, and offer their Blood for their Brethren. This made their very Persecutors cry out, *See how dearly these Christians love one another!* We are all **Below-Members of the same Body mystical**, whereof Jesus Christ is the Head. Now as there is a Sympathy in the Body natural between the Members, (for if one suffer, all the rest suffer with it; or one be honoured, all the rest rejoice with it;) so ought it to be amongst Christians; for *we are the Body of Christ, and Members in Particular*, as the Apostle speaks, *1 Cor. 12. 26, 27.* What a strange unseemly Thing were it for the Members of the Body

*Body* to make an Infurrection one against another? For *the Hand* to pluck out the *Eye*; or for *one Hand* to cut off the *other*? Alike unseemly it is for those who are united together in the same *Body of Christ*, to be divided in their Affections or Practices; or to rend and tear one another. This hath been the great Sin and Unhappines of our Days. One Limb of *Christ* hath torn off another as a Limb of *Antichrist*. Some have separated, and become Schismatical; others are become Unnatural, and rejoyce in the Sufferings of their Fellows: The Weak have censured the Strong; and the Strong despised the Weak: And upon such petty Differences in Judgment and Opinion, have arisen such vast Breaches in Love and Charity; Breaches wide as the Seas, and, without a Miracle, as incurable: As if it were sufficient Ground for Quarrel that one Limb is not just of the same Make, Size, and Proportion with the others. For shame, Christians, let us all who hold the same Head, *Christ Jesus*, be all united together in the same Spirit, and exercise mutual Love, and mutual Forbearance. Or else believe it if the *Sheep* divide among themselves, and separate, and scatter, the *great Shepherd* will send in those *Dogs* or *Wolves*

among them, that will make them run together again.

Secondly, Another Duty that adorns the Doctrine of Christ, and recommends it to the Acceptance and Esteem of others, is, *Love to our Enemies*, and a ready forgiving of Wrongs and Injuries that have been maliciously done against us. This is a Duty highly press'd upon us by the Gospel. Very few of the Heathens (tho' they went far in many excellent Points of Morality) have ever attained to this Height and Perfection. And therefore

\* Cicero de Oratore.

† Cicero ad Atticum.

|| Aristot.

Ethic. l. 4.

c. 5. Rhetoric.

c. 9.

Tully tells us, \* *Ulcisci te laceffitus potes.*

And again, † *Odi hominem, & otero utinam ulcisci poteram.* And Aristotle in his Rhetoric, || *Τὸ τὰς ἐνθρῶς πηρωρεῖσθαι καλὸν δοκεῖ, &c.*

It is good, saith he, to revenge our selves upon our Enemies; for it is but just to return the same Measure we have received; and it is manly not to be overcome in any Thing. But

the Gospel hath taught us another Way of overcoming our Enemies, Rom. 12. 21. *Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good*; by praying for them, by doing them all kind Offices of Humanity and Respect. Whilst we thus manage all the Differences that we have here with others, whosoever gets the better in this World, yet certainly at the Last Day the Victory and

and Crown will be adjudged ours. This is that which our Saviour Christ greatly insists on, *Matth. 5. 44. I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* And he adds an Argument that is very cogent and inforcing from the Example of our Father, *V. 45. That ye may be the Children of God; for he causeth his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and the Unjust.* God doth good to all, even to his Enemies, and this should be our Pattern to do good also to our Enemies; especially considering, that in doing good to them, we indeed do good to our selves: For we pray for the Forgiveness of our Trespases, according to our Forgiving others those Trespases which they commit against us. But while we keep and nourish any rancouring or revengeful Thoughts, we do but put in a Caution against our own Prayers, and bind our Iniquities upon our Souls, yea, and make our very Prayers the most dreadful Curses that can be uttered against us: *For if we forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us our Trespases, Matth. 6. 15.* Revenge is utterly contrary

\* Tertull. de Patien-  
 tiâ. Ultio  
 a contume-  
 liâ non dif-  
 fert nisi  
 ordine :  
 Qui dolo-  
 rem regret  
 tantum  
 excusatiùs  
 peccat.  
 Seneca de  
 Ira, cap. 2.  
 § 32.

to the Spirit of the Gospel : As \* Tertul-  
 lian speaks well, There is no Difference  
 between him that doth an Injury, and  
 him that requites it ; *Nisi quod ille prior  
 in maleficio reprehenditur, at ille Posterior* ;  
 but only that the one is wicked a little  
 sooner than the other. Yea, indeed the  
 best Way of Revenge, if we study that,  
 is to requite Wrongs with Kindnesses  
 and good Offices. What, saith the Apostle,  
*Rom. 12. 20. If thine Enemy hunger, feed  
 him ; if he thirst, give him drink ; for in so  
 doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his  
 Head.* By heaping Coals of Fire on his  
 Head, may be meant, either that thou  
 shalt kindle in him a Regret and tor-  
 menting Displeasure, that he cannot vex,  
 nor discompose thee, and so shalt make  
 him the Instrument of thy Revenge upon  
 himself. Or thou shalt kindle in him  
 such a Sorrow and Compunction for ha-  
 ving causelessly wronged thee, as shall  
 burn him like Fire, until he hath given  
 thee abundant Satisfaction. Or else,  
 Lastly, Thou shalt kindle upon him the  
 Coals of Everlasting Fire in Hell, for per-  
 sisting obstinately to hate and injure thee  
 without Cause or Provocation. And  
 that's a Revenge to Purpose, a Revenge  
 that belongs unto him who hath said,  
*Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it.*

*Thirdly,*

Thirdly, Patience, under Tribulations and Afflictions, is a Grace that doth excellently adorn the Doctrine of God our Servant. When we are under any Calamities sent from the Hand of God, or any Persecution from the Rage and Wrath of Man, quietly to submit without either repining or murmuring. A Christian should pass through the World with as little Noise, and Tumult as may be. Wicked Men may roar and swagger in it, it is their Country: But it is only a Christian's Road, through which he is travelling to his Country. And it were a vain and endless Thing, should he stop to take up a Stone, and cast at every Dog that will bark at him in his Passage. But because I have elsewhere treated at large concerning this Grace of Patience, I shall not farther expatiate here.

Fourthly, Modesty and Lowliness of Mind, is a Grace that doth mightily adorn the Doctrine of Christ. And therefore a Proud Spirit is called the Ornament of a carnal mind. Spirit, which in the Sight of God is of great Price. A proud, supercilious, self-conceited Christian is a Monster in Religion. As any Extuberance and Wen in the Body is a great Deformity.

Deformity and Blemish to it; so these Professors that are high swoll'n and puff'd up with Conceit, they are but Wens in the Body mystical; they are but Blisters, that contain nothing in them but ill Humours, and bring a great deal of Deformity and Discredit upon that holy Religion which they profess.

There is a twofold Pride, Childish, and Devilish. A Childish Pride, I call that which is conversant about the Body, adorning that beyond Decency; and then thinking themselves by so much better than others, by how much their Glorings are finer.

A Devilish Pride, is that which lurks within, when Men are proud of their Excellencies and Perfections, proud of their Wit, of their Judgment, of their Elocution, or any other of God's Gifts; yea, and Pride is such a Rust and Canker as can seize on the purest Metals; there may be some proud of their very Graces; yea, proud of their very Humility.

Now though the former Pride be more ridiculous, yet this latter is more pernicious and baneful, and both are contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, and bring a Blemish upon the Professors of it.

There be Two Things in Pride that make it so unlovely : Unsociableness, and Contention.

A proud Man is an unsociable Man. He looks upon all others as below him ; hates a Rival, and scorns to have an Equal. If all will not vail to his Opinion in Matters of Dispute, or to his Humour in Matters of Practice, he takes himself as affronted by them ; and because he hath given himself a kind of Sovereignty over others, looks upon himself as wronged, if others will not do so too, and let him controul and govern them as the only fit and able Person to do it. Hence we may commonly observe it, that though there is a kind of Love and Complacency between all other Sinners one towards another ; as the Drunkard loves his Pot-Companion, and seeks his Company ; the Thief joins himself in Society with those who are Thieves, and every one labours to rub his Vice upon as many as he can ; yet never was it seen that two proud Men could agree together : For none is a greater Enemy to Pride in any but himself, than a proud Man ; and that because this is a Vice that always seeks Superiority and Preeminence, which a proud Man cannot bear in any but himself.

Again,

Again, Pride is always contentious, full of Strife and Brawl: And it must needs be so; for as Tumours and swelling Biles in the Body are very sore, and the least Touch makes them ake and rage, so these swelling, proud Men, if they be but at all touch'd in their Repute or Interest, yea, or but in their Fancy and Opinion, they presently rage and storm, and cannot bear, no not the least Thing which they imagine to be an Injury done them; for proud Flesh is always tender. And therefore, saith the wise Man, *Prov. 13. 10. Only by Pride cometh Contention.* Now how unseemly a Thing is this untractable Humour; how infinitely contrary to the Doctrine of Christ? The Apostle commands us, *Phil. 2. 3. That nothing be done out of Strife or Vain-glory, but in Lowliness of Mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* A Temper, which when it shall please God to redeem Religion from all the Contempt and Obloquy that is cast upon it, he will inspire into the Hearts of Professors. I am sure I can see but very little of it abroad in the World: No, we are grown now to that pass, that he is thought the best Man who can find the most Fault, and make the most Strife. And whosoever hath but Wit enough to make a quick

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and



*Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as Evil Doers, they may by your good Works, which they shall behold, glorifie God. But how may this be done? He presently subjoins, V. 13, 14. Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake; whether to the King, as Supreme, or to Governours sent by him: And observe the Reason of this Injunction, V. 15. For so is the Will of God, that by well-doing, ye may put to Silence the Ignorance of foolish Men.* We ought still to walk by the same Rule, and by our Submission and Obedience to the Powers God hath set over us, make it appear, that Religion is not Faction; and that in whatsoever Man's Law, and God's, do not contradict one another, our obeying of Man's, is but part of our obeying God's, who hath commanded us to be *subject to the higher Powers,* not only for Fear, and upon Politick Respects, but for Conscience sake; and hath threatned *all Resistance and Opposition with Damnation,* Rom. 13.

**Sixthly,** It doth much adorn the Doctrine of Christ to be just and upright in our Dealings with Men: It must needs be a most foul Blemish to Religion, when those who profess it shall pretend to high Spiritual Enjoyments, and yet neglect the Duties

Duties of common and moral Honesty ; and be as unjust towards Men as they would be thought devout towards God. Would to God this Blot were as easy to be wiped off, as it is obvious and easy to be observed. It hath made Religion to stink in the Nostrils of profane Persons, and wrought in them such an inveterate Hatred against all Profession of Godliness, that now the World flies and avoids all that make shew of it as dangerous People ; and thinks it not safe to converse with those, who will dare once to talk of conversing with God. It is a Shame and Grief of Heart to hear the Blasphemies that are daily uttered against Holiness upon this very Account. What is more common in their Mouths, than, “ Have a Care how you deal with such an One : Why, he is a Saint, and will lay his Hand upon his Heart, and cheat you with a Sigh, and a Verily. Well, of all Men in the World deliver me from having to do with a Saint.” I would not mention such Things as these to you, did I not know them to be ordinary and common Reproaches. I beseech you, O Christians, for the Gospel’s sake ; if not for your own Credit, yet if you have any Respect left for that Piety you pretend unto, if any Sense of the

the Reputation of that Religion for which you profess: you are ready to lay down your very Lives, redeem its lost Honour, and make it appear to all the World, that *Yea* and *Nay* is as true a Dealer as Oaths and Curses. Consider that dreadful Place, *1 Thess. 4. 6. Let no Man go beyond, or defraud his Brother in any Thing, for that the Lord is the Avenger of all such.* His Justice will certainly punish your Injustice; and though you may have an Advantage through the Ignorance or Easiness of those you deal with to over-reach them, yet believe it there is a Day coming wherein the false Weights shall be themselves weighed, and the Scanty Measures be themselves meted by a Standard that is infallibly true. Possibly thy Bargains and Contracts may proceed so with those who are perswaded to trust thee, because of thy Profession, that they can have no Advantage to recover their Right by Law. Beware thou give them no Occasion to rail at the Gospel; nor to accuse themselves of Folly for thinking that a Professor could be an honest Man. Remember there is a Day coming, wherein a Thousand Witnesses shall be produced to testify what Agreements and Contracts thou hast made. All Accounts shall be ballanced, and so much found resting due,

due, which thou shalt certainly pay, tho' not to those thou hast wronged, yet to the Justice of God, who is the great and universal Creditor. He is the Avenger of all such, who by wronging others in their Estates, wrong them most of all in their Souls, and embitter their Hearts against that Religion and Profession which deluded them.

Especially, the Scandal is so much the more gross, and the Wound that Religion receives the more incurable; when Rapine, and Extortion, and Injustice, shall be done under Pretence of advancing the Gospel, and promoting the Honour and Glory of God. What is this else but to bring him into a Partnership with them; and to make him the Receiver of their Thefts? To transgress the Law, that we might please the Lawgiver, and to be wicked for God's sake? As if it were a Service done to him, to make use of the First Table of the Law to break the Second in Pieces; and that to be zealous towards God, required we should be unjust towards Men. Let it appear now by your Equity and Justice towards all with whom you deal, that you do indeed believe that Gospel which you profess, and which teacheth you to despise whatsoever this World offers, either at the Price of a

Sin against your Religion, or of a Re-  
proach upon it.

*Seventhly*, It doth mightily adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, as to be just and upright in our Dealings with Men, so as not to over-reach and defraud them in what is theirs, so neither to be too rigorous and strict in exacting what is our own. We ought in some Cases *fare nostro cedere*, to part with our own Right, and rather than be contentious, sit down by the Loss of what others unjustly take from us. Whereas those who will strain their Right to the utmost Extent, and still have recourse to the *summum Jus*, the most rigid Exaction of whatsoever they can lay claim to, if they turn not Justice into Oppression, yet they turn it into Wormwood, as the Prophet speaks, and make it bitter and unpleasing. If they do not Injury to others, yet certainly they injure themselves, and they injure the Reputation of that Religion they profess, which requires us not to stand upon Punctilio's, but to give a meek Concession one to another; and votes him that yields both to have the better Cause, and to be the better Man. And yet I do not condemn, where Violence and Injustice deprives us of what is necessary to  
the

the Sustainment of Life; where what they take from us is more than we can well spare without some notable Inconvenience: I do not, I say, condemn those who seek to recover their own by legal and allowed Courses. In this Case, I know the Law is good, if it be lawfully used. And therefore the Apostle (1 Cor. 6. at the Beginning: *Dare any of you, having a Matter against another, go to Law before the Unjust, and not before the Saints?*) condemns not suing for our Right, but suing for it in such a manner as to bring a Shame and Scandal upon the Gospel. He forbids them in any Case of Difference among themselves to have recourse to the Heathen Tribunals for Justice; but would have other Christians to take up the Matter, and compound it between them. They must not bring such a Disparagement upon Religion, as that the Heathens should ever know there were any Differences and Contentions among Christians: And therefore they must not plead for Right in their Courts, but chuse out some of their most prudent Brethren to be Arbitrators and Umpires between them, standing to their Award. So now it is a great Discredit to Christianity, for those who profess it, to be always quarrelling about small Things, and those

little Concerns, which though they may belong to them, yet it doth not belong to Christians to be contentious about them. When Men shall stand upon every trivial Right, and rather than part with the least that they can call theirs, will imbroil themselves and others in troublesome and endless Suits; this argues that they have not such mean Thoughts of the World as the Doctrine of Christ requires, since they prefer any small and petty Concern of it before Christian Peace and Quietness, which the Gospel hath highly recommended. Our Saviour hath given us our Rule in this Case, *Matth. 5. 40. If any Man will sue thee at the Law, and take away thy Cloak, let him have thy Coat also. And in the Verse foregoing, Resist not Evil, but whosoever will smite thee on thy right Cheek, return to him the other also.* Now because these Places seem to contain something peculiar to the Doctrine of Christ, I think I shall not much digress, if I give you a brief Comment and Interpretation of them.

*Resist not Evil*; that is, you who are but private Men forbear to vindicate and right your selves according to your own Discretion. For Passion and Self-Love may make you immoderate, and cause the Revenge to be far greater than the Offence.

But if the Injury be greater than is fit to be born, this doth not forbid you to have recourse to the Magistrate, *for he beareth not the Sword in vain.* Revenge is an untamed Thing; and it is well for Mankind that God hath challenged it to himself, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, saith the Lord:* And hath appointed Magistrates, whom he calls *God's*, committing to them the Dispensation of Temporal Vengeance, reserving to himself the Dispensation of Eternal. Yea, so far must we be from being Judges in our own Cause, that our Saviour adds, *Whosoever shall smite thee on thy Right Cheek, turn to him the other also;* which must not be understood as literally obliging us. For neither Christ himself, nor his Apostle *St. Paul*, invited the Injuries that were done them, but rather sharply reprov'd those that unjustly smote them. To *turn the Cheek*, therefore signifies nothing else but to bear patiently the Affronts that are done us. And so we have it, *Lament. 3. 30. He giveth the Cheek to him that smiteth him.* And so it is prophesied of Christ, *Isaiab 50. 6. That he should give his Back to the Smiters, and his Cheeks to them that pluck off the Hair.* That is, he should suffer meekly and patiently those Indignities that were done unto him. All that

either the Example or Precept of Christ lays upon us, is to bear such personal Injuries calmly ; and to be willing rather to suffer a second, than to revenge the first. And this is far enough from that Sense, which that scoffing Apostate *Julian* put upon the Words, when commanding some Christians that were brought before him to be buffeted, ask'd them in Scorn, " Why  
 " they did not follow the Commands of  
 " their Master, who bid them *turn the other*  
 " *Cheek also ?*

It follows ; *If any Man sue thee at Law, and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak also.* Neither must this be understood according to the Letter, as if we were bound to reward those who injure us ; but thus much it teacheth us, that about small Matters, Things that we can easily be without, or else easily procure, as a Coat, or a Garment, or the like, we should not be contentious ; but rather recede from our Right, than rigorously pursue it with Strife and Quarrels. And truly, this is a Temper worthy of Christians ; but how rare is it to be found ! Pride, and Passion, and Self-Interest, have now a-days eaten out the Meekness, Charity, and Patience of a Christian Spirit. Many hot Professors there are, that, with *Peter*, are ready to pray for Fire to come  
 down

down from Heaven, and consume those that offer them the least Injury: And many that are more ready to take from others what is justly theirs, than to yield up any Thing of their own to the unjust Possession of others; many that would rather smite on both Cheeks, than suffer on one. Certainly Christian Meekness is perish'd from the Earth. And if we would find any remarkable Examples of it, we must turn over the ancient Monuments of the Primitive Church; for our latter Ages can furnish us with very few. Be perswaded, Christians, to bring this again in Practice. Nothing will more commend your Religion; nor set it off to the Esteem of others, than this: For when they shall see you bear notorious Wrongs and Affronts, with a conquering Patience; when they shall see you part with your Right, rather than strive about it; and willingly forego those Things, wherein others place a great Part of their Content and Felicity; what must the World conclude, but that certainly these Men have a most excellent Religion, a Religion doubtless that assures them of far better and more excellent Things than these, since it can prevail with them so easily to give up their Concerns, which others

so highly value. And indeed, upon this very Score the Apostle sets it, *Heb. 10. 34. Ye took joyfully the Spoiling of your Goods, knowing in your selves that ye have in Heaven a better, and an enduring Substance.*

This is the last particular Duty I shall insist on, as adorning the Gospel: Many others there are, too numerous indeed to be severally discoursed of; As the filling up of our Relations with the Duties appertaining to them; Self-denial, and an holy Contempt of this World; Charity and Liberality in relieving the Necessities of others: A mutual Forbearing to censure and judge one another; a Sin that mightily abounds in this Age, wherein every one thinks so much the better of himself, by how much the worse he thinks of others: A chearful contented Spirit under every Dispensation of God's Providence towards us: With several others, which I cannot now stand to treat of particularly.

And thus I have dispatch'd the Doctrinal Part of this Subject, and shewn you both what it is to adorn the Doctrine of Christ, and likewise, how a holy and pious Life, that is conformable to the Precepts of our Religion, doth it in general, and in particular.

All that remains farther to be done, is to exhort you thus to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things ; that as you have taken up the Name and Profession of the Christian Religion, so you would walk worthy of both, and of *the Vocation wherewith you are called.* Sensible I am, that the Temptations which lie against a strict and Gospel-Conversation, are many and discouraging. The careless Examples of those whom we yet think well of ; the Enmity of the World which lies in Wickedness, and will be sure to hate those who, by being more severe and precise than themselves, upbraid their Crimes ; the Reluctance of the Flesh against a Doctrine that engageth us to subdue and mortify it ; the Rigour and Difficulty of Christ's Precepts ; and vain Hopes and Presumptions of God's Indulgence : Are all of them such powerful Orators, that he who would carry it against all these, had need use very forcible Motives ; such as should not only perswade, but compel ; and give such Reasons, as should not only convince, but necessitate. But this not being in the Power of Man, I shall only shew you how reasonable this Exhortation is, notwithstanding all the Prejudices that lie against it ; and doubt  
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not, but I shall speak so much on the Behalf of strict Piety and Godliness, that Murmurings and Repinings shall be the only Objection left, which I must leave to the efficacious Perswasions of the Holy Spirit to remove and answer.

The Grounds of all, I shall lay in Two Particulars:

*First*, That the Profession of the Doctrine of Christ, is most rational.

*Secondly*, That it is most rational we should live according to the Profession we make.

The *First* I shall but briefly speak unto, because I take it as granted by all of us; Yea, even those lewd profane Wretches who hate the Professors of Religion and Godliness, and make them their Sport and Scorn; yet have not the profligate Impudence to avow that it is for their Profession, but pretend it is for their Hypocrisy, because they do not act suitably thereunto: Yea, the very Devil himself is forced to acknowledge, that this is the Doctrine which shews unto us the Way of Life and Salvation, *Acts* 16. 17. All other Religions in the World are nothing else

else but a Fardle of ridiculous Fopperies ; which the Devil could never have imposed on Mankind, did he not love to make Men Fools, and to triumph over their Reason, as well as their Souls.

The Excellency of this Doctrine of Christ, appears in these Three Things :

*First*, In the Sublimeness of the Mysteries it teacheth.

*Secondly*, In the Purity of the Duties it enjoins.

*Thirdly*, In the Transcendency of the Rewards it promiseth.

*First*, Its Mysteries are most sublime and lofty. And no Wonder, for in them is contained the manifold Wisdom of God : A Trinity in Unity ; the Incarnation of the Son of God ; that the Immortal God should die ; and that, by his Death, he should give Life to the World ; that his Blood and Sufferings should satisfy Divine Justice, and expiate our Offences : And indeed, the whole Method of Redemption are Mysteries that far surmount the highest Flight of Reason, and yet are therefore the more rational, and do the more oblige us to believe them, because  
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the same Reason tells us, that that cannot be the Wisdom of God, which may be comprehended by the Weakness and Foolishness of Man.

*Secondly*, Its Precepts are most holy and pure. As for the Idolatrous Worship of the Heathens, it was barbarous, and commonly cruel or obscene, insomuch that *Cato* (though it was the only Religion which he knew) was ashamed to be present at its Solemnities. And for the *Jewish* Religion, so much of it as is not incorporated into the Gospel, though there were nothing in it dishonest nor unlawful; yet it consisted in external Observations, as Circumcision, and Sacrifices, and Ablutions, which God in Wisdom imposed upon them to amuse and busy them about the Ceremonies of their own Religion, who were so naturally prone to fall into the Idolatry of others. But the Doctrine of Christ teacheth us to worship him who is a Spirit, *in Spirit and in Truth*; to employ our selves in those Works which have an innate and inseparable Goodness in them. It requires us not to circumcise our Flesh, but our Hearts; not to offer up the Blood of Bulls and Goats unto God, but even our own, if it be necessary,

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in bearing Witness to the Truth, and for the Glory of God ; not to wash our Garments, or our Cups, but *to cleanse our selves from all Pollutions both of Flesh and Spirit* ; not scrupulously to abstain from some Kind of Meats, but temperately to abstain from Excess in any Kind of them. This is the Doctrin that commands us to trust God with all our Affairs, to take his Promises for Security, to love and fear him who is infinitely Good, and infinitely Great, as the whole of that Service he requires from us. This alone reacheth to our Thoughts, and to our Affections, and lays the Ax to the very Root of our Vices, judging those secret Motions of our Souls which are unaccountable to any but God alone ; condemning rash Anger for Murder, and an unchast Glance for Adultery ; and penetrating into the inmost Reccesses of the Heart, ransacks and censures all the Wicknesses that lie latent there. And this shews that it is excellent above all other Doctrines in the World, and only Divine.

*Thirdly, Its Rewards are most transcendent, that which neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, God hath prepared for*

*for those that love him.* Other Religions either speak doubtfully of a future Reward, or else promise such an one as is mean and sordid : Sensual Rewards, fitted for brutish Religions. But now our Saviour Christ, after he hath commanded us to love God, promiseth us the eternal Fruition of the God we love ; promiseth no less for the Reward of our Love, than the Object of it ; assures us, that after a short Life spent here in his Service, we shall be released from all the Miseries and Troubles of this Life, and received up to a better, where all our Hopes shall be crowned, our Desires satisfied, all our past Labours fully recompensed ; where both Soul and Body, as they have been here Partners together in serving God, so shall be Partakers together of inconceivable Happiness, our Souls irradiated with the clear Vision of God, our Bodies irradiated with the Brightness of our Souls, and both for ever to remain in eternal Joy and Glory. This is the Religion, and the Doctrine of God our Saviour. And judge now, whether it be not most rational to profess it. Were there any other that were either so mysterious in its Revelations, so pure in its Precepts, or so excellent in its Promises, the World were not

not much to be blamed if it should adhere unto that: But when all others, so far forth as they differ from this Doctrine of Christ, are but rude and beggarly Elements enjoining either what is impure, or unnecessary, and promising Rewards abject and sordid; some of which, Reason it self teacheth us to hate, and some to despise; then certainly it will follow, that if it be not Folly to embrace and profess any Religion at all, it is Folly not to embrace and profess this. But there are some deep Impressions and Characters engraven upon Natural Conscience, of the Notion of a Deity, and a Supream Power, that ought to be feared and served by us, that it is altogether as necessary for us to be religious in some way or other, as to be Men. Many practical Atheists there are, even among Christians themselves, who live as without God in the World. Many such Fools who say in their Hearts, *there is no God*; who by having loose and erroneous Opinions of a Deity, serve him not as he requires: But for a contemplative Atheist, that shall set it down as his deliberate and resolved Judgment, that there is no God, I very much doubt whether any Instance can be given of such an one. Now then, if to embrace some Religion,

gion, be so natural and rational ; if all other Religions in the World fall infinitely short of the Excellency of the Doctrine of Christ, it remains, that it is most rational for us to believe and profess this Doctrine ; to own it to all the World that we are Christians, and that the holy Scriptures, whereto are contained all the Precepts of our Religion, is the Rule by which we are to walk. Let us not spare openly to profess this, and to make it our continual Employment to discourse of the Precepts and Constitutions of our Saviour's Doctrine, for fear of being scorned as Professors, or hated as Hypocrites ; for certainly, if this Doctrine be in it self most excellent, the Possession of it must needs be most rational, and they are only weak or malicious Fools that speak either against the one or the other.

*Secondly,* As the Profession of the Doctrine of Christ is most rational, so it is most rational to live answerably to such a Profession. If it be most rational to profess it, then certainly it is most rational to practise it, unless we intend to be only wise in Notion, and Fools in Deed. What Excuse can such Men plead for themselves at the dreadful Day of Judgment? Must they

they not needs be self-condemned, condemned out of their own Mouths, and by their own Profession, when those Things which they have owned to be most excellent, have been most neglected by them? And that God; and that Saviour, whom they have professed with their Lips, they have denied in their Lives? Suffer me to lay before you these following Considerations.

*1<sup>st</sup>.* Consider, that the Profession without the Practice of Religion, is but mere Hypocrisy; and Hypocrisy is the greatest Folly in the World. The Hypocrite dallies and plays with God; thinks to conceal himself from those Eyes before which all Things are open and bare; which is infinitely more foolish, than if one should go hide himself in a Net. Thou infinitely disparagest that God whom thou pretendest to serve: For whilst thou listest up thine Eyes, or thy Hands to him; whilst thou flatterest him with thy Mouth, and yet thy Heart is far estranged from him, thou dost but cast a Reflexion upon thy God, as one that is so weak as to be pleased, and put off with fair Words, and empty Shews. What base and unworthy Apprehensions of his Divine Majesty must  
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needs lie lurking in thy Heart, whilst thou thinkest to cover over an ungodly, unholy Life, with Pretences of Piety and Devotion? Thou votest with those, *Psal.* 94. 7. *The Lord shall not see, neither shall the holy One of Jacob regard it.* An Hypocrite must either deny the Omniscience of God, or his Justice, and at least tacitly conclude either that he takes no Notice of his Sins, or that he will not punish them; and so is worse than an Atheist. For as *Plutarch* (though an Heathen) speaks well, That it would be a less Injury done him, if any should absolutely deny that ever there was such a Man as *Plutarch*, than if he should grant that indeed such an one there is; but that he is a Fool, or unjust, or vitious, &c. So saith he, They speak not so ill of God who deny there is such a Being, as they do who acknowledge him, but yet think him unwise or unholy. This every Hypocrite doth; who while he professeth there is a God, and gives this God some external Homage and Service, and yet will dare to be loose and vain in his Conversation, unjust and oppressive in his Dealings, must needs believe either that this God doth not see him, or will not revenge: *But ye Fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the*  
*Ear,*

Ear, shall not he hear? He that formed the Eye, shall not he see? He that chastiseth the Heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Man, that they are vain, Psal. 94. 8, 9, 10. Doth not thy Religion represent God to thee as the Searcher of the Heart, and Trier of the Reins? As a God who looks quite thorough thee, and discerns every Breathing of a Thought, and of a Desire in thee? As an All-seeing, and All-knowing God, who will bring every secret and hidden Thing into open and publick Judgment? Live then according to these Truths: Live as always under the Eye and Observation of thy God; as one that art accountable to him, not only for the more remarkable Actions of thy Life, but for every Cogitation of thy Heart, and every the least Motion of thy Soul; or else thou provest thy self to be a very Fool, in not believing a Religion which thou dost profess, or else in not practising a Religion which thou dost believe.

2dly. Consider, thy Profession hath beautified and adorned thee; it hath honoured thee in the Esteem of all serious and sober Persons, who think well, and

speak well of thee, because of that Profession and Appearance of Piety and Godliness that is in thee. Now, as thy Profession of the Doctrine of Christ hath commended thee to the Esteem and Acceptance of good Men, so do thou commend that Doctrine to the Esteem of evil and wicked Men, by a Life altogether suitable to the Precepts of it. Sadden not the Hearts of the Children of God by thy Miscarriages: They have received thee as a Brother, and as a Fellow-Member with them of the same Body mystical. Approve thy self, by the continued Holiness of thy Life, to be worthy the Repute they give thee. Never think to maintain it by any hypocritical dissembling Arts. A rotten Limb will at last fall off, and stink in all their Nostrils: If thy Profession be not sound, thy Apostacy will be most certain. Keep up the Credit of that Religion among wicked Men, which hath given thee so much Credit among the Good: Let them never have an Occasion, through thy Miscarriages, to open their black Mouths, and to blaspheme the holy and reverend Name of God.

**Consider, 3dly. There is no other Way left to redeem, and vindicate the lost Credit**

dit of your Religion, but by a Life suitable to the Precepts of it. Its Honour lies bleeding, and is insulted over by wicked Men, who scorn and deride it, who triumph in its Disgraces, and ask, What now is become of your God, and of your Godliness? Christians, if you have any Kindness for either, shew the profane World, that even in this languishing State of Religion, yet there is Beauty and Lustre enough left in it, to dazle the Eyes of all that look maliciously upon it.

*First*, Redeem its Credit as to the Doctrines of it: Be not giddy, wavering and uncertain, but sound in the Faith; not toss'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine. Let not every glaring Delusion, every skipping Light, every whiffling Pretender to new Notions, pervert your Minds with good Words and fair Speeches, which the Apostle gives as the Character of a Company of Deceivers in his Days, *Rom. 16. 18.* and agrees but too well with a great many in ours. The Errors and Heresies that have thus crept in, have torn the Church in Pieces; and each Sect and Opinion hath gain'd so many Profelytes, that between them they have made a great many Atheists; who seeing that Christians are not yet agreed what to believe, will

themselves believe nothing; and knowing that many Tenets in Vogue are false and absurd, are strongly tempted to reject all, even those that are true. As *Averroes*, that learned Commentator upon *Aristotle*, refused to become a Christian, because of that monstrous Error of Transubstantiation, and gave this Reason for it, *Cum Christiani adorant quod comedunt, sit anima mea cum Philosophis*; "Since the Christians eat what they adore, let my Soul be among the Philosophers." Now, Christians, retrieve this lost Honour of your Religion; and let it appear, by your *holding fast the Form of sound Words*, that the Doctrine of Christ is certain in the Principles it teacheth; and that the Truths of it are built upon such clear Evidence, that neither the Subtilty of those who lie in wait to deceive, nor yet the Malice of those who oppugne them, could ever shake, or make you forego your Belief.

**Secondly, Redeem the Credit of Religion, as to the Duties it commands. Let it appear, that the most severe Duties it imposeth upon you, as Mortification, Self-denial, Contempt of the World in its Pleasures, Profits and Honours, are not so unreasonable nor impossible, as the World takes them to be, by your constant**

stant and chearful Performance of them. Recover again that Credit which others, or perhaps you your selves, have formerly made it lose through a loose and vain Conversation, by your Holiness and Strictness for the Time to come. Convince the World, that Debauchery is not necessary, and that the Doctrine of Christ was not given only to take up your more serious or melancholy Hours; but that it is an universal Rule for the Guidance of your whole Life, and that it hath an Influence into all your Actions. Till you do this, Religion must needs suffer and bleed, and, I pray God, it may not utterly expire, and die among us.

*4thly.* Consider, for your Encouragement, that if you thus adorn the Doctrine of Christ, it will for ever adorn you; and as you have made it glorious in the World, it will make you for ever glorious in Heaven. This is the Reward it promisseth; It will put a Wreath of Beams, a Diadem of Stars, a Crown of Glory, upon your Heads: *Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, Matth. 13. 43.* And therefore those who are careful to adorn the Doctrine of Christ, are but like those who put Ornaments, and hang Jewels on those Cloaths

which themselves are to wear; the Beauty and Lustre that reflects from them all, redounds to themselves. So we are promised, *1 Sam. 2. 30. Them that honour me, I will honour.* And to shut up all, consider that Place of the Apostle, *Gal. 6. 16. As many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*

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OF

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O F  
WITHDRAWING

From such as

*Walk Disorderly.*

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2 THESSAL. III. 6.

*Now we command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us.*

**T**HESSE Words are as authoritative and pressing a Command, as any we meet with in the whole Book of God. In them we may observe both the Matter, and the Form, of this Injunction: The Matter is, Separation from the Converse of wicked and profane Christians, who

who are here described to be *such as walk disorderly*: Ἀτάκτως, that walk out of Line, and keep not their Ranks. A Word borrowed from Military Discipline, which requires every Soldier to march in his File, and to keep that Order in which he was placed by his Leader.

But because there can be no Irregularity, but a Rule must first be presupposed; and no Disorder, where no Orders have been given: Therefore the Apostle farther explains whom he means, and whom he would characterize by this Note, of *walking disorderly*: And those he tells us, are they who *walk not after the Tradition which they had received*; i. e. according to that Doctrine which was taught and delivered to them by the Apostles and Ministers of Christ. And therefore,

*First*, All that commit gross and flagitious Wickedness, and that live in a Course of foul and notorious Impieties, are justly branded as those who *walk disorderly*. Tho' they make Profession of an Holy Faith, yet they contradict, and enervate it by an unholy Life: They take upon them the Name of Christians, but yet live as without God, and without Christ in the World. The Doctrine of the Gospel teacheth nothing but Holiness and Purity;

It is a Doctrine according to Godliness, as the Apostle expresseth it, *1 Tim. 3. 6.* All its Precepts, Exhortations, Promises and Threatnings, the whole Drift and Design of it tends only to make us more holy, and to impress upon us some Strictures of the Purity of God our heavenly Father. And therefore, certainly, they who live in the Commission of any scandalous Crimes, must needs be guilty of most wretched Disorder; they break their Ranks, fly out into open Rebellion; yea, while they march under the Banner of Christ, fight against their own Captain, and are to be reputed not his Soldiers, but his Enemies. And not only these, but,

*Secondly,* All that are erroneous and heretical, are disorderly Persons. Others transgress the Rule, but these destroy it: They pluck up the very Boundaries of the Faith, and deny not only their Obedience to the Truth, but the Truth it self. And though they may varnish over their damnable Doctrines with fair Shews, and good Speeches; and seem to be very mortified, spiritual, and heavenly Persons; that thereby they may gain Profelytes, and a Veneration among them; yet are they far more pernicious and baneful to the Church of Christ, than those that  
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are openly profane and scandalous : For since the Mind and Understanding is the leading Principle of Man, if that be perverted, it must needs have a malignant Influence upon all the inferiour Faculties. Our Notions are the Guide of our Actions; and consequently, an Error in Judgment stops not there, nor rests only swimming and floating in the Brain; but challengeth the same Privilege the divinest Truth hath, to direct and govern our Lives; and so by a wretched Improvement, becomes a Transgression in Practice too. He that hath denied the Faith, must, if he will, be coherent to his own Principles, refuse that Obedience which is consequent upon it. As a *Vertigo*, and Dizziness in the Head, causeth a reeling and staggering Motion in the Feet; so those who are vertiginous and giddy in their Opinions, must of Necessity be disorderly in their Conversations. They can never walk steadily by a Rule, which they deny to be so. And thus Error is not only Error, but an accumulative Mischief; it is Error, and **Wickedness too.**

*Thirdly*, And not only these, but all turbulent and factious Persons are disorderly Walkers: Such who rend the Church with Schisms and Divisions; and despise Government

vernment and Order, only because it is not of their own devising; and are so full of new Models, and new Platforms of Discipline in their Fancies, that in the mean while they have made such wide Breaches in the Peace and Unity of the Church, that I doubt it would much puzzle not only their overweening Wifdoms, but the Wisdom of an Angel himself, to compose and make them up again. And,

*Fourthly*, Not only these, but also all idle and impertinent Tatlers, all slothful Tale-bearers, who are very busily idle in gadding from House to House, like a Company of giddy Flies buzzing up and down, and who have no other Employment but very solemnly to whisper Nothing in every Man's Ear they meet; these also are branded by the Apostle as disorderly Persons. Indeed, a great Part of this Chapter is spent about these: Especially *Ver. 11.* *We hear that there are some among you which walk disorderly, working not at all, but are Busy-bodies; very busy they are, but yet do no Work. Unprofitable Burdens to the Earth, and good for nothing in the World, but only to keep the Air in motion.* Now from all these Sorts  
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of disorderly Persons, we ought to withdraw our selves, to have no Conversation nor Society with them.

And to this we are bound by a Command, as express and urgent, as any contained in the Scriptures. The Form of it runs imperatively, *We commend you, Brethren*: And the Authority of this Command is most absolute and sovereign, *In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*; *i. e.* We command you by the Authority of Christ, or Christ commands you by us, that you *withdraw your selves from every Brother that walketh disorderly.*

And here we may observe Two Things:

*First*, That a mere external Profession of Christianity, though it be overborn and contradicted by a disorderly and sinful Life, is here made by the Apostle, a sufficient Title to a Fraternity with true Christians: Though they *walk disorderly*, and are dissolute in their Lives, and erroneous in their Tenets; yet while they own the Head, Christ Jesus, and make Profession of his Name, they are yet acknowledged and called *Brethren*: They all belong to the same Family the Church, till they are solemnly cast out from thence;

thence; and that not only the Dutiful and Obedient, but the Untractable and Rebellious, *withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly.*

*Secondly,* The Apostle commands them to be more cautious in abstaining from Converse with a disorderly, lewd, or erroneous Christian, because he is a Brother, than if he were an utter Stranger to the Commonwealth of *Israel*, and a sworn Enemy as well to the Profession, as to the Practice of Christianity; *Withdraw from every Brother,* rather than from every other Person, *that walks disorderly.*

To this Purpose it is a most remarkable Place, and well worthy our most serious Consideration, *1 Cor. 5.* from the 9th to the 12th Verse, *I wrote unto you in an Epistle, not to company with Fornicators: Yet not altogether with the Fornicators of this World, or with the Covetous, or Extortioners, or with Idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the World. But now I have written unto you, not to keek Company, if any Man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat.* It seems that in a former Epistle (which perhaps is not now extant) the Apostle had forbidden the believing *Corinthians*

all Converse with wicked Men ; which possibly might occasion some Trouble and Perplexity in them, because in those Beginning Days of the Church, the number of Christians was so small, that the very Necessities of Life required their Converse with their Heathen Neighbours, who were Idolaters, Fornicators, Drunkards, and generally as wicked as Wickedness it self could make them : And therefore to relieve their Minds of this Scruple, the Apostle writes to them again, and distinguisheth wicked Persons into two Sorts : Such as visibly belonged to the World, and were professed Heathens, whom he calls the Fornicators and Idolaters of this World ; and such who belonged to the visible Church, and were Christians by an external Profession, but yet continued in their old Sins, though not in their old Gentilism. Now (saith the Apostle) I meant not that you should wholly abstain from having any Converse with wicked Heathens, though their Crimes be very vile and flagitious : For since the greatest Part of the World, and of those among whom you live, are Heathens, the Necessities of humane Life require that you should have Commerce and Dealing with them. You must go out of the World, *i. e.* You cannot possibly live, if you be wholly

wholly interdicted their Society, and de-  
barr'd from those, with whom your na-  
tural Relations, and secular Affairs, Inte-  
rests and Dependencies, are so closely in-  
terwoven. But there are another Sort of  
wicked Persons, those who are impious  
and scandalous Christians, those that are  
called *Brethren*, that make Profession of  
the same common Faith, and own the  
same Lord and Saviour; and yet their  
Lives are as profane, as their Profession is  
holy. From these they ought to with-  
draw themselves: *If any Man that is called  
a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or  
an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or  
an Extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat.*  
You see then that the Command is most  
express, and that which the Apostle ur-  
geth with a great deal of Vehemence and  
Earnestness.

And in prosecuting of it, I shall endea-  
vour,

*First*, To state the Duty, and to shew  
you how far we ought to *withdraw from  
those that walk disorderly.* And,

*Secondly*, Give you some Reasons, why  
we ought to do it: And make Application  
of all.

*First*, In stating the Duty, I must premise, that our Condition is much different from those Primitive Churches to whom the Apostle then wrote: They lived mingled among Heathens and Infidels, who made up far the more populous Part of all their Cities. Then the Church was in the World, as a little Leaven in a great Quantity of Meal, as our Saviour compares it, *Math.* 13. 33. But now, since the Progress and Spreading of the Gospel, the World (at least this Part of it) is come into the Church. We live, we converse with few or none but those who are called *Brethren*, and are all Christians, and the People of God, at least by eternal Profession and Vocation. And therefore,

In the *First* Place, As the Primitive Christians might lawfully converse with Heathens in managing their Civil Affairs in Traffick and Commerce, and whatsoever else was for the Necessity or Convenience of their Subsistence; the like Converse may we lawfully maintain with ungodly and dissolute Christians: For the Reason in this Case is the very same. The Apostle allowed them to converse with Heathens, though they were  
and wicked, because most of those among  
whom

whom they lived were Heathens ; and if this were not granted, there were no living in the World : And therefore, now that we live among none but those that are Christians, though the greatest Part of them should be supposed to be overgrown with Vice, and notoriously wicked and profane ; Swearers, Drunkards, unclean and covetous Persons ; yet we may lawfully converse with them about the necessary Concerns of Life : Otherwise, still the same Inconveniencies would press us, that we must go out of the World. We may trade and traffick with them, and perform all Offices of Civility and Courtesy, that do not either engage us unto, or demonstrate too great a Familiarity and Inwardness with them. Yea, the very same Converse which was allowed the Primitive Christians with their Heathen Neighbours, may, by the Parity of Reason, in all Circumstances be allowed us with dissolute and disorderly Christians.

*Secondly,* We are not so far to withdraw our selves from them as to violate the Bonds of Nature, or those Respects we owe, according to the Relations in which we stand towards them. A *godly Son* must not withdraw himself from un-

der the Government and Authority of a *wicked Father*. And those who are unequally yoa'k'd to wicked and dissolute Persons, must not therefore assume a Liberty either of relinquishing that Relation, or neglecting the Duties of it, because the other is lewd and licentious. Servants must not therefore reject the Commands of their Masters, and refuse Obedience to them because they are wicked: For this would put all the World into Confusion, and rude Disorder. Dominion is not founded in Grace. And it would be a wild World if Inferiours should acknowledge no Superiour, but those who are truly and cordially subject unto God: If Servants should obey no Master, but such as obey their Master Jesus Christ: If Yoak-Fellows should not acknowledge one another, unless they were mystically and spiritually married unto Christ: If Children should not be subject to their Parents, unless their Parents themselves were the Children of God: No; we ought to converse with all Persons, be they never so loose and dissolute, according to the Relations in which we stand unto them: And that also with the greatest Intimacy and Familiarity, and most endeared Friendship that such Relations do challenge from us. For the

same Authority that hath commanded us to withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly, hath commanded us likewise to love our Relations. And therefore, though they should remain obstinately wicked after all our Endeavours and Perswasions to reclaim them, we ought not to withdraw either our Persons or our Affections from them.

*Thirdly,* We are not to withdraw from any wicked Person, if we have great Hopes and strong Probabilities of reforming and reducing him by our Converse. For this is to act the Physician; and with whom should such an one be most frequent, but with the Diseased? And therefore we find that our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who by the Apostle is said to be *separate from Sinners*, Hebr. 7. 26. was calumniated and traduced upon this very Account, because he kept so much Company and Society with them; and accused by the supercilious and blind *Pharisees* (who could not distinguish between the Leprous and the Physician) as a Sinner himself, because so familiar with Sinners! *Matth. 11. 19. The Son of Man came eating and drinking*, i. e. he demeaned himself affably and courteously to all, accommodating himself to all their

lawful Actions; and they say, behold a Man gluttonous, and a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans, and Sinners. And so again, when they were captiously censuring him for eating with Publicans, and Sinners, Matth. 9. 12. he justifies this Action which seemed so obnoxious to them by the Charity of his Intention; *They that be whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick.* He was conversant among diseased Persons, with a Design of healing them, and among wicked Persons with a Design of converting and reforming them. And certainly the same Charity may justify our conversing with such: For should all serious and pious Persons withdraw from them, it would only leave those Diseases, which are in themselves dangerous, altogether desperate and incurable. And it would fare with them, as too often with many poor Wretches in the Plague, who perish miserably, not so much from the Malignity of their Disease, as only for Want of Help and Assistance.

But yet two Cautions are here necessarily to be observed:

1<sup>st</sup>. That thou thy self be very watchful over thine own Heart, and over thine own Actions, when thou art in wicked Company even with a Design of doing them

them good: Else, perhaps, thou mayst thy self get Infection, while thou intendest to cure it. For the soundest Christian hath corrupt Humours in him, which are very apt to take the Contagion. The best Preservative you have is your utmost Care and Caution, which if you do in the least slacken, it is great Odds but you will be involved in their Guilt and Sin, either by being drawn by their Examples into the same Acts, or by con-  
niv<sup>ing</sup> at them, when it may be fit and necessary to reprove them.

And, *2dly.* That you venture not into wicked Company, if you have not very probable Grounds to hope that your Presence among them will be an Occasion to hinder their Sins. Which ordinarily you may with Reason expect, if either,

You have *Prudence* enough to divert them.

Or *Authority* enough to affright them.

Or, *Thirdly.* *Reverence* enough to overawe and shame them.

One of these three Qualifications is absolutely necessary for every one that would converse with wicked Men to their Benefit and Advantage; either Prudence, or Authority, or Reverence and Respect. But for any other Christian (though he be never so zealous, and come fortified

with never so good Intentions and Purposes) he is no fit Man for such Society.

For, *First*, It is hazardous whether he shall be able to preserve his Conscience safe, where he shall be born down and outbraved by boisterous Sinners, who will scorn to be controul'd by a Person in whom there is nothing venerable but that Holiness and Piety which they despise and contemn. And so he will lie under a Temptation to do many undecent, if not sinful Actions, only that he may not be exposed to their Scoffs and Injuries. Or,

*Secondly*, If he preserve his Conscience safe, yet his very Zeal and Godliness will be made a Prey to their Taunts, and the weak inefficacious Attempts he makes to check their Sins, will but the more enrage and embolden them. They will but sin the more, to beat him quite out of Countenance; and that out of mere Despight that a Person, whom they so much contemn, should take upon him to prescribe Laws and Orders to them: And so instead of Physicians, they will, out of a mistaken Charity, prove only Murderers to their Brother. And this I have frequently observed in the World to be the sad and woful Issue of it. And therefore

fore you, who have Reason to suspect either the Frailty of your Nature, or the Weakness of your Parts and Authority, beware that you venture not into such Company. The best Security thou canst have, is to withdraw thy Foot far from them; and to disengage thy self as soon as possible, if at any Time thou art accidentally cast upon them. For either they will wound thy Conscience; or thou wilt but occasion them to wound their own the deeper. But if God hath endowed thee with such Courage, Prudence and Authority, that thou canst baffle and shame the Impudence of wicked Men, know that it is thy Duty, and a Work of Charity, at fit Times and Seasons, when God's Providence shall cast thee upon it, to converse with evil Men. Thou goest among them but to part a Fray, wherein though they all seem merry, and very good Friends, yet they are desperately stabbing, and wounding, and murdering one another by their Sins. And if thou canst either hinder any one of those Blows, or cure any of those Wounds, thou hast done a kind Office to their Souls, and an acceptable Service unto God. That's the third Particular.

*Fourthly,*

*Fourthly*, We are not to withdraw and separate from wicked Men in the Service of God. We may join with them in Prayer, in hearing the Word, yea, and in all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ; and be glad they will so far own Religion, as to give it any, though but an outward and complemental Reverence and Respect. The great Scruple, I know, is concerning that most sacred Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper*; and that Place before-mentioned, *1 Cor. 5. 11.* is here much insisted on, *with such an one, no not to eat.* From whence they infer, that if they may not eat *common Bread* with such who are Drunkards, Railers, Extortioners, or Unclean, &c. at their own Tables, then much less may they eat *sacred Bread* with them at the *Lord's Table*. And this passeth as an unanswerable Argument to justify Separation from them in this Institution.

But to this I answer,

*1st.* Jesus Christ himself eat his Supper in Communion with one whom he knew to be a wicked Person; yea, and whom he had branded with the Black Name of Devil: Which, were it needful, could be demonstrated as plain as Evidence it self can make any Thing. But,

See *Luke*  
22. 20, 21.  
*Mark* 14.  
23.

*Secondly*,

*Secondly*, Let it be supposed that such have no Right to partake of that holy Ordinance, yet you ought not to withdraw your selves because of their Admission, but endeavour rather to remove them. If you do not know them to be guilty, you are most uncharitable both in suspecting them, and in separating only upon a Suspicion. If you certainly know their Guilt, have you admonish'd them? If you have admonish'd them both secretly and before Witnesses, and yet they still persevere in their Sins; have you accused them, and before the Church brought convictive Proofs of the Scandal they have given? If thou hast used this plain Course, which our Lord Christ himself hath commanded towards an offending Brother, *Matth. 18. 15, 16, 17.* there will be no need of separating, but by this Means thou shalt either remove and eject him that hath given the Offence, or clear thine own Soul, and not partake of his Sin, in partaking of the same holy Ordinance. If otherwise, if thou hast neither reprov'd the Offender in private, nor accused him in publick, how darest thou separate from the Communion of the Church of Christ? How darest thou contradict his express Order and Command; yea, and think thy self the

the more holy and pure for doing so? Is this Conscience? Is this Religion? Is this strict Piety and Godliness? Nay, rather let me tell thee, it is a Piece of *Pharisaical* Pride to separate because of their Sins, and yet never reprove, never accuse them for their Sins!

*Thirdly*, Suppose we may not eat familiarly with such at their own Tables; yet it is no Consequence to argue hence, that therefore we may not eat with them at the Table of the Lord. And the Reason is, because the one is of Choice, the other is of Necessity, till they be cut off from the Church. I may chuse my Acquaintance and familiar Friends with whom to converse at Pleasure; and if I chuse those that are wicked and ungodly, without any charitable Design upon them, I then sin; and shew my self to be such an one as delights in vain and wicked Persons. But I cannot chuse Church-Members, nor say I will communicate with this Man, but not with this, till they are cut off from the Body of Christ, unless I design to make a Rent and Schism in the Unity of it.

*Fourthly*, To cut the Sinews of this Objection: I answer, That upon the Grounds already premised, it is as lawful for us to eat with wicked and disorderly

derly Christians, as it was for the Primitive Christians to eat with lewd and wicked Heathens. For the State and Circumstances of the Church are altogether chang'd; and we have now none to converse with, but those who are by Name and Profession Christians. And therefore though they should be guilty of the same Sins as the old Heathens were, yet upon the very same Account that the Apostle allowed his Converts to eat with Heathens, upon the very same may we be allowed to eat with loose Christians, when decent Circumstances seem to require it from us. So that if we take this Prohibition of the Apostle literally, we may safely affirm that it was but Temporary: Or if we take it Analogically, and by Rules of Proportion, so it forbids us nothing but an unfit and unnecessary Familiarity with wicked Persons; and so indeed we hold its Obligation to be perpetual.

Thus then I have shewed you the Cases wherein we are not bound to withdraw from those who walk disorderly. Not in managing our civil Affairs, and necessary Concerns of this Life. Not if we are bound to them in near and mutual Relations. Not if our Converse may  
be

be profitable and beneficial to them. Nor, *Lastly*, in the Worship and Service of God.

Let us now consider the positive Part of this Duty; and shew you in what Cases, and how far we are bound to withdraw from them.

*First*, We are bound to withdraw our selves from all unnecessary Converse and Correspondence with wicked and ungodly Men. We are not to make them our Bosome Friends, nor our chosen Intimates, nor to have Society with them, more than either the Necessity of our Affairs, or a charitable Design of doing them good exacts from us. And this I take to be the genuine and true Import of the Text, *Company not with any Brother that is vicious and debauch'd*, i. e. be not his Intimate and Familiar, give him no Countenance by seeking or embracing his Acquaintance. We ought not to chuse nor select such to make them our Friends, our Confidants, or Privado's. But if upon other Accounts we are obliged to converse with them, then although the latter of this Command reacheth no farther than this, yet by the same Reason we are obliged in the

*Second Place,* To withdraw from them our inward Respect and Esteem, setting them low in our Affections, and accounting but meanly and slightly of them. This the Psalmist gives as a Character of those who shall dwell in God's *holy Hill*, Psal. 15. 4. *In whose Eyes a vile Person is contemned.* They have learnt to judge of Things and Persons as they are: And though they may have many great Advantages of Wit and Parts to adorn them, yet these Things dazle not their Eyes; but they know it is but an *Ignis Fatuus* which makes all this Blaze, a Thing made up of earthy and sordid Vapours, whose Extraction is base, whose Employment pernicious, and their End deplorable. Alas! how can he highly value a Company of Slaves, whom he sees busily turmoiling in the Devil's Drudgery! How can he but nauseate those Swine that wallow in their Mire; and those Dogs, when he sees them licking up their Vomit! He knows, that such as these are vile in the Sight of God; and it would be a strange Dissonance if they should be dear to him, whose Affections ought to be conformed to his heavenly Father's.

*Thirdly,* We ought to manifest this inward Dislike, by our outward Demeanour,

nour, and to let them know by some overt Acts, that they are a Company of Persons we have no great Esteem nor Value for. We ought to put a vast Difference between our Converse with those who are sober and serious Christians, and those who are lewd and profane. Indeed, if we have no great Love nor Esteem for them, this Difference will soon appear of it self. For let two pious Christians converse together, how presently are their Souls touched with a mutual Sympathy; and that Holiness which knits them both unto Jesus Christ, knits them likewise one to another. Their Communion is sweet and free; no Reservedness, no Disgusts, but as full of Joy, as it is of Innocence; and their Souls seem to be as much one anothers as their own. But let a Person, whose Vices have made him odious, intervene, and his Presence (like that, as they say, of evil Spirits) brings a Damp and Suffocation with it. Presently their Joy is stifled, their Freedom restrain'd, they shrink and retire within themselves; and treat him with a visible Coldness, and an inward Constraint and Reluctancy. And indeed, we ought to shew a kind of Aver-sation towards wicked Men when we are in their Company, that it may appear  
that

that neither they, nor their Converse, are acceptable to us; and that we are, as it were, out of our proper Element, whilst we are engaged in their Society. So we find that holy *David* resolves to witness his Dislike whenever he should chance to be with evil Men, *Psal. 39. 1. I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle, while the Wicked is before me,* i. e. I will lay a Restraint upon my self; my Words shall be but few and sparing, that it may appear such Company is not at all grateful to me.

But here let us beware of running into Extremes. For many Men may be apt to take that for the Zeal of their Spirits, which indeed is only the Frowardness of their Temper; and so instead of an holy Dislike, may express only a proud Disdain of wicked Men: And by the Sourness of their Humour fright them not only from their Converse, but from their Religion too, which they are ready to censure as the only Thing that makes them thus crabbed and ill-natured. And therefore to both these Particulars of lessening our Love and Esteem, and the Signs and Testimonies of it towards wicked Men, we must add these following Cautions.

*First,* Thou oughtest heedfully to distinguish between thy Brothers Person,  
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and his Vices ; and neither love, nor hate the one for the other : For he that loves his Person for his Vices, is a Devil ; he that loves his Vices for his Person, is a Flatterer ; he that hates his Vices for his Person, is a Murderer ; and he that hates his Person for his Vices, is unchristian and uncharitable. And therefore, *Levit. 19. 17.* God forbids us to *hate our Brother in our Heart*, although he be such an one, whose frequent Sins may give us frequent Cause sharply to *rebuke* him. And therefore *St. Austin* gives us a good Rule ; *De Civit. Dei, lib. 14. cap. 6. Nec propter vitium oderit hominem, nec amet vitium propter hominem ; sed oderit vitium, amet hominem :* “ Neither let any hate the  
 “ Man for his Vice sake ; nor love his Vice  
 “ for the Man’s sake ; but hate the Vice, and  
 “ love the Man.” For indeed, couldst thou but cure his Vice, there is nothing in thy Brother but what is lovely and amiable. It is, I confess, a very difficult Matter to carry our Love and our Hatred with so even an Hand, that they shall not one intrench upon the others Object. And truly I know but one only Method how it may be done ; and that is, by using our utmost Endeavours to reclaim and reform our Brother : For thereby we do at once both express our Hatred against his Sins,

by seeking to root them out and destroy them; and our dearest Love to his Person; by seeking his eternal Welfare and Salvation. But, believe it, if we take any other Course of expressing our Dislike, than what in Probability may be beneficial to our Brother, and tend to reduce him, we do not only declare our Hatred to his Vice, but to his Person, from which we ought never to withdraw our tenderest Affection. And therefore to rejoice at his Miscarriages; to report them needlessly to his Disparagement; to upbraid him spightfully with them, not seeking his Amendment, but his Shame and our Revenge; is too true a Sign, that be our Hatred never so great against his Vices, yet it is not little also against his very Person. That's the First Caution.

*Secondly,* Another Caution is this: We must not so far withdraw the Testimonies of our Respect and Esteem from the most wicked Person on Earth, as to deny him that Civility and Respect which is due unto his Place; nor to refuse him the Offices of Humanity, which that common Nature we are all Partakers of, doth challenge from us. The one is not Religion, but Rudeness, and shews not so much Zeal, as want of Breeding: The other is barbarous and unnatural; with  
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which the Satyrift justly taketh the stubborn Jews, *Non monstrare vias, quæsum ostendere fontem*, Juven. Satyr. That they would not shew the Way, nor direct a thirsty Traveller to a Fountain, if he were not of their Religion. But certainly, Religion doth not teach Men to be surly and churlish; but it is the most gentle, the most obliging and affable Thing in the World. It is beautiful to see Christians kind and respectful to all, in their Deportment; taking all Opportunities to be helpful and beneficial even towards those with whom they refuse Familiarity. This their ready Willingness to do good to the worst of Men, will be a most effectual Means to bring up a good Report upon their Profession, when it shall appear that nothing but their Conscience and their Religion prompts them to it. Our outward Deportment towards others, is to be regulated by outward Respects, as well as our inward Veneration by inward Excellencies. I owe not so much Ceremony to a mean Man, although truly gracious, as I do to a great Man, though impious and profane: The one shall have my Hat, the other shall have my Heart. Certainly, it is but a sullen Humour, and not Religion, that teacheth any to deny accustomed and due Respects. *Festus*, tho'

an Unbeliever, shall be most Noble, as well as *Joseph of Arimathea* an honourable Counsellor, though it be added in his Stile, that *he waited for the Kingdom of God*. Though some wicked Men should be equally great in Crimes, as in Power; yet I ought to pay their Place and their Quality my Reverence, whilst I reserve my Veneration and Esteem for the poorest Saint. That's a Second Caution.

*Thirdly*, When, I say, that we ought to withdraw our Love and Affections from wicked and ungodly Persons, we must observe that there is a twofold Love: A Love of Benevolence, whereby we wish well to the Party beloved, and endeavour to promote his Good; and a Love of Complacence and Friendship, whereby we take Delight in him. We ought to love all wicked Men, whosoever they are, with a Love of Benevolence, cordially desiring their Good and Welfare, labouring what in us lies to forward it. But generally we ought not to love them with a Love of Complacency, Delight, and Friendship.

*Fourthly*, We are to withdraw from wicked Men, our Love and the Expressions of it; not absolutely, so as not to love nor esteem them at all; but only comparatively, so as to love and esteem

them less: And that in a twofold Comparison,

*First*, If we are not related to them, to esteem them far less than we do others that are truly sober and serious Christians. Our Delights should be in such, as are the Excellent Ones upon Earth; and we should in all our Demeanour put a visible Difference between our Deportment towards the one, and the other, that it might be seen, that my Converse with the one is only out of Charity or Necessity; but with the other it is out of Delight, and a free unconstrained Choice. And,

*Secondly*, If we are nearly related to them, and by that Bond are perhaps obliged to love them more than any other Persons in the World, yet also we must love them less in comparison, if not to others, yet to themselves. There are some natural and some civil Relations in which we stand, that challenge from us a Love and Esteem of the highest Nature, though the Persons be never so wicked and impious. And if we do not love and honour them above all other Persons in the World, we sin. And yet we must love them comparatively less, because of their Vices; not indeed less than other Persons, but

less than we should else love, and honour, and esteem themselves, were they truly virtuous and holy. Natural and Civil Relations are a strong and inviolable Bond of Love and Respect. But yet where true Grace and real Godliness is to be found, there the Union of our Souls should be closest and most endearing: And this double Cord, both of Grace and Nature, should knit us straighter to them, than where only one of these doth tie the Knot. And we should in a wise and obliging Manner let them know, that though we respect and value them as they are, above all earthly Enjoyments, yet our Respect, Love and Valuation of them would be far greater than it is, could we but prevail upon them to be other than they are. These are the Cautions I thought fit to give you. And thus I have done with the first General, the Stating of the Duty, how far, and in what Cases we ought to withdraw from the Company and Converse of wicked and ungodly Men that walk disorderly.

The *Second* is, To give you some Reasons that may inforce this Duty to you. And indeed, it being a Duty that seems so rough and morose to the too sociable and compliant Humours of most Men,

it had need be back'd with very cogent Motives and Reasons. And such I doubt not but to produce.

*First*, It is an Act of the greatest Love, and Mercy, that we can shew to their Persons. We are not to separate from them out of Spight or Peevishness, but out of Good-will and Charity; it being the last, and probably the most effectual Means to reclaim them: And therefore, as the Church is impower'd by Christ to draw forth its last Weapon against obstinate and contumacious Sinners, and to cut them off from its Fellowship by the dreadful Sentence of Excommunication (which Power is given her, not for the Destruction of any, but for their Edification; that they may thereby be brought to a Sight of their Sins, and repent for them); so also that personal Power which every private Christian hath over his own Converse, to refrain from the Society of such as *walk disorderly*, should be used by him (with the Rules and Cautions before prescribed) towards those who are otherwise incorrigible, as a charitable Means to reduce them from their sinful Ways; that when they see themselves thus banish'd, and, as it were, excommunicate from the Company of all those that are sober and serious,

serious, they may be moved to reflect upon their Actions, and to return both to themselves, and to God: And therefore the Apostle gives us this Command, *2 Theff. 3. 14. Note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed.* And indeed, if a Man be not altogether profligate in Wickedness, if he be not wholly lost to Bashfulness, it must needs make him blush to think, that he should be grown such a vile Wretch, that all good Men should carefully shun the very Air he breathes in, and the Places he haunts as contagious and infectious. The Truth is, whatsoever Company a wicked Man keeps, it proves a Snare to him: For by his Familiarity with evil Men, he is but tempted to more and greater Sins, And by good Mens Familiarity with him, he will be shrewdly tempted to Security, and Self-confidence, under his Sin and Guilt. He will argue with himself, that certainly such Men who are reputed holy and pious, would not converse with me as they do, did they not think well, and entertain a good Opinion of me. Were such and such Sins so black and horrid, as some few sower People would fain persuade me, these godly People would shun my Company as unworthy of them, and avoid me as a Person both noisome and dangerous.

dangerous. And therefore, doubtless, I may keep my Sins, and yet go Hand in Hand with them to Heaven; for if we part not by the Way, I hope we shall not part at the Journey's End. And so they are harden'd in their Sins; and you by keeping Company with them, and not reproving them, prove the Ruine and Destruction of their Souls. Whereas did you but withdraw your selves from their Society, it is probable the very Shame of seeing themselves forsaken, and left as it were lonely and desolate in the World, would at length work in them an Hatred of those Crimes which they see so detested by others. And thus we should only leave them for a Season, that we might afterwards enjoy them for ever. That's the first Reason.

*Secondly*, Consider the great Danger you are in, of being your selves defiled with the Converse of wicked and ungodly Men. There is no Plague, no Leprosy in the World so catching, as that of Sin: For,

1<sup>st</sup>. Our Hearts themselves are naturally corrupt: There are in us the latent and lurking Seeds of all manner of Wickedness. We should therefore beware, how we venture an evil Heart amongst evil Examples. The Devil hath a strong Party

Party within us, that watch all Advantages to betray us. And if thou wilt needs be gadding Abroad, to observe the Manners and Fashions of the World, beware thou beest not caught and ravish'd, and sent Home with a Wound and Dishonour. And;

2dly. It is the Glory and impious Pride of wicked Men, to rub their Vices upon as many as they can: They would fain make all like themselves: And it is much to be doubted if thou venturest among them, that as thou art more prone to be infected, than they are to be cured (for Sin is natural both to them and us, but so is not Grace); so also they will shew more Zeal and Forwardness to debauch and corrupt thee, than thou wilt to reform and reclaim them. Nay, indeed it cannot otherwise be: For they will look upon thy Sobriety and Seriousness, as a severe Upbraiding them for their Dissoluteness and Profaneness; and so to ease themselves of such a troublesome Reflection, would fain banish that Virtue which reproacheth them: And therefore will be earnestly perswading thee to do as they do, and be as they are. And, I believe, the very best Christians will find it a very hard Task when they are engaged in such Company, to keep themselves pure and unspotted,

unspotted, when they have so many Disadvantages against them, as an evil Nature within to prompt them, and evil Examples and Inticements without, to allure them. In this Respect certainly, there is not so much Danger in conversing with wicked Heathens and Infidels, as there is with wicked Christians: For as Physicians observe, that Diseases sooner infect those that are of a Blood, than those that are Strangers one to another: So is it likewise in the moral Diseases of the Soul. The Vices of a Brother, of one that is called a Christian; are more dangerous and contagious, than of a Stranger and Alien; inasmuch as the Sameness of Profession is apt to make us less suspicious, and wary of his Actions. And when we both own and embrace the same Religion, we are apt, first to favour, and then to imitate his Deeds: And therefore the Apostle commands us, especially *to withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly*. And that, if not out of Charity to him, yet at least we should do it out of Care to our own Souls; for we are in Danger to be led aside by their evil Examples. And how many have returned from such Converse with bloodied Consciences! Their poor Souls have long lain languishing under those Wounds which they have received in the House  
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of their Friends, as the Prophet speaks, *Zech. 13. 3.* That's the Second Reason.

3dly. Consider, our Society with lewd and wicked Persons, may not only involve us in their Guilt, but also in their Punishment. And indeed, it is but Reason and Equity that we should be Partners with them in the One, as well as in the Other. And therefore we have that Threatning, *Prov. 13. 20. A Companion of Fools shall be destroyed.* Nay, though we could keep our selves from their Crimes, yet our Society with them may justly expose us to their Plagues; and that, because our very Converse with them is Sin enough to provoke Divine Justice against us; which finding us in the same Herd, may well drive us to the same Slaughter. And therefore we see how earnestly *Moses* cautions the *Israelites*, to separate from the rebellious Company of *Corah*, and his Associates, *Numb. 16. 26. Depart, I pray you, from the Tents of these wicked Men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their Sins.* And so again, *Revel. 18. 4.* where the Destruction of the mystical *Babylon* is foretold, God warns his People to come out of her; *Come out of her, my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues.* And therefore you ought, for your own Interest

rest and Security's sake, to abandon the Company of wicked Men, unless perhaps you intend to perish with them for Company.

*4thly.* Consider, that if no other Punishment overtake you, yet the very Society of such must needs be a continual Burden and Vexation to all those who are truly conscientious, and tender-hearted Christians: So that, if not for your Security, yet at least for your own Content and Satisfaction, you should think your self obliged to desert the Company of such who must needs be a perpetual Grief and Torment to you. Thou who hast any Reverence for the holy Name of God; any Veneration for the Mysteries of the Gospel; and the Truths which thou professest; any Love and Esteem for Piety and Godliness; any Respect for Temperance and Sobriety; with what Pleasure canst thou converse with those who impiously tear and rend the holy Name of the great God with their hellish Oaths and Curses? Who deride Piety, and all that profess, or practise it: Who make it their Business to overthrow the Faith, and expose the sacred Oracles of God, and Mysteries of Religion; upon which all thy Hopes for the future are built, to publick Scorn and Contempt; who are  
only

only witty when they are profane, and learned when they are atheistical; whose Mouths are froth'd with Lasciviousness, and whose most familiar Dialect is Ribaldry; who are continually abusing themselves, and God's better Creatures, by their Excess and Intemperance; and boast of it as an heroick Atchievement, how many they have fell'd by the downright Valour of their Riots! Are these Companions fit for thee who callest thy self a Christian, and makest Profession of that Religion which requires Purity and exact Holiness from all its Votaries? Canst thou find any Pleasure in such Society? If thou canst, thou thy self art not only one of them, but worse; for so the Apostle accounts those who have Pleasure in such wicked Persons, *Rom. 1. 32.* But if thou hast but one Spark of Grace under all that Flame of Devotion thou makest shew of, thou wilt be so far from taking Delight in such Company, that it will be the greatest Burden and Vexation of thy Life: And when thou hast heard thy God dishonoured, thy Religion abused, thy holy Gospel denied or derided; and seen all the Abominations that Wrath, Lust, and Luxury prompts those to, who are Slaves to these filthy Passions, wilt return Home with a sad and heavy Heart, and find abundant Cause

Cause to weep over their Sins, tho' thou hast reprov'd them; or thine own, if thou hast not? And what a Folly then is it, voluntary to make thine own Life uncomfortable; and by Seeing and Hearing, vex thy righteous Soul from Day to Day with their unlawful Deeds? Indeed, if thou art constrained to dwell amongst such, it is thy Affliction; but it is thy Sin, if it be thine own Choice. It were altogether as pleasant an Abode, to dwell among Lions, and Bears, and Tygers, and all the ravenous Beasts of the Forrest. See how *David* complains of it, *Psal. 57. 4. My Soul is among Lions, and I lie even among them that are set on Fire; even the Sons of Men, whose Teeth are Spears and Arrows, and their Tongue a sharp Sword.* And see how passionately he bemoans himself, that he was under the sad Necessity of conversing with such Persons, *Psal. 120. 5. Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesecth, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar.* If thou art constrain'd to this unequal Converse, either through God's Providence casting thee among such, or through the Necessity of thine Affairs or Relations, thou oughtest to look upon it as a sore and heavy Affliction; and wilt find frequent Occasion in the Anguish of thy troubled Spirit to cry out, *Wo is me, that my Soul dwells among Lions, that I sojourn*

*in the Tents of wicked and ungodly Men :*  
That ever I should reside in those Places,  
and among those People, where the Name  
of God is daringly blasphemed, the Ways  
and Worship of God impudently derided ;  
where I hear nothing but Oaths and Cur-  
ses, and see nothing but wicked Examples.  
Certainly, if thy Heart be true and up-  
right before God, this will be thy perpe-  
tual Torment : But if thou needlessly ma-  
kest such Converse thy Choice, it is not  
only thy Suffering, but thy Sin too.

*5thly.* Consider, thy Converse with lewd  
and ungodly Men, will be a very great  
Hindrance to thee from doing of thy  
Duty. Art thou to perform any Duty of  
Religion in the Worship and Service of  
God? Thou wilt find there is no such  
Check to the Freedom of thy Spirit, as the  
Presence of wicked Persons ; who watch  
all we do, and with a malignant Eye,  
wait for some Advantage to scoff and  
taunt us for it. So that our holy Zeal  
and Ardour will be very much damp'd  
through the sinful Awe that is upon us,  
of offending them. Is it any common  
Affair of thy Life, that thou art to trans-  
act? If thy Interests be much interwoven  
with theirs, it is hard if they do not im-  
portune and prevail with thee, to put in  
some of their Byas's ; and perswade thee

to do somewhat, that either is dishonest or indecent. Art thou invested with Power and Authority, as a Magistrate? How hard will it be for thee, to punish the Crimes of those whom thou hast made thy Companions and Associates! How hard to administer Justice impartially against all the Solicitations of thy wicked Acquaintance, who will be ready to plead on the Behalf of the Guilty, only because they are so! Art thou an Inferiour? How hard will it be to preserve thy self free and untainted, from the Vices of those upon whom thou livest and dependest! And so in every State and Condition of Life, we shall find that Converse with wicked and ungodly Men, will prove to us either a mighty Temptation wholly to neglect our Duty, or a great Impediment to a conscientious and right Performance of it.

6thly, Consider, that thou hast other Company to keep, and needest not to be beholden to wicked Men for their Converse.

*First*, There are good Men, whose Company and Acquaintance we should covet and desire: And, Thanks be to God, that though these are but thinly sown in the World, yet there are but few Places where

where our Lot may be cast, but some one or other may be found, whom we may make our Guide and our Companion to Heaven. And though they should be but one or two, yet these are enough to take sweet Counsel together; these are enough to make thy Bosom Intimates, and Familiar Friends. The rest thou may'st lawfully converse with for thy Necessities; those thou should'st select for thy Choice and Delight. Or,

*Secondly,* If all others should be wicked and profane, and thou should'st live like *Lot in Sodom*, no righteous Person in the Place but thy self; yet art thou not left desolate and solitary. Hast thou not a good Companion in a good Conscience? A Companion which thou always carriest about with thee. This is such Company as a wicked Man dare not keep. Alas! there is nothing but chiding and brawling sessions: A quarrelsome Conscience, corroding Guilt, ghastly Reflections, pale Fears, Terror, Despair, Self-accusing, and Self-condemning Thoughts, that Hell would be almost as quiet an Abode for him, as his own Conscience. And therefore he keeps most Abroad, and converseth with any Thing, rather than his own Heart; and complains of being forsaken and solitary, if he hath not some to divert him

from minding the troublesome Discourses of his own Conscience. Whereas with a godly Man, all is quiet and calm at Home ; he can take his Heart aside, and commune with it, and entertain himself with a silent Joy. And certainly, he that hath such a serene, pure, and pacified Conscience, can never complain for Want of good Company. Nay,

*Thirdly*, Thou may'st every where, and at all Times, keep Company with the great God of Heaven and Earth : And he will make one with thee : And then thou may'st say, as our Saviour did, *I am not alone, but I and my Father*. Certainly, that Soul hath a strange gadding Humour, and is not sociable but wanton, whom the Company and Communion of God himself cannot satisfy. Such as these would certainly have repined to have been the first in Heaven ; and would have thought *Abel* himself not compleatly happy, who had there none of his own Rank to converse with. And thus much for the Reasons or Motives to this Duty ; for in a practical Subject, Reasons and Motives are the very same.

Suffer me to close up all, with a brief Word of Application : I shall but mention what might be more largely insisted on.

*First,*

*First*, Ought we thus to withdraw from those *that walk disorderly*? Then let not wicked Men condemn conscientious Christians, as if they were proud, or scornful, or unfociable. Know that it is not out of Pride, or Humour; but only out of Charity to thee, and Care of themselves, that they dare not keep thee Company. They are far better Friends to thee, than those who help thee to consume away thy precious Time, and damn thy precious Soul. They pity thee, they pray for thee, and will be ready to contribute their utmost Assistance to thy Advantage. Change thou but the Lewdness and Dissoluteness of thy Life, and thou wilt quickly find them to be the most affable, courteous, and complaisant Companions in the whole World.

*Secondly*, Must we withdraw from every one *that walketh disorderly*? Let this then serve to break all Knots and Combinations of wicked Men. God, the great Master and President of all Societies, hath prescribed us the Rules of our Converse; which if it be not regulated according to the Measures he hath given us, is no longer to be called a Society, but a Confederacy, and Conspiracy against Heaven. The first and chiefest Thing to be regarded in all Company, is the Company it self; which if it be

impious and debauch'd, we ought as carefully to avoid, as we would a common Pest. For the Devil hath no such artificial Method, of insinuating Vice into the Minds of those who are of ingenuous and facile Natures, than first to toll them into the Haunt of wicked and lewd Persons: For Custom usually begets Liking, and that Imitation. Know therefore, that it is thy indispensable Duty to separate from all thy loose and ungodly Companions, unless thou intendest to keep them Company to Hell, and there burn together in unquenchable Flames. Think how these Wretches, that now hug and embrace one another, will then fly in one another's Faces; and with fearful Outcries, charge their Damnation one upon another: One for enticing, the other for consenting; one for plotting, the other for executing, and there hurl Firebrands at one another for ever.

*Thirdly*, Here see the Misery of those that are wicked: God hath so low and vile Esteem for them, that he not only thinks them unworthy of his Presence in Heaven, but of the Converse and Society of Saints here on Earth.

*Fourthly*, Let it be for Exhortation, to those who are true Christians, that they would withdraw themselves from all ~~that~~ *walk*

*walk disorderly.* The Motives and Arguments that might perswade you to this, you have heard already: I shall therefore only give you a few Helps and Directions.

1<sup>st</sup>. Get your Hearts much off from those Things, that wicked and carnal Men are permitted to abound in: For these are the Baits that draw and allure you to their Company. There is scarce any Person that loves another only because he is wicked, but because of some Advantage, and secular Commodity, that he hopes and expects from him. Now when we can overlook all their temporal Pre-eminences, their Wealth, their Honour and Interest, and the like, from which we might expect any Profit to our selves, we shall not be in much Danger of being inveigled by a Person who hath nothing to recommend him but his Vices; nor by those Vices which have nothing to recommend them, besides their own Deformity and Ugliness.

2<sup>dly</sup>. Be as little beholden and engaged to wicked Persons, as possibly you can: For receiving of Courtesies from them, will seem to oblige you in Gratitude to converse with, yea and sinfully to honour them.

*3dly.* Let them see that you are Persons of most undaunted Courage and Resolution, that will not be afraid of the Face of any Man alive; but will boldly reprove them as often as they dare to sin in your Presence: For this will be the Means either effectually to reform them, or at least to make thy Company the less acceptable to them, and so to deliver thee from the Danger of theirs.

*Fifthly,* Let me add one Exhortation more; and that is, that those who are truly pious Christians, would so demean themselves, that all who have any Ingenuity in them, may acknowledge that their Company is far more desirable, than the Company and Converse of lewd and profligate Persons.

*1<sup>st</sup>.* Walk so that Men may see there is a Reality in your Principles, and that your Practice is agreeable to your Profession; For this brings a great Credit to Religion, and is a beautiful and charming Thing in the Eyes of all. That Man must needs render himself grave and considerable, who professeth what is true, and practiseth his Profession.

*2dly.* Let

2<sup>dly</sup>. Let them find an Evenness, and constant Tenor in your Life and Conversation: Be the same in your Houses, as in the Church; in Private, as in Publick: For nothing doth so much ingratiate a Man in the Reverence and Esteem of others, as to be constant and suitable to himself in all Occurrences.

3<sup>dly</sup>. Especially labour to outstrip wicked Men, in those commendable Things wherein they seem most to excel, and by which they gain upon the Affections of others to their Ruine. As,

*First*, Some wicked Persons pretend to be very exact in doing the Works of Justice, in giving every one their Due: And it is sad to consider, how they trample upon, and triumph over the Profession of Religion upon this very Account, that many who have pretended highly to it, have been found notoriously guilty of Rapine, Extortion and Deceit. Now, O Christians! gain this Ground of them, and make it appear that you are as just towards Men, as religious towards God, that neither you, nor your Gospel, may be evil spoken of.

*Secondly*, They brag much of their Courtesy and Affability, towards all: And indeed, by this very Act, they draw many  
into

into their Society, and the Snare of the Devil. Be you therefore kind and obliging, and use all the honest Insinuations you may to win others first to a Love of your Persons, and then of Virtue.

*Thirdly,* They boast much of Love and Agreement among themselves; which, though it be very false, yea, and impossible, that those who do not agree in God, who is Love, should ever cordially agree in loving each other: Yet because they maintain a kind of League and Confederacy among themselves, whereby they draw others to join with them; therefore let true Christians, who are all united to Christ Jesus by Faith, be likewise united one to another by Love. Shall the Members of Satan agree, and not much more the Members of Christ? Never cast that Shame either upon your Lord and Master, who is the Prince of Peace, or upon his Holy Gospel, which is the Gospel of Peace. But by the Indear'dness of your mutual Affection one to another, win over others to the Obedience of the Truth, who will be much the sooner perswaded to it, when they are once convinced that only in the Society of true Christians, they shall find true Friends, and such  
who

who will most sincerely and cordially love them.

*Fourthly*, They boast much of their Charity and good Works; how liberal they are in relieving the Wants and Necessities of the Poor. Let them not carry away this Glory from you. But as we have Opportunity, let us do good unto all, and thereby lay up for our selves *Treasures in Heaven*, 'till we come to our own, that is, our Heavenly Country, where we shall be repaid with abundant Interest and Advantage. Where *we shall converse with God and with Christ, with Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect*. Where we shall for ever be freed both from the Contagion and Trouble of wicked Company. Where we shall with infinite Joy and Satisfaction embrace the Society of those good Men with whom we have here taken *sweet Counsel together*, without Fear of Disunion or Separation, when both they and our selves shall be made infinitely better.

AGAINST

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A G A I N S T

# R E B E L L I O N.

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P R O V. XVII. 26.

*Also to punish the Just is not good,  
nor to strike Princes for Equity.*

**T** REASON and Rebellion are such horrid and loathsome Crimes, that if they should appear in their Native Visage and genuine Deformity, they could never form a Party, nor allure Men to divorce their Allegiance, and espouse a Cause whose very Look is hideous, and whose Portion is Shame and Damnation. And therefore, they always wish themselves under some goodly Vizard, and insinuate into the Affections of the unwary and easily deceived Multitude, under the specious Pretences of Piety and Purity, Zeal for the Reformation of Religion, the Extirpation of Superstition and Idolatry ;

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the Security of our Liberties and Properties, the Preservation of the Kingdoms from Tyranny and Arbitrary Government: And to View, they expose no other Consequents, but glorious Days, Godliness in its Power, Christ upon his Throne, and Heaven upon Earth; and such golden Dreams, that too many of the People, in the Simplicity of their Hearts, have followed *Absalom*, and transported with the Witchcraft of Rebellion, have abominated those who are truly Loyal and Orthodox, as Enemies to the Scepter and Kingdom of Christ, secret Favourers of Popery, and open Abettors of Profaneness. When this Zeal (and I may well call it a Zeal without Knowledge) hath once turn'd their Brains, straight they receive a Commission from Heaven, *to bind their own Kings in Chains, and their Nobles in Fetters of Iron*; straight 'tis trumpeted into their Ears, that *curst is he who goes not forth to the Help of the Lord, to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty; that curst is he who withhold his Sword from Blood, and who doth this Work of the Lord negligently.* We have already seen the direful Effects of this popular Frenzy, and if we are not wilfully blind, we may well see that the same Artifices are still made Use of to the same

Ends. Wherein, as our Stupidity is gross and inexcusable, to be twice gull'd by the same Methods, twice caught by the same Bait. so is the Craft and Subtily of our factious Deceivers most conspicuous in throwing out the most taking Law that can be devised to make the rash Vulgar eagerly stoop to it. For if once they can be but flatter'd into an Opinion, that they are the only Saints, (and indeed Man is a very silly Creature, and loves to be flatter'd into glorious Delusions) 'tis then very easy to make them believe, that 'tis their undoubted Privilege and their Birthright by Grace, to thrash Mountains, and overturn all earthly Power that may give a Check to that Spiritual Kingdom which they have modelled in their own Fancies; for such Honour have all his Saints. Perhaps some here may think me too sharp in making such a Representation: But indeed, 'tis impossible to speak of the Humours of a mad and giddy Age without seeming severe to the Infected, and he who barely shews what they have been, and what in too great a Measure they still are, is most satyrical and biting. 'Tis not my Design to offend any; but if I am accounted their Enemies for telling them the Truth, 'twas the Apostle's Lot  
before

before mine, and what was his Support, I hope will be mine, the Discharge of my Duty and a good Conscience. If therefore any shall think that a good and holy Cause, (as every Party is apt to think its own to be) if they shall think that Equity and Piety, Religion and Reformation, that the most precious Cause, and the most holy Designs, can justify Rebellions, or sanctify the Authors of them, I desire them, in the Name of the great God, soberly to consider that short Portion of Scripture which I have chosen for my Text, and on which my following Discourse shall be grounded. They are the Words of the wisest of Men :

*Prov. 27. 26. Also to punish the Just is not good, nor to strike Princes for Equity.*

'Tis true, indeed, that these Words were spoken by one who was a Prince, yea one of the greatest Princes upon Earth ; yet he spoke them by the Dictate of the King of Heaven. And therefore 'tis a most impious and profane Spirit that hath prompted some to say, that *Solomon*, in his Writings, hath pleaded his own Interest, and hath strained the Right of Kings so high, because him-  
self

self was one. If this be not an unpardonable Sin in those who pretend to be more refined Christians than others, yet I am sure 'tis one sort of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, by whose immediate Direction *Solomon* wrote, and wrote for our Direction, which if they will not follow, I think the King's Loss of his Subjects Obedience is nothing near so considerable, as the Subjects Loss of their own Souls.

I very well know that some have per-versly translated this Text, and instead of, *striking Princes for Equity*, have render'd it, *Princes striking for Equity*. 'Tis true indeed, that it is not good for Princes to strike their Subjects for Equity, since this were Tyranny and Persecution. But though this be a Truth, yet every Truth is not a true Interpretation, nor can it possibly be the Sense of this Place. *First*, because it is against the natural Order of the Words, *Lo tob le haccoth nedibin gual josber*; which, according to the plain Gram-matical Construction, ought to be rendred as our Translation, the *Septuagint*, and the *Arabick*, have it, *it is not good to strike Princes for Equity*; or else we must make an unnatural and ungrammatical Trans-position of the Words where there is no Occasion for it. And, *Secondly*, be-

cause they who do otherwise render the Words, must accuse *Solomon* of committing a Tautology in one of his short and concise Proverbs. And all Men know that it is against the Genius of Proverbial Speeches to have any insignificant Redundances: Yet if we must translate these Words, as some would have us, that *it is not good for Princes to strike for Equity*, is not this the very same Sense with what he had said before, that *it is not good to punish the Just?* For those Princes who *do strike for Equity*, do certainly *punish the Just*.

The Words therefore seem to have a double Aspect. The one respects Princes forbidding them to punish their righteous Subjects. *To punish the Just is not good*. The other respects the People forbidding them to rebel against their Princes for Equity's sake, *It is not good to strike Princes for Equity*.

First, *It is not good to punish the Just*. It is neither good in Conscience, nor good in Consequence. It is not good in Conscience, because it is the highest Piece of Injustice that can be committed to wrong those who wrong not any Law either of God or Man, and to exact a Penalty from those who are guilty of no Transgression. **This is absolute Tyranny and Oppression.**

It is not good in Consequence, because God will be the Avenger of all such; and *he that doth Wrong, shall receive for the Wrong that he hath done, and there is no Respect of Persons*, as the Apostle speaks, Col. 3. 25. Persecution for the sake of Christ, as it is *an evident Token of Salvation* to those who meekly suffer it, so it is *an evident Token of Perdition* to those who inflict it, as we have it, Phil. 1. 28, 29. But because every Man's Ways seem right in his own Eyes, although they are never so crooked in the Eyes of God, therefore their Fondness for their own Sentiments, and their Zeal for their own Way, will make them account all that oppose them as Enemies to the Truth, and Persecutors of Righteousness; and if any the least Restraint be laid upon their illegal and licentious Practices, tho' it be done with the greatest Moderation, and upon the highest Necessity of preventing the general Ruine, this they look upon as a punishing of the Just and Godly; and I am afraid too many think their Party most grievously persecuted, only because they have not yet the Power which by all Jesuitical Artifices they are labouring to get of persecuting others. That therefore we may not be imposed on by the Exclamations

of those who arrogate to themselves to be *the only People of God*, let us not so much consider whether they be just and righteous, (I heartily wish that all who have so good an Opinion of themselves were really so) but whether they suffer for Justice, and Righteousness sake: If so, then happy and blessed are they; the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon them. But if any Man suffer for transgressing the Laws of the Magistrate, which he is not sure to be contrary to the Laws of God; if any Man suffer in the Defeat of a Conspiracy, or in carrying turbulent and seditious Designs against the Peace of the established Government; if any Man suffer as he is, a busy Promoter of any particular Faction of Christians, rather than a zealous Promoter of the general Profession of Christians; let us not think that Man suffers as a Christian, but for acting directly contrary to the express Rules of Christianity. But indeed, what Sufferings, what Punishments, were they that could exasperate their Minds to enter into that hellish and accursed Design for the Discovery and Disappointment, of which we this Day bless our great and gracious God? Did they suffer from the State, unless it were grievous in their Eyes that it was peaceful, prosperous and flourish-

riſhing? Did they ſuffer any Thing in their own Eſtates, unleſs it were a dangerous Barfeit of Eaſe, Wealth and Plenty? Did they ſuffer in their Conſciences, except it were a tormenting Regret, that they could not model the Government of the Church according to their own Fancies? Were they not permitted their own Liberty, both as to their Way of Discipline and Worſhip? Did the open Doors of their Meetings, and the vaſt Numbers within thoſe Doors, make them look like a persecuted People? Were they a persecuted People, when 'tis ſufficiently known that many joined themſelves to them merely for their Intereſt, and their own Advantage; and in many Places, thoſe who cleaved to the Communion of the eſtabliſh'd Church ſuffered the Perſecution of Revilings and bitter Mockings? What Sufferings then can we imagine they lay under; unleſs it be an inſupportable Suffering to tender and generous Spirits to enjoy all this Licenſe merely upon Sufferance? The Laws and Statutes were againſt them, 'tis true; but if this be ſuch a dreadful Perſecution, ſurely they are Men of a very delicate Senſe that can feel the Letter of a Law, when they never felt the Execution of the Penalty. In ſine, let any rational Man

soberly consider the Illegality and destructive Tendency of their Ways, and then withal the great Condescensions of the Government to them, and let him impartially pronounce whether they were any otherwise *persecuted* than that they could not persecute; or any otherwise *oppress'd*, than that they were not uppermost. For this it is they struggle. And when they had not long since gotten an uncontrollable Power into their Hands, we then sadly found that the Injustice and Tyranny of those who pretended they were set up by God on Purpose to punish the Faults of others, only justified and acquitted them; so that the greatest Crimes and Miscarriages that Envy could ever object against those whom they called the ungodly and malignant Party, were Innocence and Virtue, in comparison with the enormous Villanies of those Saints who were sent to correct them.

But however, suppose all their Exclamations to be true and well grounded; suppose them, *First*, to be as just as they suppose themselves; suppose, *Secondly*, that for this their Justice and Righteousness they are most cruelly and inhumanely punish'd; the first of which I wish were as true, as the second is certainly false: Suppose, *Thirdly*, that the Magistrate is

**extreme-**

extremely to blame, and guilty of a great Sin before God and Man to punish such innocent and righteous Persons; yet after all this, the Question is, Whether it be lawful for such persecuted Subjects to revenge themselves upon their persecuting Rulers? Whether they may not for the sake of Piety and Religion, for the Preservation of the true Profession and Professors thereof, for the Maintenance and Administration of Justice and Equity, repel Force with Force, and *strike* at those Princes, who so injuriously *strike* at them? To this my Text answers, *No*, they may not; for though it be *not good* for Princes to punish the *Just*, neither is it *good* to *strike* Princes, no not *for Equity*. And this is that Part of my Text I intend chiefly to insist on.

And here it is necessary briefly to open the Words; wherein we have,

*First*, The Action condemned, which is, to *strike* Princes.

*Secondly*, The Cause, Motive, or Provocation to this Action, *for Equity*.

*Thirdly*, The Censure and Doom pass'd upon it by the wisest of Men, guided by the Spirit of the All-wise God, *It is not good*.

I shall begin with this Last, the Doom and Censure, which though it be mild in Terms, is yet very heavy and tremendous in Sense: *It is not good.* It speaks only Dislike, but means Detestation; and by a *Meiosis* frequent in Scripture, carries the Signification much farther than the Expression, and declares that it is a Crime most impious in it self, and most odious and abominable to God. So *Prov. 16. 29. A violent Man inticeth his Neighbour, and leadeth him into a Way that is not good;* i. e. a Way that is most baneful and pernicious. And most fully, *Ezek. 36. 31. Ye shall remember your Doings which were not good,* which he there interprets to be their Iniquities, and their Abominations.

*Secondly,* Let us consider the Action that is thus condemned to be *not good;* i. e. to be extremely heinous and impious, which is, *to strike Princes.* Neither must this be understood precisely according to the literal and proper Signification of it, as if nothing else were forbidden but a rude and boisterous wounding of them. But hereby the Holy Ghost prohibits also whatsoever may be an Injury either to their Persons, or to their Authority, for both are sacred.

We must not, *First*, Strike Princes with *the Tongue* in their Fame and Reputation, any more than with the Hand in their Persons; nor by reviling, or diminishing Whispers, Fly-blow the Ears of their Subjects; nor by little Arts, and suspicious Intimations, and sly Conveyances of Shrugs, *Aposiopeses*, and half Sentences, seek to undermine and lessen them in the Affections of their People. We have already both seen and felt the fatal Consequences of such Methods of insinuating Politick Jealousies into the Minds of Men; first by Supposition; what if such Things should be, 'till the seditious Humour growing stronger, they come to bold Affirmations that they are; and then with an affected Sadness, bidding us prepare for sadder Times, for greater Sufferings and Calamities that are yet to ensue. And so the Vulgar are possess'd with nothing but Fears and dismal Apprehensions of what Miseries are coming upon them, and what they are like to undergo from the Power and Authority of their Rulers: Which all tends to produce that Hate which naturally follows upon Fear, and so to shake the very Roots and Foundation of Government, which are firmest settled in the Love and chearful Obedience of the Subjects. We have already  
felt,

felt, I say, the sad and bitter Consequences of this Artifice, *of striking Princes with the Tongue*, which hath been but the Prologue to a sad Tragedy, and made Way to all the Extremities of Blood, Rapine, and Violence, under which these Three unhappy Kingdoms for many Years miserably groaned : And I pray God we may not again find the fatal Effects of it; for every discerning Person may evidently see that we are treading in the very same Tracts, that before lead us to Death and Ruine. Certainly, those who will draw *their Tongues* against their Prince to lessen his Authority, would, if they had Opportunity, draw *their Swords* too to cut it quite off. Such Whispherers, who make it their Business to go about with sad News, and with instructed Sighs, instill into the People groundless Reports, and false Surmises, giving out blind and ambiguous Speeches, as if they would be thought to understand much more than they dare relate, That *Religion is in Danger*, and Antichristianism will doubtlesly be establish'd, making the poor amused People believe, that none are *true Christians*, nor *true Protestants*, but themselves. These are the very *Bontefeu's* of the Nation, and their Breath hath blown up the Coals in one Civil War already; and if

the same Arts have the same Success upon the Minds of the People, I see not how we can avoid another. Indeed, God hath at this Time wonderfully blasted their wicked Counsels, and delivered us from a Ruine, which by these cunning Wiles, they had been long preparing for us; and for so great a Rescue we bless his holy Name. And, oh! that we might ever be so wise as to avoid the Entanglement of these Snares. Beware, O Christians! upon your Fidelity to God the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*; beware that you do not by Misrepresentations, or Misinterpretations, traduce the Actions of your lawful Governours, nor lend your Ears, or assent to the calumniating Suggestions of a Company of Men, whose Words though they are smoother and softer than Oil, yet are they *drawn Swords*. Beware what Air you breathe, what Converse you keep; suffer none of those Leeches to fasten on you, whose very Mouths will draw Blood. The Apostle have given them their right Character, 2 Pet. 2. 20. *Presumptuous are they, self-will'd, they are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities.*

Secondly, We must not *strike Princes in their Authority*, nor the Exercise of it over us. Which is done two Ways: Either

by refusing to be subject to their Laws, or deposing them from their Dominion.

1st. We must not refuse Subjection and Obedience to their Laws, for this is a striking, yea, a maiming a Prince in his Authority. This is so often press'd and inculcated on us in Scripture, that scarce have we more Precepts for any one Duty to God, than we have exprefs Commands for our general Subjection and Obedience to our Magistrates and Rulers; 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours, as unto those who are sent by him, for the Punishment of Evil Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well: For so is the Will of God.* Rom. 13. 1. *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers. And, Verse 2. Whosoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive unto themselves Damnation.* And in many other Places, too numerous to be now cited. And here we are not to chuse our Subjection, and elect what Laws we please to obey, and reject others: For this is to make our selves our Sovereigns, and to acknowledge no Validity in the Ordinances of the Magistrate till we enact them. Believe it, it is not little Inconveniences or Prejudices, or Secular Interests

terests and Advantages, that can supersede the Obligation by which I am bound to Obedience. It is not enough to say, I do not like such a Thing, and therefore I will not do it: No, God hath not left you at such Liberty. There lies a Necessity upon you in Point of Conscience, and as Matter of eternal Salvation or Damnation, if not for the Fear of the Wrath of Men, yet for Fear of the Wrath of God, to yield ready Obedience to every Law and Ordinance of Man that doth not contradict the Law and Command of God. And those who think it no great Matter to fail in their Duty towards their Governours, if so be they carefully perform their Duty to God, do grievously delude themselves; for our Obedience to them is a great Part of our Duty to God, and he hath as strictly enjoined it under as great Penalties and severe Threatnings, as any other Duty whatsoever that immediately concerns himself: Yea, our Obedience is so absolutely required, that 'tis not left to our Liberty to chuse the Penal before the Preceptive Part of the Law, to chuse to suffer the Punishment rather than to fulfil the Precept, unless it be in one Case, which I am sure no Faction among us can with any Reason alledge, and that is, when the Laws of the

Magistrate do contradict the exprefs Laws of God, then indeed Subjects are bound to yield Submission only to the Penal Part, and willingly to undergo the Punishment threatned in it, but by no Means to obey the Precept ; for in such Cafes 'tis a stated and unvariable Rule, that we must obey God rather than Men. This therefore is the Subjection which we owe to the Supreme Authority ; and whosoever refuseth to be *actively obedient*, when nothing is required against the Law of God ; or *passively obedient* in case it should be so, he *strikes* his Prince, *wounds* him in his Authority, and takes away a Subject from him by turning him into a Rebel.

*Secondly*, Much less must we strike them in their Authority, so as to attempt to depose them from their Rule and Government. The Crown doth not precariously depend upon the People, to be worn, and then laid aside again as they shall please : Nor can the Dominion, with which a Sovereign Prince is invested, be abrogated by the Consent of the People, altho' it might perhaps be first given by their Consent. Because, as there was the voluntary Concurrence of both to assume it, so there must be again the voluntary Concurrence of the Prince at least to lay it down ; or else he must needs suffer Wrong  
and

and Injury. Indeed, it is far less Injustice to take away any private Man's Inheritance, than to deprive a Sovereign Magistrate of that Authority, which God and Man, Law and Succession, and all the Titles we can have here on Earth, have instated in him. And the Iniquity is so much the greater, inasmuch as virtually all other Rights are lost and destroyed when his is; all others being derived from his, and depending upon it.

This therefore is the *Second Particular*, *We must not strike Princes in their Authority*, either by denying Obedience unto it, or deposing them from it.

*Thirdly*, If this be Iniquity, then certainly it is Sacrilege to strike them in their Persons, and to offer Violence to their Liberty or Life. They are sacred as they bear the Impress of God's Similitude stamp'd upon them, which who so violates, is sacrilegious. God hath *cloathed them with Majesty and Power*; and whatsoever they are as to Virtue and Religion, though some of them may be Devils for their Morals, yet they are Gods for their Dominion. And the great God, who is their only King and Ruler, hath bestowed upon them the Fellowship of that high Name, *Psal. 82. 6. I have said ye are Gods.* And, *Verse 1. He judgeth among the Gods.*

So *Exod. 22. 28. Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the Ruler of thy People.* This Prohibition respects not the Heathenish Gods, who were indeed but Devils; and no Reproach could be injurious to them; but *thou shalt not revile the Gods, who are the Rulers of thy People.* For it reflects an high Disparagement and Indignity upon the only true God to abuse his Image, and affront that Authority which is the nearest Type and Resemblance of his own. And therefore *David*, who was designed to the next Succession in the Kingdom, yet when he cut off but the Skirt of *Saul's* Garment, (who was his sworn and implacable Enemy, and sought his Destruction by all unworthy Means) though he did it without intending any Hurt to his Person, or Contempt to his Authority, but only that he might produce it as a Pledge and Evidence of his Innocence; yet it is said, that *his Heart smote him for it*, because he had approached too near to Majesty with any other Design than to serve and venerate it. What then shall we think of those, who durst cut off not only the Skirt, but the Sacred Head of a Sovereign Prince, and stretch forth their bloody Hands against the Lord's Anointed? Certainly, we never heard that their Hearts

*smote*

smote them for it; or that they ever testified the least Remorse for so horrid and impious a Crime: Yea, they died, glorying that they had done it; and seemed not only to have Peace, but to be full of Raptures and Ecstasick Joys in the Assurance of a glorious Reward for it. Which yet is so far from being a Justification of their horrid Wickedness, that we may rather think they had sinned, and were harden'd past Repentance. And as for our late Conspirators, they were altogether as bloody, though not so Ceremonial as the former. They had prepared their Instruments of Death; call'd out a select Number of Assassins, chosen the Place on which to take their Stand to the greatest Advantage both for Success and Secrecy. And now nothing wanted, but that *the Breath of our Nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord, had fallen in their Snares, but only a few Days, and a favourable Providence.* But God, whose Care Sovereign Princes are, and among them Outs in a more especial and peculiar Manner, by a wonderful Providence (which his Majesty himself hath thankfully acknowledged in his Declaration) defeated their Designs, and after brought to Light their Hellish Villany. And though they were unsuccessful, yet were they not

less guilty, than if their execrable Attempt had taken the same Effect that Hell and their own wicked Hearts had desired. For whosoever designs to *strike* his Prince, whether he hit, or miss, to be sure murders his own Soul.

And thus I have shewn you how Princes are stricken; in their Reputation, by slanderous Tongues; in their Authority, by denying Subjection to it, or endeavouring to depose them from it; and lastly, in their Persons, by Violence, and Murder; and how damnable and destructive each of these Ways of striking Princes is: *It is not good to strike Princes.*

The *Third* and *Last* Branch of my Text yet remains, and that is, the Cause, Motive or Provocation to this abominable and damnable Action, and that is *Equity*: *It is not good to strike Princes for Equity.*

Now these Words may admit of a double Interpretation; for we may understand them either of the Princes, or the Subjects Equity. And to strike for either, is here censured as an heinous Crime.

*First*, To strike Princes for Equity, may be understood of resisting, and rebelling, against

against them for their own Equity, and the Execution of that Justice which is committed to them. When a Prince shall duly execute the righteous and known Laws of his Land, and suffer for so doing by his powerful and factious Subjects; when he shall punish any of them for doing Evil, and thereby exasperate them to take Revenge; when he shall zealously maintain God's Worship and Service in the stated and regular Way, and thereby incense the ignorant and wayward Multitude to rise against Government it self as Superstition, and to pull down Kings as Idols; this is to be stricken for Equity, for doing of that which is Just and Right. And it is a most provoking Crime in the Sight of God; for it is no less than Rebellion against him. For as resisting and wronging an inferior Officer, commission'd by the King, is virtually and interpretatively the same Disobedience, as if it were done against the King in Person; so likewise to resist and injure Kings and Supreme Magistrates in the Execution of their righteous Laws, is virtually the same Affront, as if we rose up against God, and struck immediately at him; for they receive their Commission from him, and are his Viceroys and Vicegerents on Earth.

Now though this Sense of the Words carries in it a great Truth, yet I do not think it the most proper Import of them in this Place; and that because this is the very same with *punishing the Just*, from which *striking of Princes for Equity*, seems to be made distinct.

*Secondly*, Therefore *striking of Princes for Equity*, may be understood of striking them for their Subjects Equity; that is, it is a great Iniquity to strike Princes upon any Pretences of Equity and Justice in so doing. Never yet was there any Insurrection against the lawful Magistrate, but what was prefaced with glorious Pretences; the Honour of God, the Liberty of the Subject, a due Freedom for tender Consciences, the thorough Reformation of Abuses in Church and State, the Establishing of the Ordinances of Jesus Christ in Power and Purity; which indeed are all of them as excellent Things as any Design of Man can reach, and we can never too much prosecute them, while we do it in a lawful and allowed Manner. But what! must we therefore level Kings and Kingdoms to the Ground, and cast down, by Right or Wrong, whatsoever we fancy stands in our Way to these blessed Ends? No; God forbid. For tho' our End may be Equity and Truth, and Justice,

Justice, and Holiness, yet it is Iniquity to *strike Princes for Equity*. A good Purpose can never justify a wicked Action; and God abhors that our Sins should be made the Means of his Glory: Yet certainly there is no one Topick that doth more prevail upon weak Minds, than this. Perswade them once to believe, that they are like to be wronged in the dearest of all their Concerns, their Religion, or their Property; that Popery will overthrow the one, and Arbitrary Government the other; and there needs no other Ferment to make them work over into Sedition and Tumults, to shake, and, if they can, overthrow the Establish'd Government, which indeed is the surest Defence against both.

Arbitrary Government is, in Truth, a hard Word, and a much harder Thing: And I am verily perswaded, that many Men have learn'd to speak it by rote, who understand nothing at all what it signifies; and it may mean Classical, or Synodal, for ought they know, and I am sure with much better Correspondence than as they usually apply it. In short, Arbitrary Government is a Government managed by the sole Will and Pleasure of the Ruler, without the Direction and Prescript of Laws. But have they any Reason to fear this? Was there ever any

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Prince,

Prince, that in all his publick Transactions, hath kept himself more precisely to the Rules of the establish'd and known Laws, than ours hath done? Hath he ever sought, by Force and Violence, to push on his Designs, or to redress those intolerable Affronts and Injuries that have been done him by some of his petulant Subjects, by any other Means than Recourse to the Laws? Yea, and in those just and mild Proceedings, he hath met with such hard and perverse Measures, that he had Reason to complain, (as 'tis said he once did) That none within his Dominions were denied Justice, but himself. So that this Pretence of Arbitrary Power, and Arbitrary Government, is nothing but a Bugbear, invented to fright the People first from their Wits, and then from their Allegiance. And let me add, that of all Men in the World, those who by such wicked Arts, and bloody Enterprizes, sought the Subversion of the Government, ought least of all to have objected this: For as their vile Attempts were utterly against Law; so, had they succeeded in them, no doubt their Sway, and Management of their usurped Power, would have been most arbitrary, and squared by no other Law than their own Will and Pleasure.

**And**

And for the Coming in of Popery, I must confess, I dread it as much as they, and, I think, upon better Grounds : For I not only know the restless Industry, the crafty Artifices, the formidable Power and Interest of that Antichristian Party, who have with the greatest Application endeavoured, in one continued Series, to reduce that rotten Religion again into these Nations, ever since it was first expell'd out of them ; but that which gives me the most troublesome Apprehension is, the Helping-hand which those lend to bring it back again, who yet seem to cry out loudest, That it is coming in. Are these Men fit to keep out Popery, who do what they can by their Factions, Schisms, Seditious and Conspiracies, to make Protestantism odious ? And act so as if it were their Design to demonstrate to the World, that we must be either Papists, or Rebels ? Nay, as if it were their Design to baffle all Popish Plots, and detestable Treasons, by striving to outdo them ? What shall I say ? It is a Lamentation, and it shall be for a Lamentation, that these Men who pretend to be at the greatest Distance from Popery, and who are ready to call all others Papists but themselves ; yet do their Work for them more effectually than all the Emissaries of

Rome, or of Hell, could have done. And yet, I hope, our God hath not utterly abandoned the small Remains of his true reformed Church among us; and notwithstanding all the Advantages that these Men have given to the common Adversaries, not only to reproach, but to persuade and prevail, he will yet in his infinite Mercy find out Expedients to preserve his true Religion free, both from *Romish* Idolatry, and Fanatical Confusion. In the which Hope, I am the more encouraged by the wonderful Preservation of his Majesty from the two Hellish Conspiracies, both of Popish, and Antimonarchical Plotters; as also, by his pious Care of Settling the Succession of his Crown upon Princes of Protestant Families, and Profession: Which whosoever shall seriously consider, can never be induced to believe otherwise, than that the sincere Intention and earnest Desire of his Majesty, and of the Government, is to maintain the true Orthodox Protestant Religion, as it is at present establish'd. But if God should, for our great Sins, and among them our carnal Distrust and Jealousy, Fears of Dangers, and wicked Arts to prevent them, set open the Mouth of the Bottomless Pit, so that the Locusts and Smoak thereof should again over-

spread

Spread these Lands, what have we else to do, but patiently give up our Lives as a Testimony for Jesus Christ, who gave his Life a Ransom for us. In this Case, it is better to die Martyrs than Malefactors, and far more like Christians to breath our last at a Stake, than on a Block. If Princes will be so ill advised as to punish the Just, yet must not we *strike them again for Equity*. Believe it, Sirs, whatsoever Doctrine is contrary to this, is Antichristian, contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, and to the constant Practice of the holy Martyrs in the first and purest Ages of the Church. But as I said before, so now I say again, that the greatest Danger I yet see of the Irruption of Popery, is from the Scandal given by the Seditious and Rebellious of those who call themselves Protestants, upon a Pretence of keeping it out. But certainly, whatsoever in Truth they be, Protestants they are not: For both their Doctrine and Practices are directly contrary to this great fundamental Article of the Protestant Doctrine, That Kings are supreme to all under God, and accountable to none but him; that in all Things, Subjects ought to submit themselves to their Rule and Government; in all lawful Things, by a chearful Obedience; and in all other, by a contented Suffering.

fering. But they who would set up the Sovereign People, or the Sovereign Church and Synod; above the King, and invest them with Power to call him to an Account for his Actions, to censure, to controul, and punish him, are not Protestants; but, take it how they please, are in this Point as rank Papists as the Pope himself, or any in his Conclave. And if either Sort of Papists prevail, either they who are for one Pope, or they that are for a great many, on both Parts the Royal Sovereignty is lost, and the Imperial Crown must vail either to the Mitre, or the Black Cap.

If the bloody Designs of either Party had succeeded, what horrid Confusions had we seen before this Day? We had either been wetsing in our own Blood, or wading through the Blood of others: But blessed be God, who hath delivered us; and will, we hope and pray, still deliver us. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a Prey to their Teeth: *Our Soul is escaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler, the Snare is broken, and we are escaped.* Blessed be the Lord, who giveth Salvation unto Kings, who hath delivered David his Servant from the hurtful Sword. The Mercy we this Day commemorate, deserves the Praises due for the Mercies we hope

hope to receive during our whole Lives ; for they all depend upon this Day : And therefore let us not celebrate it with a carnal, rude, and profane Joy. But as you would approve your selves loyal Subjects, beware that you do nothing this Day that may cause God to repent he hath bestowed so great a Mercy upon you. You cannot shew your selves greater Enemies to the King than by Riot and Excess, Ranting and Quaffing ; which are the too frequent Practices of those who, when they should render Thanks unto God for his Mercies, do what they may to provoke his Judgments. But let it be our Employment, soberly and spiritually to admire, and to bless God for all those gracious Expressions of his Care and watchful Providence over our Church and Kingdoms ; and not to drink, but to pray, Health and Happiness to our King.

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THE  
APPENDIX:

CONTAINING A

*SUPPLEMENT*

TO

Several DISCOURSES which  
are publish'd imperfect in  
the Folio Edition.

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*[To be inserted at the End of the Sermon on  
the Resurrection : Folio, p. 357.]*

**A**ND from each of these, what abundant Cause have we of Joy and Exultation! Of Joy, in that his Resurrection hath afforded us an irrefragable Testimony to convince the World that we have not misplaced our Faith, our Hope, our Worship; since that Jesus whom

whom we serve, was not only lifted up on the Cross, but gloriously raised from the Grave. Of Joy, in that his Resurrection is an infallible Evidence to us, that the Debt is paid, when the Surety is discharged from the Arrest, that now God's Justice will as well acquit us from our Guilt as his Mercy, since it is not consistent with the Rules and Measures of Justice to punish the same Offence in the Principals for which the Surety hath fully satisfied. And lastly, of Joy, in that his Resurrection is a most certain and assured Pledge of ours; and that he hath risen before us, only to pluck us out of our Graves, and is ascended into Heaven before us only to prepare Mansions for us, and by the Vertue of his Resurrection and Intercession, to lift us from the Dust, to sit together with him in heavenly Places.

And now, truly, the best Way that I know to affect your Hearts with Joy for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, is first, to lead you to his Cross and Sepulchre. Let me say unto you, as the Angel did to the Women, *Come see the Place where the Lord lay.* Behold him first in his Death and Sufferings; see the Lord upon the Cross pouring out his Blood and his Soul for you, and this will be a good Help to heighten your Joy when you shall confi-

der him risen again, and come triumphantly from under all his Agonies and Sorrows. This Day exhibits Christ unto you, both Bleeding and Reigning; Suffering and Conquering, Dying and Reviving; all the glorious Achievements of Redemption, are this Day to be represented lively to your Faith and Devotion. And as a Messenger sent to you by Christ, I do in his Name invite you to come and see your Lord, and mourn over him in the holy Institution of his Supper. I know we are apt to wish, that we had lived in the time of Christ's Abode here upon Earth; that we had been conversant with him as his Disciples were, to have seen both his miraculous Actions, and his no less miraculous Passion. Why truly, the Disciples Sight of these Things, hath no Advantage at all above our Faith. If we can but act Faith in this Ordinance, which we are this Day to partake of, these Things will be now present to us. There shall we see Christ crucified before our Eyes, yea, and crucified as truly and really to our Faith, as ever he was to the Sense of others. This can carry us into the Garden, and make us do more than they, even watch with him in his Agonies. This can carry us, without being befriended by Acquaintance, into the Judgment-Hall, to hear his  
whole

whole Tryal and Arraignment. This can lead us with the Multitude and Crowd of People, to his Cross; and in this Ordinance, we may see his Body broken, his Blood poured out, and hear him crying, *It is finish'd*; and see him at last give up the Ghost. All this the holy Sacrament doth as lively represent to the Eye of Faith, as if it were now doing. Consider, were there a Sight to be represented, at which Heaven and Earth, and Hell it self, should stand amazed, wherein God himself should suffer, not only in the *Form of a Servant*, but under the Notion of a Malefactor, wherein the everlasting Happiness of all Mankind, from the first Creation of the World, to the final Dissolution of it, should be transacted; in which you might see the Venome and poisonous Strength of all our Sins, wrung into one bitter Cup, and that put into the Hands of the Son of God, to drink the very Dregs of it; in which you might see the Gates of Hell broken to Pieces, Devils conquered, and all the Powers of Darkness: Were there, I say, but such a Sight as this, so dreadful, and yet so glorious to be now represented, would you not all desire to be Spectators of it? Why, I invite you to it this Day. Only come, and come with Faith, and you may see

the Son of God slain, the Blood of God poured out; you may see him that takes away Transgressions, *numbered himself among Transgressors*; you may see him hanging upon the Soreness and Tenderness of his Hands and Feet, all our Iniquities meeting upon him, and the Eternity of Divine Wrath and Vengeance contracted into a short Space, and, as Beams through a Burning-glass, made more violent and scorching by that Contraction. Come therefore, and see, and let your Eye affect your Heart with deep and bitter Sorrow, that ever you should imbrew your Hands in the Blood of your Saviour, that ever you should be his Executioners and Murderers; that ever your Sins and Guilt should squeeze so much Gall and Wormwood into the bitter Cup of his Passion. And when you have thus wept over your dying Lord, let Joy and Gladness again fill your Hearts, for *He is risen*; he is risen from Death to Life, from Earth to Heaven; by the one, to confirm our Faith; by the other, to prepare our Glory.

[To be inserted in the Beginning of the Sermon on Christ's Nativity, Fol. p. 570.]

**A**LL the Circumstances of Christ's Birth, are well worthy our most serious Consideration. A Decree issues out from *Cesar Augustus*, that all the World (that is, all the Roman World, those many Kingdoms and Provinces, which Arms and continued Successes had made subject to him, who was the Lord and Emperor of the greatest Part of the then known World) should undergo a Tax. This Tax in *Judea* was not to be levied upon them from House to House, as they lived dispersedly asunder; but each Family, how remote soever their Abode might be, was bound to repair to that City, to which, according to their Genealogical Tables, their Ancestors did appertain.

In Obedience to this Command, *Joseph* prepares himself to undergo this double Burden of the Payment, and of the Journey. And because he was descended of the Royal Lineage of *David*, (tho' now grown poor, and fallen to Decay) travels with *Mary*, his espoused Wife, to *Bethlehem*, the City whence the Progenitors

tors of them both had their Rise and Original; *Joseph* descending from *David* by *Solomon*, and *Mary* by *Nathan*.

*Mary's* appointed Hour draws nigh, to undergo a far more sorrowful, and dolorous Travel. Her blessed Burden had now been kept its full Time, both in her Womb, and in the Womb of the Promise. And when this *Fulness of Time* was come, that the Truth and Veracity of God might be safely delivered of its Charge, as well as *Mary*, Providence wonderfully conspires with Prophecy, and makes use of either the Necessities, or Avarice of the *Roman Emperor*, to summon them to *Bethlehem*; that so those Predictions might be punctually fulfill'd, which foretold that Christ the Saviour should be born there.

The great Confluence of People from the adjacent Country, had already filled all the Inns; No Harbour, no Reception, could be gotten for such mean and vulgar Persons as they were. And though she appears in a Condition that is wont to command Pity and Respect from the most barbarous and uncivil Natures; yet when they are crowded with so many gainful Guests, none are found to compassionate that Distress, which is unhappily joined with, and increased by Poverty. A Stable

is the best Room they can obtain ; and this thought good enough too for the Wife of a Carpenter. Nor in Likelihood was this left so free to them neither, but that, *Bos & Asinus ad praesepe alligati sunt* : Vid. *Baron. Annal. init.* Brute Beasts must be their Inmates, and their brutish Keepers their Companions. There she is forced to lay her sacred Burden amidst the Disorders and Impurities of the Place, where there could be neither modest Assistance, nor tolerable Convenience ; but Rudeness, Noise, and Confusion.

It might seem strange, that God should so many Ages before-hand appoint *Bethlehem* to be the Place of his eternal Son's Birth. *Bethlehem*, that would afford him no better Accommodation than a Stable for his Chamber, and a Manger for his Cradle ! That he should intrust such a precious *Depositum* to Persons so devoid of Charity and Humanity ! Yet so it is ordained, that his whole Life, from first to last, might be infinitely full of Debasements and Dishonours ; that he might breath his first under the Uncharitableness of Men, as his last under their Cruelty.

But though he be so badly welcomed on Earth, yet Heaven makes an abundant Amends for all. A Company of honest industrious Shepherds are watching their  
Flocks

Flocks by Night; and little thought of any such Thing, as that to them should be revealed *the Shepherd of Israel*. An heavenly Light surrounds them, and sheds Glory and Lustre about the Place: An Angel accosts them, and tells them Tidings of great Joy, that *that Day was born to them a Saviour, even Christ the Lord*; and bids them *leave their Flocks, and go seek their own Pastor*. Upon this Message, as if all Heaven kept Festival, the Text tells us, that *an innumerable Multitude of the heavenly Host praised God, saying, Glory to God in the Highest, Peace on Earth, Good-will towards Men*.

In these Words is contained whatsoever is delightful both to God and Man: What *Jotham*, in his Parable, speaks of the Vine, *Judges 9. 13.* is certainly true of this Text, it *cheareth God and Man*. God knoweth no higher Design than his own Glory; and Christ's coming into the World, most illustriously promotes and displays it. Man can desire no greater Happiness than what follows, *Peace and Good-will*; and both these were born into the World together with Christ. All Sinners stand in a double State of Distance from God: The one, of Opposition and Defiance; the other, of Alienation and Estrangement. *Peace* removes the one,

and *Good-will* the other. And in the Text, God, by his Angel, proclaims both to the World: *Peace*, to reconcile them; and *Good-will*, to endear them; and both in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have at another Place, the last Anniversary, shew'd the Reasons why the Angels should so much concern themselves in the Birth of our Saviour, as to rejoyce at so signal Abasement of the great God whom they adore and serve. I likewise then spake of the First Part of this Angelical Song, and shew'd how God's Glory is eminently advanced by the Incarnation of his Son. It remains now to insist upon the Second Part of it, which is, *Peace on Earth*.

This *Peace* may be understood Three Ways:

*First*, Either *Peace* mutually between Man and Man; that at the Coming of Christ, Men should be at Peace with one another. Or,

*Secondly*, *Peace* internally, with a Man's self: *Peace* in the Region of his own Spirit and Conscience. Or,

*Thirdly*,



Peace in our own Consciences, seem to appertain to the last Clause of this heavenly Anthem; The One being the same with God's Good-will towards us; the Other being its Effect, and Consequent, upon the comfortable Sense of it in our own Breasts.

Christ's Coming into the World therefore, tends to the Promoting of Peace in it between Man and Man. We find in the Records of History, that about the Time of our Saviour's Birth, *Jesus's Temple* was shut up, and that there was an universal Peace throughout the World. And *Florus*, speaking of those Times, relates, that *Constantina totius Humani generis, aut Pax erat, aut Pæcio*: "That there was either a Peace, or "Truce, among all Mankind." And indeed, it was but fit that Wars should cease, when the *Prince of Peace* was born. The Divine Wisdom so disposed of Humane Affairs, that He, who was not to strive, nor cry, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Streets, should then come into the World, when it was serene, and enjoyed Halcion Days; when there were no Strifes, nor Wars, nor confused Noises, nor Garments roll'd in Blood. The very Name of *Peace* is sweet, and lovely; It is the Calm of the World, the Smile of Nature, the Harmony of Things, a gentle  
and

and melodious Air struck from well-tun'd Affairs. A Blessing so excellent and amiable, that in this World there is but one preferable before it, and that is, Holiness. And certainly, great Glory doth dwell in that Land, where these two Sister-Blessings, *Righteousness and Peace, do meet and kiss each other*, as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. 85. 9, 10.* I know, that there are hot and turbulent Spirits enough Abroad, that are apt to suspect whatsoever is spoken on the Behalf of Peace, to be to the Disadvantage of Holiness: And perhaps some Mens Zeal may be such a touchy and forward Thing, that though an Angel from Heaven, yea an innumerable Multitude of them proclaim it; yet they cannot believe there may be *Glory to God in the Highest*, whilst there is *Peace on Earth*.

Indeed, if Peace and Sanctity were incompatible, or if any unhappy Circumstances should compel us to redeem the one, at the Price of the other; we ought rather to follow Righteousness thorough Thorns and Briars, than Peace in its smoothest Way strewed with Roses. But there is no such Inconsistency between them: For certainly, that God who hath commanded us to follow both Peace and Holiness, *Heb. 12. 14.* supposeth that they themselves may well go together. We may

may well suspect that Zeal to be but an unclean Bird of Prey, that delights to quarry upon the Dove; and those erratic Lights which make the Vulgar gaze, and the Wise fear, to be but glaring Comets, whose bloody Aspects, and Excentrick irregular Motions, threaten nothing but Wars, Ruin, and Desolations. Righteousness doth not oblige us, as soon as any Thing is pass'd contrary to our present Judgments and Perswasions, nay suppose it be contrary to the Truth also, strait to furbish our Weapons, sound an Alarm, and to kill others in Defence of that Cause for which we our selves rather ought to die. This is not to part with Peace for Righteousness; but to sacrifice both Peace and Righteousness, to Injustice and Violence. The Cause of God, of Piety and Religion, may frequently engage us to forego our own Peace, as Sufferers and Martyrs; but never to disturb the publick Peace of our Country, as Fighters and Warriours.

Now this publick and civil Peace is mightily promoted, by Christ's Coming into the World as a Minister: For since the Work and Office of a Minister is to teach both by Doctrine and Example, Christ hath both Ways, as a perfect Minister of Peace, taught us to follow Peace with all Men. For,

*First,*

*First*, All the Precepts of his Doctrine do directly tend to the establishing of Peace among Men. There are but two Things that can be supposed to violate Peace:

*1st.* Doing Wrong unto others.

*2dly.* Revenging of Wrongs done unto us by others. And both these, the Doctrine of Christ doth strictly prohibit.

*First*, Christianity teacheth us, not to offer any Injury unto others. It obligeth us to the strictest Rules of Justice and Equity; and whatsoever is not correspondent with the most rigid Observation of these, it utterly forbids and condemns. Our Saviour hath fix'd and seal'd the great Standard of all natural Righteousness; *Matth.* 7. 12. *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them*; and frequently presseth that brief Summary of the *Second Table*; *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*. Certainly, there can no Place be left for Wrongs and Injustice, where our Love to our selves is made the Measure of our Love to others, and the Care of our own Welfare, the very Model and Pattern of our Care for theirs.

Neither doth Christianity restrain only the outward violent Acts of Injustice and Rapine;

Rapine; but it looks inward, and lays a Law upon our very Thoughts and Desires. It forbids us to think or judge hardly of another, to despise him in our Hearts, or to be angry with our Brother without a Cause. So wonderfully accurate is the Doctrine of Christ in this Particular, that it not only prohibits us to wrong them really in their Persons, but ~~not~~ not so much as wrong the very Shadow and Idea of them in our Minds. And as well those who nourish any secret Grudge against them in their Hearts, or seek by any clandestine Artifices to undermine their Credit and Repute; as those who are more openly and tumultuously injurious, break this Peace which the Angels here proclaim, and which our Saviour himself came to preach to the World.

*Secondly,* The Doctrine of Christ forbids all private Revenge, and retaliating of Wrongs and Injuries done unto us. For indeed, there is no other Difference between him that doth a Wrong, and him that requites it, but only that the one is a little sooner wicked than the other. This our Saviour frequently insists on, as that which is the very Genius of the Gospel, and the very Spirit it breaths: *Matth. 5. 38, &c. You have heard that it hath been said,*

said, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not Evil. But whosoever shall smite thee on the Right Check, turn unto him the other also. These and the following Precepts must not indeed be understood literally, as that scoffing Apostate Julian impiously derided them, who when he had commanded some Christians to be buffeted, ask'd them in Scorn, why they did not turn the other Cheek also? For neither our Saviour himself, nor St. Paul, invited the Injuries that were done them, but rather sharply reprov'd those who unjustly smote them. But the Meaning is, that we ought patiently to bear the Wrongs that are done us, and to be willing rather to suffer a second Injury, than to revenge the first. Yea, Verse 44. our Saviour raiseth his Doctrine a Strain higher, and not only forbids us to requite Wrongs with Wrongs, but commands us to requite Injuries with Courtesie: I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them which hate you, and pray for them which despightfully use you, and persecute you. And St. Paul, who most exactly follows both our Saviour's Doctrine and Example, urgeth the very same, Rom. 12. 20. If thine Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. This is all  
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the Revenge the Gospel permits. This is that excellent Doctrine which our Saviour came to preach : This is that Doctrine which he hath given us Commission to declare and publish to the World; to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace, that we might all be united, as by Faith and Obedience unto God, so in Love and Charity one to another. But, alas! may we not justly complain, that this excellent Temper is rare to be found among Christians in these our Days? Would they not be ready to wonder at it, as some strange and unheard-of Doctrine, if we should expostulate with them, as the Apostle doth? *1 Cor. 6. 7. Why do you not rather take Wrong? Why do you not rather suffer your selves to be defrauded? Is it ever likely we should prevail with those, who are apt to do Wrong and defraud others, to be content quietly to pass by the Wrongs and Injuries that others do them? Will they part with their own Right, who are so ready to invade the Rights of others? And yet if this hard Lesson be not learnt by us, we frustrate one great and special End of Christs Coming into the World. He came to be a Minister of Peace; and hath taught us neither to do Wrong, nor to retaliate it. The first were sufficient to establish a general*

neral Peace, were it but generally observed; but in case others will break the Peace, and be injurious to us, Christ hath strictly enjoined us the Observation of the latter; that though we cannot be quiet, yet we may be innocent. Thus you see how the Doctrine of Christ tends to promote Peace.

Secondly, The Examples of Christ all tend unto Peace. His whole Life was the very Pattern of Meekness and Gentleness. When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but with infinite Patience bears the Indignation of God, and the Indignities of Men: Yea, we find him very careful of giving any Offence both in Matters Civil and Ecclesiastical. When Tribute was demanded of him; though he pleads his Right to be exempted, as being a Descendant of the Royal Line; yet, *Matth. 17. 27. Lest we should offend them, &c.* What! the great God so cautious of giving Offence to vile Creatures whom he was able to speak, to look into nothing! Yea, he would rather work a Miracle, than occasion an Offence, and make the Sea pay Tribute to him, rather than he not pay Tribute to the State: *Lest we should offend them, go thou to the Sea, and cast an Hook, and take the Fish that first cometh*

cometh up, and when thou hast opened his Mouth thou shalt find a Piece of Money; that take, and give unto them for me and thee. Yea, and we find likewise that he accommodated himself to the received Custom of the Jewish Church, and that in a Matter wherein there was the greatest Appearance of Reason that could be to have dissented. He sits at the Passover with his Disciples; although it be plain that the first Institution of it was to eat it standing, with Shoes on their Feet, and Staves in their Hands; none of which Rites our Saviour observed. But defers so much to the Authority and Custom of the Church, and that a very corrupt one too, that he would not differ from them in a Matter that was merely Circumstantial, though they themselves differ'd from the Primitive Institution. Certainly, if so much could be objected against the Rites and Orders of our Church, as might have been objected against this Custom of the Jewish Church, those who now raise such great Tragedies out of little Matters, might, I will not say with more Confidence and Clamour, but doubtless with more Shew of Reason, decry them as humane Inventions, sinful Impositions, unwarranted Innovations, and contrary to the Word of God. And yet

our blessed Saviour, in a peaceable Condescension, conforms himself to the Practice of the Church in which he lived; and because the *Romans* Manner of Discumbency or Sitting was then the received Custom among them, he likewise sits with his Disciples. And therefore let me only by the Way note to you, that this Sitting of our Saviour at his Supper, is most imprudently and unwarily urged against our Kneeling. For their Argument may forcibly be retorted against them, that because Christ sat at his Supper, therefore we ought to kneel. For since there was so much to be said for standing at the Passover, out of the express Word of God, and the Primitive Institution, and yet our Saviour, out of Compliance to the Usage of the Church, chose rather to sit; how much more ought we, who have nothing left to determine the Gesture, conform ourselves to the Usage of the Church in which we live, and whose Members we are: For this is to conform our selves, not indeed to the Gesture, for so neither do our Opposers themselves, but to the Intent and Design of Christ, which was Peace and Unity.

And thus you see how Christ was sent into the World to be a *Minister of Peace*;

to preach it in his Doctrine, and to commend it to us by his Practice and Example. The Gospel is the Gospel of Peace, the Precepts of it are all meek and peaceable, the Ministers of it are Ambassadors of Peace, and the *Fruits of it*, where it hath its due Effect, are *Joy and Peace*.

But here it may be objected, How is it then that our Saviour himself tells us, *Matth. 10. 34, 35. Think not that I came to send Peace on the Earth: I came not to send Peace, but a Sword. For I am come to set a Man at Variance against his Father, and the Daughter against the Mother, and the Daughter-in-Law against her Mother-in-Law*. And one would think this is far enough from turning the Heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the Heart of the Children to the Fathers. And do we not find it by obvious Experience, that Religion hath sowed more Strifes and Dissentions, and occasioned more Tumults and Uproars in the World, than ever Tyranny or Ambition did?

To this I answer, We must distinguish between the direct End of Christ's coming into the World, and the accidental Issue and Event of it. The End of Christ's coming, was to pacify the World, and to teach it a Religion that is pure and peaceable.

peaceable. But accidentally the Event hath proved quite contrary: For Religion being avowedly the dearest and most precious of all our Enjoyments, Men are apt to preserve it by undue and violent Courses. And because we can never think it secure enough, unless others embrace it too, we are generally very ready to impose our own Sentiments upon them, and to judge that we do them no Wrong whilst by any Means we constrain them to what, in our own Opinion, is most excellent, and the only Truth, which all ought to profess: And therefore those who were zealous for their Heathenish Superstition and Idolatry, embroil'd the whole World in Persecutions and Blood to suppress the growing Doctrine of Christianity. And among those who profess Christianity it self, what Heats and Animosities, endless Controversies, and perpetual Contentions are there agitated, each Sect and Party blowing up the Coals, till they have put both Church and State into a Combustion, and Differences about small and trival Matters have too often broken forth into all the Extremities of Rage, War, and Bloodshed. But yet this is not to be imputed to the Religion of Christ, but to the Pride and Ignorance of Men: Their Ignorance, in that they know

not the Truth; or their Pſide, in that they will not ſubmit unto it. The Goſpel is free from all that Blood that hath been raſhly and unwarrantably ſhed in Quarrels about it. It teacheth us the Way of Peace perfectly; and would all Men be perſwaded to ſubmit their Paſſions and their Interests to the Precepts of it, we might ſoon beat our Swords into Ploughshares, and our Spears into Pruning-Hooks, for the whole Spirit of the Goſpel breaths nothing elſe but Love and Obedience; Condeſcenſion and Yielding; Love to one another; Obedience to our Superiours; Condeſcenſion and Yielding either to the Malice of our Enemies, or the Weakneſs of our Brethren.

But, alas! Pride and Paſſion, and Self-Interest, and a ſtiff Adherence to former Apprehenſions, have now a days eaten out the Meekneſs and Patience of a Chriſtian Spirit. Each values himſelf by the Boldneſs of his Oppoſition. He that can find moſt Faults, and moſt bitterly inveigh againſt them, is the beſt Man; and whoſoever hath but Wit enough to make a quick and confident Reply, begins now to think of ſetting up for himſelf to head a Party, and controul all Orders both Civil and Sacred. And I wiſh they may never again attempt to write themſelves  
Saints

**Saints in the Rubrick of their Brethrens Blood.**

And yet, I pray, consider what are all our Dissentions about? Did we differ in any Fundamental Points either of Faith or Practice? We were then indeed to contend earnestly for them; and to resist unto Blood; yet not the Blood of others, but our own. But when mere Modes and Circumstances, Things altogether in themselves extraneous to Religion, and by all Parties acknowledged not to be necessary nor essential to it, shall yet be so eagerly contested, as if the whole Weight of Religion, and the Eternal Salvation or Damnation of Mens Souls turned upon those Hinges, to the Violation of Charity, Peace and Order; what can we think, but that God may be justly provoked to try whether we will be as zealous about the necessary and vital Principles of Religion, as we are hot and fiery about small Indifferences and unconcerning Circumstances. For my Part, I shall always think that the Power and Savour of the Gospel hath taken most Hold on those who are willing, for the Preservation of such an inestimable Blessing as Peace, to comply with any Thing, and to do any Thing but Sin. So long as the Doctrine of Faith which we preach, the

Duties of Obedience which we press, the Ordinances of Jesus Christ which we administer, are the very same; since we *profess the same Lord, the same Faith, the same Baptism, the same God and Father of all*; what should hinder our Coalition and Union together in the Bond of Peace? What, shall we rend the Coat of Christ in Pieces, only because there are some Loops and Fringes sewed to it? Shall we separate from Communion, and crumble our selves into endless Frictions, perpetuate irreconcilable Divisions and Animosities, and run our selves into that which is clearly sinful, to avoid what, at worst, is but dubitable? If any can as evidently prove out of the Word of God, that those debated Forms and Modes are Sins, as it can be certainly proved out of the Word of God, that to join in Church Fellowship, and the Communion of Holy Ordinances, to preserve the Peace and Unity of the Church, to yield Obedience to Things required which are not in themselves unlawful, are Duties, in comparison with which weighty Matters of the Law, all Disputes about Forms and Circumstances are but mere Trifles: I shall then yield, and confess that they ought not to purchase Peace, how desirable a Blessing soever it be, at the

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Loss of Truth, or the Price of a Sin. But 'till this be done, if any can dispense with the express Doctrine and Command of Christ, of preserving Peace and Unity, and joining in all his publick Ordinances, rather than submit to those Things which can never be evinced to be contrary to the Command of Christ, yea and which those who most of all dissent, cannot but judge to be disputable; I must needs say, that such an one strains at a Gnat, and swallows a Camel; for Conscience of a Circumstance, neglects the Substance, and for fear of that which is but doubtful, doth that which is undoubtedly sinful.

Let me then by the Bowels of Christ perswade you all to mind the same Things, and to walk in the same Way: And since we are agreed in all Fundamentals of Faith, and in all the Substantials of Worship, let not other Things, on which no more Stress is laid than that of Decency and Order, be pretended as an Obstacle to an happy Closure. But if Men will stumble at Shadows, let them beware they do not provoke God to take the Substance of our Religion quite from us, while we are so quarrellsome about the Shape of it: And lest while we strive to dress it up, each after his own Garb and Fashion, we lose not the Body it self.

Since we will needs be disputing, and opposing, and contradicting, though it be about a Matter of Nothing, may we not justly fear, that God will find out a full Task and Employment for our busy Spirits, and put us upon the sad Necessity of striving and contending about the very Essentials of Religion, and call us to shed our Blood, and lay down our Lives for them? If ever such a Time of Trial should come upon us, which we have but too much Cause to fear that God will hasten, because of our wanton Dissentions, we shall then learn to our Costs, to put a Difference between Substantials and Circumstantials, and look back with Grief and Shame upon our unreasonable and uncharitable Divisions; yea, and then should we be heartily glad, could we but enjoy the Liberty of the Gospel, and the Ordinances of our Lord Christ, under any Form of Administration now so hotly and furiously controverted amongst us. Certainly the Stake will reconcile us all; we shall there embrace, and not cry out of Superstition and Will-worship, and I know not what. The Fire of Martyrdom will purify all our intemperate Heats; and as our Bodies, so our Hearts, shall flame together in Love and Union, and together shall we ascend in that fiery Chariot

Chariot to the same Heaven. For when the Sheep scatter and separate, and tho' their appointed Pastures be fair and flourishing, will yet out of Wantonness, rather than Necessity, stray into others; the great Shepherd may justly send in those Dogs or Wolves to worry them, that will quickly make them run together again.

Well then, to conclude all: Since the Angels from Heaven have proclaimed *Peace on Earth*; since the Lord of Angels, Jesus Christ himself, came down from Heaven to establish and promote *Peace on Earth*; beware that none of you, upon Pretence of celebrating this great and joyful Day, be guilty of violating either *Peace with Men*, or *Peace with God*. And yet what more common and ordinary than now in the Time of this great Joy, when the Angels proclaim *Peace from Heaven*; what more common than for many by Rioting and Drunkenness, and Revelling and Quarrels, to proclaim War against one another, against God, against Christ, against Piety, Religion, Temperance, and all that is sacred and venerable? Certainly, Christ came not into the World to patronize Mens Debaucheries,

ries, or to give you a fair Occasion to be guilty of Gluttony and Drunkenness, to revile, reproach, and quarrel with one another. No, these are some of the Sins he came to destroy; and if you will indulge your selves in these Abominations, I cannot proclaim *Peace*, or *Good-Will* to you, but *War* and *Wrath* from the Almighty and Jealous God.

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[*To be inserted in the middle of the Sermon upon Christ's Nativity, Fol. p. 574.*]

**N**O other Sacrifice could avail to appease the Divine Justice, but that true and only Sacrifice of the Son of God, who thro' the eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to God. And therefore we find it express'd, *Heb. 10. 5. Sacrifices and Offerings thou wouldst not, but a Body hast thou prepared me.* For because the Divine Nature is altogether impassible, and not at all subject to Grief, Sorrow or Sufferings; it was therefore necessary, that the Mediator between God and Man, should be Man, as well as God; for by this ineffable Union, the one Nature suffers, and the other supports; the one conflicts, and the other conquers; and for the Pay-  
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ment of our Debt, the one brings the Oar, the other stamps it, and makes it valuable: And by this Means likewise, Satisfaction is made unto Justice in the same Nature that sinned; for as Man offended, so Man also is punished; the same which made the Forfeiture, makes the Redemption: For as *by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection of the Dead*, 1 Cor. 15. 21. The same which was shamefully foil'd, doth now most gloriously overcome; *Heb. 2. 14. Forasmuch as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through Death he might destroy him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil.*

*Fifthly*, The Birth of Christ glorifies the infinite Purity and Holiness of God. When God formed the first *Adam*, he drew upon him the Lineaments of his own Image. And because Holiness is the most illustrious part of this Image, his Almighty Creator impress'd upon him that best Resemblance, that he might be a visible Type of his infinite Purity to all the World. But Sin having despoiled Mankind of that Glory, the best having but some few Strictures, and weak Glimmerings of it restored unto them

them in their Renovation ; God was pleased to raise up a second *Adam*, who should be not only sinless, but impeccable, and to exhibit him unto the World as the most perfect Representation of his own Holiness. And therefore his Birth must be miraculous, that it might be pure. His extraordinary Conception preserved him from Original Sin ; and the Hypostatical Union, together with the unmeasurable Uction of the Holy Ghost, from all Actual. And though Jesus Christ was the greatest Sinner in the World (as *Luther* with no bad Intent made bold to call him) by Imputation ; yet had he no Sin either of Nature or of Practice inherent in him. *He made him Sin for us, who knew no Sin*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. *And he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth*, 1 Pet. 2. 22. And this that he might be to us, not only an Example of unspotted Sanctity, but also a perfect Idea of the infinite Purity of God.

*Sixthly, and Lastly*, The Birth of Jesus Christ most eminently glorifies the infinite Love and Mercy of God towards Sinners. So very dear were our Souls to God, that when he saw us lie forlorn in our Sin and Misery, forfeited to his Justice,

Justice, exposed to his Curses, and liable to his eternal Wrath, he was pleased to commiserate our wretched Condition, and to send his only begotten Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem us who were under the Curse and Malediction of the Law. O Miracle of Love and Mercy! that God should send his Son out of his Bosom, to lay Sinners in it; that he should abase him, to exalt us; make him the Son of Man, that we should be made the Sons of God! Well might our Saviour himself speak admirably of this infinite Love, *John 3. 16.* So God loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life.

This is that unspeakable Love which we this Day celebrate. And certainly if the holy Angels, who are not so immediately concerned in the Birth of a Saviour, of a Redeemer, yet exult in the glorious Day of his Nativity; shall not our Hearts be distended with a rapturous Joy, since all our Hopes and Happiness is wholly founded in the Incarnation of our blessed Lord? Shall Heaven rejoice when it stoops, and Earth not rejoice when it is exalted? Shall the blessed Spi-  
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rits above be more concerned out of Charity, than we our selves are out of Interest? This is a Stupidity unworthy of a Christian. This either proceeds from a wretched Contempt of the inestimable Benefits Christ hath procured us by his coming into the World; or a guilty Conscience that we shall have no Share in them. For Shame therefore, let us with raised Hearts and Voices this Day echo back unto the Celestial Quire, *Glory to God in the Highest.*

Only let us beware, that we do not dishonour God while we pretend to glorify him. It is very sad to consider, that as Christ's Birth hath been the Cause of the Salvation of many a Soul, so *Christ-mas* hath been the Occasion of the Damnation of many. The Rude and Ignorant look upon it only as a Time of Mirth and Looseness; and when they have gotten Liberty from the honest Labour and Works of their Callings, employ it only in the Works of the Devil. Suffer me to speak plainly, what through Rioting and Drunkenness, and Revelling, and Gaming, and such like Excesses, the Name of Christ hath been greatly dishonoured, under a Pretence of honouring  
his

his Birth. What, Sirs, do you believe that Christ came into the World to give you a fair Occasion to eat to Gluttony, to drink to Drunkenness, to swear up all Hell? Are not these some of the Sins that he came into the World to destroy? And will you make him the Patron of your Wickedness, who came on Purpose to redeem you from it? This is to entertain Hell, and keep a Feast to the Devil; and as those infernal Spirits howl'd at the Birth of our Saviour, so to make them rejoice and triumph at the Annual Return of it. I have somewhere \* met with a Story of a *Turkish* Ambassador, who was sent to one of the greatest Courts in Christendom; when he returned Home to his Master, and was by him examined what Customs the Christians observed, made this Answer, That for twelve Days in the Year all the Christians ran mad. His Observation was but too true, and too much to the utter Disparagement of Christian Religion; and that general Profaneness which usually rages and abounds at this Season, may make it questionable, whether there be not more Wickedness committed in those Twelve Days, than in all the Twelve Months after.

\* *Busbequ.*  
Ep. 3.  
p. 168.

after: I beseech you therefore, that you would not, to the Shame of your Religion and your Reason, indulge a mad loose Joy; rejoice not so as to make the Devil glad too. But let your Joy be spiritual and heavenly; a Joy not of Noise and Laughter, but of Praise and Blessings; a Joy that may diffuse a calm and serene Chearfulness through your Souls; and let it be full of Innocency, and full of Peace. Thus let us give *Glory to God in the Highest*; Glory to the Son, who descended from the Highest; Glory to the Holy Ghost, who gives us Hopes of ascending to the Highest; Glory to the holy, blessed, and undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and let us all from the very Bottom of our Hearts say, *Amen, Amen.*

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[To be inserted in the midst of the same Sermon. Fol. p. 575.

**F**IRST, That he lay under no Necessity of saving us at all. As nothing accrues unto him by our Happiness, so nothing would have been diminish'd from him by our Misery. For as God created Men and Angels, not that we might supply his Indigence, but partake of his Fulness; so he redeems us and preserves them, not that he might reap our Services, but that we might enjoy his Mercies. What saith *Eliphaz*? Job 22. 2, 3. *Can a Man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? Or is it Gain to him, that thou makest thy Ways perfect?* And if we cannot profit God by serving him, much less certainly by receiving Rewards for it. We can contribute nothing to his essential Happiness; for God is for ever blessed in the Contemplation and Enjoyment of his infinite Perfections. It was not to ease the Solitude and Tedioufness

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dioufness of Eternity that therefore God created the World; for all the Delight he takes in any of his Creatures, is only as he views his own Perfections in them; which being eternally in himself before the World was, he then possess'd the same Felicity as now, without receiving any Addition, or Variation from any Thing that he hath made. As it is no Advantage to the Sun that so many Eyes behold its Light, but it would still be as bright and glorious in it self, although no Creature were capable of receiving its Rays; so is God infinitely glorious and blessed in the Excellencies of his eternal Being and Attributes, and would have been so for ever, although he had never formed any Creature to observe and adore the Brightness of his Perfections. And if God gain nothing by creating us, then certainly neither doth he gain by saving us. All the Tribute that either Angels or glorified Saints pay unto him, it is but Love and Praise: And these cannot suppose the Person who receives them to be benefited, but to be beneficial. 'Tis true, Christ was sent to seek and to *save those that were lost*, Matth. 18. 11. But if

if this gracious Design had never been laid, and all Mankind had perish'd for ever, the Loss had been only to themselves, not to God, whose Justice would then have had that whole Glory which is now divided between his Justice and his Mercy. If therefore it be a Commendation of Love to be wholly disinterested, nothing can more gloriously advance the Love of God, than that he should give his own Son for the Redemption of such inconsiderable Creatures, whose Hatred and Rebellions are but despicable, and their Service and Obedience unprofitable.

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[To be inserted at the End of the Sermon, Of the Nature, Corruption, and Renewing of the Conscience, Fol. p. 672.]

4. **T**HE *Fourth* General Head propounded, was to shew of what great Importance and beneficial Consequence it is to keep clear and inoffensive Consciences; that here our Apostle should tell us, he made it his continual Exercise. And in handling this, I shall at once both give you the Reasons of the Point, why it should be your constant Endeavour

vour to keep your Consciences clear, and likewise Motives to perswade you to the Duty.

*First* then, a clear Conscience is a most comfortable Relief under all false Reproaches and Aspersions cast upon us. A good Conscience is only in our own Power; but a good Name is in the Power of every slanderous Tongue to blast. And indeed, it is almost an impossible Thing at once to keep a good Conscience, and a good Name too. The World is shattered into so many Parties, and each of them have such different Relishes of Good and Bad; that unless our Actions have as universal a Gust, as (according to the *Rabbins* Tradition) the *Israelites* Manna had, which tasted of what they best phancied; we must of Necessity fall under Misconstructions, Censures, and Defamations. For indeed, if we observe it, 'tis usually our Similitude to others, that makes them think and speak well of us. Whosoever commends another, commends him for somewhat that he supposeth at least he hath in himself. And this is the Reason of that *Wo* which our Saviour denounceth, *Luke 6. 26, Wo unto you when all Men speak well of you, When wicked*

wicked Men speak well of us, it is a Sign that we are but too much like them: Even an Heathen could say, when he was highly applauded by the vulgar Rout, *What Evil have I done, that these Men praise me?* The very Reproaches of ungodly Men, are the best Testimonials that can be given of an excellent and singular Christian. In a strict and holy Conversation, there is that Contradiction to the loose Profaneness of the World, as at once both convinceth and offends them, reproves and galls them. And if, as we ought, we thus reproach them by our Lives, we must expect they will again reproach us by their lying Slanders. 'Tis a sinful Tenderness of our Esteem among Men, when we tack about to every popular Breath that blows. Such must needs prefer the Praise of Men, before the Praise of God: And 'tis as fruitless, as it is sinful, since this Wind will always blow from contrary Points. While some extol us, others will as much vilify and scorn us. 'Tis miserable to live upon the Reports and Opinions of others. Let us not reckon what they say, but what Reports our own Consciences make. Better far we should offend the whole World, than God and them. And

if a Storm of Obloquy and Reproaches, Railings and Curses, do at any Time patter upon us; how sweet is it to retire inward into the calm Innocency of our own Hearts! There are a thousand Witnesses will tell us, we have not deserved them. How comfortable is it to remit our Cause to God, and leave our Vindication to him, for whose Sake we suffer Reproach? Thus *Jeremiah* appeals to God, *Jer.* 20. 10, 12. *I heard the Defaming of many: Report, say they, and we will report it. But, O Lord of Hosts, thou that triest the Righteous, and seeest the Reins and the Heart, unto thee have I opened my Cause.* Thus, if while wicked Men are maliciously conspiring how to blot and sully our Names, we can but keep our Consciences clear; what need we much trouble our selves how the Wind blows abroad; since we are harbour'd under the Retreat of a peaceable Heart. They may possibly perswade others to believe their Calumnies; but they can never perswade God to believe them. He who *searcheth the Heart* and Conscience, knows that we are injured; and he is hastening forward a Day wherein he will clear up our Righteousness; and then the Testimony of a good Conscience shall put Ten thousand Slanders to Silence.

*Secondly,*

Secondly, A good Conscience, as it enables a Man to bear Reproaches from others with Patience, so it gives him an Advantage to reprove others with Authority. 'Tis a true Rule, That he who reproves another, ought himself to be free from the Fault he reproves: For otherwise, it neither comes with Freedom from the Reprover, nor with Efficacy to the Reproved.

1<sup>st</sup>. A Reproof that comes from a guilty Conscience, is but stammering and timorous. Such a Man's own Conscience must needs rise up in his Throat, and choke his Reproofs. Consciousness of the same Mifcarriages, will retort, whatsoever we can say against others, more forcibly against our selves; and suggest to us, that 'tis but a base Piece \* of Hypocrisy, to blame that which our selves practise. With what Face canst thou press others to repent and reform, what Arguments canst thou use,

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who,

\* Κυβευτῶ ἀνάσκη καὶ βαδισερὸν εἶναι, ὅστις ἐνεχόμενος πρὶ αὐτοῦ κακῶ, ὀππμήσει τοῖς ἄλλοις. Arriani Epi-ctet. l. 3. c. 22.

Τοῖς βασιλευσὶ καὶ τυραννοῖς οἱ δρυφόροι καὶ τὰ ὄπλα παρείχτο ὀππμᾶν ποί καὶ δωιάσαι καὶ κολακάζειν τὰς ἀμαρτανονίας, καὶ αὐτοῖς, ἔσι κακοῖς, τῶ κωικῶ ἀπὸ τῶ ὄπλων καὶ τῶ δρυφόρων τὸ σωειδὸς τῶ ἐξουσίαν ταύτων παεαδίδωσιν. Id. ibid.

who, by continuing in the same Sins, dost thy self judge that those Arguments are of no Force? Thus Conscience suggests, and thereby Tongue-ties Reproof.

*2dly.* This too makes Reproofs ineffectual. It were a Temper to be wish'd, and pray'd for, that we could only respect how righteous the Reproof is, and not how righteous the Person is that gives it; and be content to have our Motes pluck'd out, though it be by such who have Beams in their own Eyes. For indeed, there is no more Reason to reject sound Admonition, because it comes from an unsound Heart, than there is to stop our Ears against good Counsel, because it is delivered perhaps by a stinking and unfavoury Breath. Yet so it is, that when Men of defiled Consciences and Conversations reprove others, they are apt to think either that they are not in earnest, and do but personate what they speak; or else, that they envy them their Sins, and would engross all to themselves; and so the Reproof takes no Place upon them. But now, when a Man of a clear unspotted Conscience reproves wicked Men, his Reproof breaks in upon them with Conviction and Authority; and if it doth not reform, must at least daunt and silence them.

them. Here's one reproves me for Sin, who doubtless believes it to be Evil, by his own avoiding it : Here's one denounceth Wrath if I repent not, who doubtless believes it to be as terrible as he represents it, by his own Carefulness to escape it. And thus a clear Conscience hath a great Advantage to reprove Sinners with Success, at least to work Conviction, if not Amendment in them.

3dly. A clear Conscience gives us Boldness of Access unto God : Guilt abasheth the Soul, and makes it both ashamed and afraid to appear in the Presence of God : And therefore *Adam*, as soon as he had sinned against his Maker, presently hides himself from him. We may observe in our selves what a slavish Dejectedness seizeth us when we come to God in Duty, after we have wronged him by any known Sin. We come to him suspiciously, and with such a misgiving Fear, as if we would not have God take Notice we are before him ; and are still in Pain, till the Duty be over. But when our Consciences are clear, Oh, with what Delight do we hast to him, and stay with him ! How doth the Soul dilate, and spread it self under the Smiles of God ? It applies it self to him with an holy and reverent Boldness, and sweetly closeth up every Duty and every

every Prayer, with full Assurance of obtaining Mercy. So the Apostle, *Heb. 10. 22. Let us draw near in full Assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience.* And a like parallel Place we have, *1 John 3. 21. Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.* When the Face of a Man's Conscience looks chearfully, not a Frown, nor a Wrinkle upon it, this makes us joyfully apprehend that God's Face towards us is serene also, and that we shall at all Times be welcome into our Father's Presence.

*4thly.* A clear Conscience is the sweetest Bosom Friend, with which we may at all Times freely converse. Wicked Men, indeed, of all Company in the World, dread and hate themselves most. They have a lowring, brawling Conscience within, that always threatens and disquiets them; and therefore they love to keep Abroad. Soliloquies, and Heart-Discourses, are Torments to them; and they wonder at the Psalmist for bidding them, *Commune with their own Hearts, and be still, Psal. 4. 4.* They are never less still, than when they discourse a while with their own Consciences; which upon many high Provocations given them, are grown so quarrellsome, and do so thunder out Woes and Curses against

against them, and so hurl about Swords, Firebrands and Death, that they dare not so much as once look within Doors. Oh, but a Christian whose Conscience is clean and clear, finds it the best Companion in the World! In his Solitudes and Retirements, with what Delight doth he call his own Heart aside? There is he, and his God, sweetly and peaceably conferring together, and pass mutual Indearments and Embraces. The Soul embraces and clasps about God, with the Arms of Faith and Dependance; and God embraceth the Soul with the Arms of his everlasting Love. Here is mutual Communication of Secrets: The Soul unlocks the Secrets of its own Conscience before God; and God again reveals the Secrets of his own Love to the Soul. Here are mutual Rejoycings; the Soul rejoyceth in God its Saviour, and God rejoyceth over the Soul to do it good. And under these Intercourses of Love and Favour, 'tis ready to faint away, and to dissolve with Sweetness and Delight. This is that continual Feast, which a good Conscience entertains a Christian with, where all is transacted with a noiseless Mirth.

*5thly.* A clear Conscience is the best Comfort, when Fear, and Trouble, and Danger, is on every Side. 'Tis a most blessed

blessed Thing when Trouble is without,  
 to have Peace within, In our own Bosom ;  
 To be then at Peace with God and our  
 selves. And therefore saith Christ,  
*John 16. 33. These Things I have spoken*  
*unto you, that in me ye might have Peace.*  
*In the World you shall have Tribulation.* A  
 Christian is a Man made up of Para-  
 doxes ; he is sorrowful, yet always re-  
 joycing ; poor himself, and yet enrich-  
 ing many ; he hath nothing, and yet pos-  
 sesseth all Things ; *2 Cor. 6. 10.* And so  
 here, he hath Tribulation in the World,  
 and yet is at Peace. When once that  
 great and bloody Quarrel between God  
 and the Soul, is taken up and compound-  
 ed ; when we are reconciled to God, and  
 our Consciencs to us, all the Enmity  
 and Persecutions of the World are but  
 little pelting Differences, which cannot  
 disturb the solid and inviolate Peace of  
 a Christian. This is a Peace, which as  
 the Friendship of the World cannot give ;  
 so neither can the Enmity of the World  
 take away. 'Tis observable concerning  
*Josiah, 2 Kings 22. 20.* God promiseth  
 him by the Mouth of *Huldah* the Prophe-  
 tesse, that he should be gathered into his  
 Grave in Peace : And yet in the very  
 next Chapter, *Ver. 29.* 'tis related, that  
 he

he was slain in the Wars that he undertook against *Pharaoh-nechoh* King of *Egypt*. He was slain in War, and yet he died in Peace; and no Wonder, for whosoever dies in Peace with God, and his own Conscience, dies peaceably, though he die in the midst of Wars and Tumults.

*6thly.* A clear Conscience affords sweet Comforts in a dying Hour. When all Things must take their last Leave of us, and we of them; when Death sets all its Terrours in array against us; Oh what a blessed Support will it then be to the departing Soul, to be able to make its Appeal, as *Hezekiah* did! *Isa. 38. 3. Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is right in thy Sight.* Such a Testimony, at such a Time, is as much worth as Heaven it self. This is to have Heaven let down into us one Hour, and to be our selves taken up into Heaven the next. Now possibly Men may frolick away their Days in Sin and Vanity, and live as though they were unaccountable; but that Day and Hour is coming, wherein Conscience will begin to open its Eyes, when their Friends stand ready about them to close up theirs: And then it will see those horrid Shapes  
of

of Death, and Hell, and Wrath eternal ; such as while they were secure Sinners, they never believed ; and now that they are awakened Sinners, (and, alas ! possibly too late awakened ) they cannot escape. If therefore you would have Peace and Comfort in Death, be sure you cherish a good Conscience in your Life. You may now, indeed, bribe it to give in a false and flattering Testimony ; but when Eternity is in View, it will then speak Truth. And, Oh ! thrice happy they, to whom a true Conscience becomes then an excusing Conscience.

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[*To be inserted in the Sermon, concerning the Use of the Scriptures : Folio, p. 714. at the End of the first Paragraph.*]

**B**UT to say, That therefore we must not read the Scriptures, because some wrest it to their own Perdition ; is alike reasonable as to say, That therefore we must not eat nor drink, because that some eat to Gluttony, and others drink to Giddiness and Madness. The Apostle St. Peter tells us, *Epist. 2. Chap. 3. Ver. 16.* that in St. Paul's Epistles there were *some Things hard to be understood, which the Unlearned*

*Unlearned and Unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own Destruction.* Shall we therefore conclude, that neither his Epistles, nor any other of the Scriptures, should be read by us, because that in some, instead of Nourishment, they have occasioned only Wind, Flatulency, and ill Humours? If this had been his Purpose, it had certainly been very easy for him to have said, Because they are hard to be understood, and many wrest them to their own Destruction, therefore beware that you read them not. But instead of this, he draws another Inference, *Ver. 17, 18. Yet therefore, Beloved, beware lest ye also being lead away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Steadfastness. But grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* He saith not, Beware that you read them not; but, beware how you read them. This is the true Apostolical Caution, which tends not to drive us from the Scriptures; but to make us more studious and inquisitive in them, lest we also be perverted by the cunning Craftiness of Men, who lie in wait to deceive. And this the Primitive Fathers thought the best and surest Means, to preserve their People from Error and Seduction. It were almost endless to re-  
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cite to you those many Passages, wherein they do most pathetically exhort all, of all Ranks and Conditions, of each Sex, of all Ages, to a diligent Perusal of the Holy Scriptures. And so far were they from locking them up in a Language unknown to the Vulgar, or debarring the Laity from reading them, that the Translations of them into the common Tongue of each Country were numerous; and their Exhortations scarce more vehement and earnest in any Thing, than that the People would employ their Time and Thoughts in revolving them. It is therefore a most certain Sign, that that Church hath false Wares to put off, which is of nothing more careful, than to darken the Shop. And assuredly the Wrestling the Scriptures by some who read them, cannot occasion the Destruction of more, than that damnable Idolatry and those damnable Heresies have done, which have been brought into, and are generally own'd and practis'd by the Church of *Rome*, through the not reading of them.



**F I N I S.**