

THE  
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P R I E S T C R A F T  
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S H A K E N.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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V O L. I.

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The SECOND EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

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T O

*Samuel Rhodes, Esq;*

O F

*Highbgate in Middlesex.*

S I R,

**T**HE design of this Collection being to emancipate the minds of men, and to free them from those chains in which they have been long held to the great disgrace both of reason and christianity, I beg leave to dedicate the first volume to you: and I do it with great alacrity and pleasure, as I am thoroughly persuaded that every attempt to serve the glorious cause of liberty and truth, will be acceptable to a man of your generous and excellent spirit.

In countries enslaved, all truth is rigorously suppressed, all the avenues to religious knowledge and free enquiry are

carefully blocked up ; and it is penal, sometimes capital, to gainsay and oppose what power hath decreed and established. A few ages ago, our own country was in the same doleful condition ; when nothing could be published but what supported superstition and tyranny, when the Priests had the direction of the press, and restrained it to their own vile purposes ; to keep the people in ignorance and bondage. But, thanks to Heaven ! our lot is fallen in happier times : and the only way to preserve our liberty, is to assert it ; and to oppose all such principles and practices as are inconsistent with it, or which threaten and endanger the loss of it.

The worth of liberty is inestimable ; it comprehends all human felicity : and it is impossible for any man to love God or his country, who does not study to promote the principles of liberty, and to serve its cause. Where liberty is gone, all is gone that is precious and dear to men !

For

For this reason, it may be justly expected that all who are friends to mankind, will ever oppose priestcraft and spiritual tyranny, as these have been ever found the greatest foes to truth and the happiness of men. In the professors of christianity this is a most indispensable duty, both from a regard to men's temporal good, and from that concern which they ought to have for the honour and purity of their religion. It is certain that nothing has been a greater hindrance to the reception of this religion among men, nothing has more obstructed its progress in the world, than the absurd and selfish doctrines, the superstitious and foolish practices, which have been blended with it and fathered upon it. To free it from these, would be the means of recommending it to all men : and it is very probable, that when once it is separated from all heterogeneous and foreign mixtures, its divinity will be acknowledged, and all men will readily embrace it.

When christianity first appeared, it was a light to the world; it comforted and made glad the heart of man: but the corruptions, inventions, and additions of after-ages, rendered it a disgrace to human reason, a burden and curse to human kind. For many centuries it was buried under such a mass of superstition, that it could not be distinguished from the worst sort of Paganism itself. In *Christendom* all was darkness, horror, and chains. Here is an everlasting reason for opposing all Priests, and an unanswerable argument against all their claims of power and authority. For, from the power and pride of priests it was, that all these terrible evils arose. Not content with being pastors and ministers according to the primitive institution, they set up for Lords and Rulers: And when they were become masters of all things, and wielded both the spiritual and civil sword, it was death and damnation to resist them.

Does it not highly concern all christians, to know and consider these things? If  
men

men had exercised their reason, or understood their just rights, their *christian liberty*; could they possibly have been thus blinded and enslaved? And is not this ample warning to all Protestant States, that have in some measure recovered their liberty, to guard against all priestly encroachments, to break every remaining yoke; and to encourage a spirit of free enquiry in their people, as what alone can preserve and perpetuate their liberty? If neither the bitter experience of past ages, nor the dreadful condition of Popish countries at this day, can open our eyes, and teach us wisdom; we must be the blindest, the most insensible, the most stupid and infatuated of all people.

Of late years religious knowledge hath greatly encreased in this nation, and the nature and design of christianity are now better understood than ever: but of what avail are all our improvements in knowledge, if we must still be slaves to the laws

and customs, the doctrines and practices of dark and barbarous ages? How can we blame *Papists* for following *Tradition*, tho' contrary to the light both of reason and revelation, when we ourselves are the most prostrate worshippers of custom, and reverence error for antiquity's sake? Better be in ignorance, than thus hold the Truth in **unrighteousness**, to flash in our faces and condemn us!

Whoever compares the scriptures with the articles and canons of our national church, will see how little we have of christian truth and liberty, and what remains there still are of *popish* corruption and tyranny. Can any man reconcile the right of private judgment, and the apostolical injunction to *prove all things*, with the twentieth article of the church; . by which the Priests claim a power over all human understanding, and by denying us a right to think for ourselves, treat us as brute beasts?

Let

Let them shew us, if they can, how the use of reason and their damning creeds agree; and the consistency of cursing in churches, or that it is less shocking for men to damn their neighbours in the worship of God, than in an ale-house or a gin-shop!

It can never be a just defence of these things, to tell us, that they are *established by law*. Human authority is not the standard of Truth; nor is it in the power of any men to make that which is wrong, to be right. ~~A law compelling us to eat what we do not relish, or cannot digest, would be less unnatural than a law commanding us to believe what we do not understand, or judge to be false.~~ If our laws are inconsistent with reason and truth and public good, have we not a right to abolish them? If not; what a ridiculous and contemptible, what a base and unworthy nation are we, to boast of knowledge and freedom?

Sir, I mention not these things for your instruction, but for your edification; to animate and fortify you in the noble opposition you have hitherto made to *established* falshood and folly. In matters of Religion, neither the great vulgar, nor the small, have any concern what they profess or act. Where honours, wealth, and preferments are annexed to any opinions, the great will ever profess and maintain them, how false and wicked soever they be; whilst truths that are attended with reproach and poverty, or any degree of persecution, will have few friends, few advocates and followers in this world. But if there be a God, the love of truth is a sure title to his favour: and hereafter They shall shine with distinguished honour, that here stood up for Truth and Liberty in a degenerate age; and by their example, influence, and all their abilities, studied to promote their interest amongst men. Who would desert

fert so glorious a cause, with such rewards in prospect? That you will never desert it, I have the greatest reason to believe; and Therefore I thus publicly declare myself to be, with great esteem and affection,

S I R,

*Your highly obliged friend,*

*And most humble servant,*

*January*  
16, 1752.

Richard Baron.

THE  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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A  
DISCOURSE  
ON

ISAIAH lxvi. 7, 8.

Preached upon the 10th of *June*, being the  
Birth-day of the *Pretender*, many years  
since.

First printed in the year 1715.

## I S A I A H lxvi. 7, 8.

*Before she travailed she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.*

*Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once?*

**T**HE works of nature, which we every day contemplate, lie within the compass of our reason, and if we cannot see into their first causes, yet we can trace them in their powers and effects, so as to be able to give some ease and satisfaction to our natural desire after knowledge. Our observations on material objects being frequently repeated, and our senses giving certain evidence of their truth, lead us into a competent skill to judge of the rise, progress, and decay of many substances, or natural beings. Various are the instances of this kind, in which we may safely say, that we cannot be *deceived*, or that we must first forfeit both our senses, and our reason before we can suffer any delusion to pass upon us in these common occurrences. There are in-

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deed some truths which are equally certain with these more obvious ones, and in these one man may be more capable of being imposed upon than another, from the unequal degrees of knowledge, or the indifferent exercises and attainments of their rational faculties; but still there are *common cases* in which every man above the class of an idiot is an equal judge, and wherein the clown and the philosopher are upon the same level.

If a man cannot tell what degrees of motion kindle a flame, yet he can certainly know as well as the best naturalist, that one flame will kindle *another*; if he cannot tell how the food supplies the body with additional parts for its preservation and increase, yet he can perceive it is nourished and increased by the food that is conveyed into the vessels. In these operations of nature, which are the objects of our daily experience, we may lay it down as a maxim, that it is impossible to be deceived. L And yet there is a *church*, and a mighty one too, which in direct contradiction to the evidence of sense, the natural results of reason, would, and does impose the grossest cheats imaginable upon its members, under the notion that their *senses* are deceived in the most obvious and plain experiments in life. With them it is no difficulty, for a *body* to be  
in

in ten thousand places at one time, for the substance which you *see, feel, smell, and taste,* to be a different substance to what all these senses represent it to be; or, in the instance of my text, for a *woman to bring forth, before she travails, and be delivered of a man child, before her pain comes.*

And now if we should add with the prophet, *who has heard such a thing, who has seen such things?* Their answer is ready, the church out of its holy treasury of legends furnishes us with a thousand instances equally improbable, equally contradictory to the received notions, and certain experience of all mankind. There are not only those who have *heard* of these natural impossibilities, but those who have *seen* them, and will witness to their truth; they have *ocular demonstrators* against common sense, and *hearsay* evidences innumerable for the proof of facts which never have *been.* The *earth shall be made to bring forth in one day, and a nation shall be made at once;* that is, the ordinary methods of a beginning from some certain principle, and a gradual encrease by regular and natural means shall be superseded, and that which requires time, pains, and industry for its growth, be formed and perfected at one instant, or in so short a space as to be equally the object of wonder, as if

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it had been produced and finished at once. Such a case as this, in which *Isaiab* appeals to the testimony of the world, if ever they had *heard* of, or *seen such a thing*, is a slight and common matter with the *church of Rome*, whose forge of miracles is always at work, and so many constant artificers employed in that pious drudgery, that though it has produced wonder after wonder for these many a century, it still labours on, and with very little pains, and a competent stock of assurance, still brings forth more and more, so that they are now become like the multitude mentioned in the *Revelations*, *which no man could number*. But that ye, brethren, may be warned from falling into the errors and superstitions of *those who lay in wait to deceive you*, and that you may fly from the snare, which is set for the weak and ignorant; I shall take occasion from the words I have named to you, to shew you in particular,

*First*, The monstrous absurdity of that *church* in its perpetual forgery of new *miracles*, and how much it derogates from the honour and truth of *christianity*.

And in the second place, I will plainly tell you the end and design of their pretensions to *miracles*.

And

And in the last place, make a particular application of the words of my *text*, to the occasion of the present time.

First then; It is absurd in the *church* of *Rome* for to pretend to the exercise of a miraculous power in that silly and ridiculous manner it does, and brings a very great discredit upon *miracles* themselves, and so reflects a dishonour upon *Christ* and his followers, who never had recourse to that method of conviction, but upon proper and extraordinary occasions. The miracles which were worked by our blessed *saviour*, were in testimony of his *mission*, that he came from *God* for those purposes which he informed his hearers he did, and therefore he very often for the truth of his mission and doctrines appeals to his miracles; as when he says, if they would not believe him, they should believe his works. In the same manner the *apostles* have recourse to the mighty works which they wrought for the confirmation of the *doctrine* which they received from their master, and propagated in his name. And certain it is, that whoever offers any thing to the belief of another, pretending that he comes from *God*, must have some evident proof of his divine mission: since no man is obliged to believe him meerly upon his own

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testimony.

testimony. For this would make way for a perpetual series of delusion, if every pretender to divine inspiration was to be believed without proof. Now the proof is the extraordinary assistance God affords to the person who really comes in his name, and this assistance appears either in the spirit of prophecy, or the power of miracles; both which, but especially the latter, were visible in the apostles, and were an evident confirmation of the *doctrines* which they taught.

Now there can be no occasion for new miracles, unless there be new doctrines; and here indeed the church of *Rome* seem to have made the first necessary, by their plentiful introduction of the latter. But have they really any of these which may be depended upon? Have they supported their additional articles of faith with confirmatory works beyond the power of natural agents? Here they glory, here they triumph. Their flock of miracles is inexhaustible, for there is not a *relique* of theirs which has not wrought mighty wonders, not a *country saint* (for they make a difference) but that the *curate* of the place shall tell you more miracles of his performing, than you can read in all the *acts* of the *apostles*. As if christianity wanted more evidences now a days, and that in a christian country,

country, than when it was to struggle in its infancy against the cunning of the *Greek*, the *obstinacy* of the *Jew*, and all the perverseness of a seduced, unenlightened world. But it is not only their *living saints* that do mighty things; there resides a power even in their ashes, in the minutest trifles that the *good men* wore, to perform the same; nay a *hair* of many of them has worked as powerfully at a hundred miles distance after their decease, as if they themselves had been present, and upon the spot. As the *bones* of *Scanderbeg* were to influence his followers to conquer their worldly enemies, so those of their *saints* by an equal virtue are piously bequeathed to subdue *satan*, and the powers of darkness. Here indeed I am upon a sad subject of lies and fictions, but such a one as deserves to be displayed in its proper colours. How shamefully ridiculous are even their own accounts of their miracles? Was it a worthy piece of the angelical ministration, for *angels* to go trotting over sea and land with a load of timber and stones of the *Virgin Mary's house*, till at length they set it down at *Loretto*, that it might be honoured with greater devotion? This story seems the more silly, because if it had stood in the same place where it was built, their *religion* gives them a warrant to have visited it at any distance, and the merit of the *pilgrimage* would have well

recompenced the tediousness of the *journey*. Is it not a goodly story to tell of a saint that walked a vast way after his head was cut off, with it in his arms, resting in some places to draw breath? And yet any one would pass for an *infidel* that should doubt of this at *St. Dennis's church*. The miracles of the christian faith, were grave and solemn actions; but what scenical ridiculous stories, not to say blasphemous ones, make up the miracles of their saints! Again, the miracles of *Christ* and his *apostles* were acted in a public manner, in the view of all, and even before the face of their adversaries; but most of these wonders were transacted in corners, none being witnesses but persons concerned to own and vindicate the cheat: From hence it comes to pass, that they abound with so many fables of *Christ's* appearing in the *host*, sometimes as a child, and sometimes as crucified, when but very few of the whole company present were honoured with that amazing sight. Now when once it has been received as a truth that something miraculous may be performed among a great multitude, and yet may be only discernible by a select number, it soon becomes impiety to question any the most monstrous fiction that can be invented; and thus a foundation is laid for the *juggling priesthood* to trump up as many miracles as they please, since they  
may

may be easily furnished from their own society with proper evidences.

Further, the miracles of the christian faith were written in the times in which they were acted, to the end that enquiries might have been made into their truth, or their falshood; and the powers who then governed, being adversaries to the christian faith if there had been any forgery, it had not only been safe but meritorious for its enemies to have discovered them, and published them to the world. But most of the miracles of *Rome*, have slept with their pretended performers many years, if not ages, and are never heard of till they are secure from the after-game of discovery, and then they are blazoned out with mighty pomp and devotion. And here, when the inventor's head is at work, he may as well trick up his *saint*, with a hundred miracles as one; nay he has the whole creation before him, and nothing to obstruct his choice, and so may pitch upon what wonders he thinks most likely to prove new and fashionable. But we may fairly ask the question how it comes to pass, that in heretical countries (as they are pleased to call them) where there is a greater necessity for those miracles, and where they might be proved, if true, by a more incontestable evidence, since

the examiners of them were not to be suspected; ~~are~~ *none of those mighty works do shew themselves forth?* Are they confined to *Italy*, and *Spain*, and must we never be blessed with one for the conversion of multitudes in *Britain*? This gives good grounds to believe their whole account to be a forgery, a bold imposition of a cunning imperious *priesthood*, working upon the ignorance, the credulity, or the fears of the laity. And indeed the contrivers of these stories have not managed their design with such dexterity, as one might have expected from them; for they have bestowed as many wonders sometimes upon *one person*, as might have *sainted* half an order. And now, if any one is not satisfied with *saints*, and their performances, let him consider farther what conformity the present *Rome* bears to the *ancient*, and what a low debased mimicry they have reduced the *Christian* religion to of Heathenish superstition. It will bear, I fear, too just a parallel; let those who make it, tremble at the effects and consequences.

Yet there is still something more dangerous behind in these *miracle-mongers* of the *Romish church*. For the people being taught to believe these forgeries, and the real *miracles* of the gospel with an equal certainty, since

Since they have the testimony of the church for both, and at the same time seeing such evident characters of fraud and forgery in these supposed miracles, as convince them of their falshood; are thereby in danger of suspecting all the miracles of the gospel to be of the same stamp, and only the artifices of a set of cunning men, whose design was to delude the rest of mankind. This opens a way to direct Atheism, since finding the one false, they conclude the other to be so too; and by consequence, cast away all religion at once, as a piece of political delusion, contrived only for the interest of the deceivers. Justly therefore may we say, that this practice of the church of Rome, brings a discredit upon miracles themselves, and is so far from promoting the real interest of christianity, that it dishonours it to the greatest degree; it being certain, that so much as the best cause is promoted by the worst means, so much in the eye of the generality of judges it detracts from the goodness of that cause. Yet we who are placed in a happier light, as we by this see the false spirit that reigns in that church, so we distinguish the true one in a most particular manner, which cannot deceive, and which has given it us, as an indication of the son of perdition, that his coming should be after the power of satan, with all power

and

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*signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, 2 Theff. ii. 9, 10.*

And now, since we have seen the absurdity of this pretended multiplication of miracles, and the dangerous consequences that it has upon the christian faith, let me open to you the real end and design that the *church of Rome* has in all these contrivances; which was my second proposal.

If we then go behind the scenes of this ridiculous pageantry, we shall see the springs and movements that set this engine of superstition at play, and discover the great secret of this mystery of iniquity. The *church* you may be sure does not play its tricks for nothing; there must be something to be got by *spiritual legerdemain*, or the actors would never be at the pains of shewing so often. The design then of this continual scene of miracles, is no other than interest, which is of two kinds; *first*, the great gain that it brings to the *church*; and *secondly*, the tyranny that it maintains over the minds of the people.

*First* then; though the *Romish* church has many ways of enriching itself, yet the *saints*, and their feats, bring no small addition to the hoily treasury. *Gregory's* dialogues first began the trade, which soon proved so thriving.

ing a one, that the masters of the mystery were resolved not to part with it on any terms. The case of *Demetrius*, who made the silver shrines for *Diana*, is much the same with the priests of *Rome*; for *Diana* was proved a goddess by no better argument, than the sons of that communion are proved *saints*: the heathen, indeed, was more plain and open in his dealing, when he fairly told his brethren, *Sirs, you know that by this craft we have our wealth,* and then they found a convincing reason to cry out, *Great is the Diana of the Ephesians!* Our fore-fathers have heard the same in *England* upon the like occasion: *Great is St. Becket of Canterbury!* has been as popular and as gainful a clamour to the zealots of *Rome*. The multitude of offerings from every degree of people, (for none that can give can be excused from giving) vastly encreases the sanctified treasuries of every particular *church*, and at the same time, adds to the general stock; for the pope being himself a greater *saint* than any of the dead ones, must have a share in all the contributions to them. And here we may take notice what lengths men will run, when they once take up a new vain superstition; for since their trade commenced, *saints* have been appointed, not only to every *country*, but to every *house*, for every *trade*, and every *disease*. So that however poor and miserable the inhabi-

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tants of any place are, they must have a constant tax to pay to the *saint* of the neighbourhood, or that of their profession, or if they have an inclination to live well with the *priests* their masters, to both. Thus is this kind of godliness in the literal sense, *great gain*.

Now there is not one of all this train that stuff the *pontifical calendar*, but has been a mighty *wonder-worker*, and has a sufficient number of testimonies to maintain his credit with the people. It is true, some of them grow old and unfashionable, but not from any decay of real power to do the same great things they had done before; but because the directors of the holy machinery have got some new impostor to amuse the vulgar; and it is well known, that new *saints*, and new reliques bear a great price at their markets. Beside that, *sainthood* itself costs very dear, and whatever may be gained afterwards by the bargain, the *saints* family, and the religious house where he is to keep his residence, and perform his miracles, pay sufficiently to the *apostolick chamber* for his admittance into that dignified order. So that the power of working miracles is first sold at a lump by his holiness, and then retailed out by the purchasers to their customers. Such are the artifices of the *vicar* of *St. Peter*; these the de-  
lusions

lusions of an avaricious insatiable pack of *priests*, to maintain the outward splendor and magnificence of their *church*, that the inward defects of purity of faith and doctrines, may be the less pryed into and observed. Which leads me to the second end of their multiplication of miracles, which is,

To preserve an arbitrary tyranny over the minds of the people. The *church* of *Rome* well knows that no tyranny is more absolute than *superstition*, that when it has once taken root in the soul, it grows and flourishes into a thousand absurdities, and is hardly removeable without taking away that *religion* itself upon which it is grafted. This then is to be cherished and kept warm in the bosom of their deluded members by a continual shew of false appearances, that strike an awe upon their senses, and fire their imaginations with ideas of terror and admiration. Hence proceed all their solemn pomp of festivals, their processions, and their publick exhibitions of their *saints*. The poor wretches have not time left them to examine into one gaudy wonder (if they were inclined to it) before another strikes upon them with equal splendor; and thus the show continues with their lives. No sooner has the *coagulated blood* of one *saint* begun to flow, but the *image* of the *virgin* keeps up the amazement

ment of the vulgar, by a short *speech* to some holy man; and the *virgin* has not long been dumb, but *tears*, or *blood*, run down from the face or side of some martyr or other; or, if none of them be at leisure, from our *lord himself*. There is such a succession, and such an artful variety in it, of these pretended miracles, that a laity not prone to question, nor at all encouraged to do it, may well be kept in slavery to their masters.

What is there so difficult, that a man would not be persuaded to attempt, what so irrational that he would not believe, if he might but have the *voice of heaven* to encourage him; and this the *priest* can let him have every day of his life? Does he want an approbation of his design, and would have a miracle to ensure his success, the first *statue* he sees shall bow, or the *curate* himself shall assure him from a *vision*, that all will be right. Behold one of these poor creatures prostrate before a shrine, and perhaps washing the feet of it with his tears, and with great affection kissing the hems of its garment: and then, if through the tricks of the priest, the image seem to nod or smile on him (which is not unfrequent) with what joy does he go away, as if some angel had saluted him from heaven? What will not men do when they believe that their *minister can charm*.

charm water, salt, wax candle for the driving away of devils? That he can borrow oil, touch beads and pebbles, which shall have a virtue against sickness of all kinds, thunder and lightning, and the temptations of the devil. One would think, that there should be little need of having recourse to dead *saints*, when the living can perform such great things; but every art has its particular gain, and is worth so much, and there lies the secret of multiplying miracles. It is amazing that any thing, a degree above natural stupidity, should continue in a servile obsequiousness to these imposing tyrannies; but the unhappiness is, that *bigotry* is become an article of their *faith*, and to scruple or question, is to incur the pains of purgatory, if not of damnation. Thus the power of the *priesthood* is settled, beyond the possibility of being shook off by any human means, especially since the secular arm is employed in its support; and thus a small degree of superstition, with a vast fear of suffering, confirms their subjection, till it become habitual sometimes, even to believe against their senses. No wonder then, if by these means of ostentatious miracles, they can inspire their members with a false fear, a false love, and a false courage, and work all their passions, so as to make them subservient to the carrying on the *great mystery of iniquity*. And now I think

think that I have plainly declared to you, the two great ends that the *church of Rome* proposes to herself in her *sham-miracles*, which are worldly gain, and spiritual tyranny. May we who see through their artifices, shun their devices, and holding sincerely to the true unsophisticated word of God, never stand in need of these vile and abominable practices to support our holy religion!

I come now to make a particular application of the words of my text suitable to the present time; an application, in which every hearer that wishes well to the *protestant* faith, and its continuance in these realms, is deeply concerned.

The prophet says, *before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once?* Now this impossibility, beyond the powers of nature and its ordinary operation, is come to pass (if you believe the *papists*) in these our days. A woman too well, and I fear, too fatally known to these *kingdoms*, has brought forth a *man child* without the least tokens, or previous symptoms of travail; the power of *Romish* miracles has done this mighty thing

thing in *one day*, and *made*, as they vainly imagine, *a nation at once*. And that it must be done in this short space of time, and that this is agreeable to the ostentatious promises of *papal* wonders, let us observe the conduct and progress of this whole affair, in which we shall discover enough to make us abhor their miracles, and the product of them.

When as yet there was neither hope on one side, nor suspicion on the other of the *queen's* being with child; when as yet the thought did not seem entertained by herself, nor was dreamed of by any near her person; yet the good men at *Rome*, out of their zeal to give us an heir, could not help discovering their design, by an *unlucky prophecy*, which we have had since occasion to regard. For among many compliments of the *Jesuits* to the Earl of *Castlemain* at *Rome*, before this affair was talked of, there appeared in publick this propheticall device. An emblem was represented of a lilly distilling drops upon the ground, which flower, according to the old opinion of the naturalist, by the shedding of the water from its leaves, propagates its species, and the motto was *Lachrymor in problem*. But to make it the plainer, this distich was written beneath,

*Pro natis. Jacobe, gemis! flos candide regum?  
Hos natura fili si neget astra dabunt.*

*Doſt thou grieve for children, James, thou beſt  
of kings? if nature denies them, heaven ſhall give  
them to thee.*

A ſufficient testimony both of their deſigns and their modeſty; and they were indeed reſolved to make good their promiſes of a *miraculous conception*. The *Jefuits*, that bleſſed ſociety, in their publick diſcourſes ſoon after, did not ſcruple to aver, as if from inſpiration, that the *queen* muſt be with *child*, and with equal confidence, that it muſt be a *male child*. When matters were a little riper for their beloved project, on which the hearts of the whole *catholick* cauſe were ſet, and for which every good *proteſtant* and *Engliſhman*, was pierced with a thouſand fears; then they began to appear ſtill more bold and poſitive, declaring that God was concerned as much in the caſe of the future birth for his own glory, as he was for the fulfilling of his promiſe in quickening the *dead womb of Sarah*.

And now, that this *child of wonder* might not be blaſted in the womb, or be deſtroyed by any other unforeſeen accident, the *conſecrated*  
trinkets

trinkets are sent from *Rome* to ensure a safe delivery, and preserve the life of the infant. And indeed it was very fitting that every step of this affair should be attended with a due solemnity, since the contrivers were to have a *babe*, who was to exalt the *triple crown* so high, and make so large returns as the *sacrifice* of a kingdom for the blessings of the *holy father*.

But this scene, whether you will call it a *miracle*, or a *plot*, (and sure it has as good a title to the latter as to the former) was carried on like the rest of their *wonders*, with the *privity* of a few only, and those concerned not to discover the imposition. The doctrine of *equivocation*, which that *church* teaches, was an excellent cordial to make any *oath*, or deposition go down without a strain of conscience, and was not unluckily propagated not many years before their members had so just an occasion for its use. And shall then a woman before she travails, bring forth? Who has heard such a thing? The *church* of *Rome*. Shall she before her pain comes, be delivered of a man child? Who has seen such things? The *church* of *Rome*. Shall the earth bring forth in one day, or a nation be made at once? Who believes this impossibility? The *church* of *Rome*.

Yet let us observe a little farther into the conduct of the action of this day. There are, as we have said in the beginning of this discourse, some things, which from the evidence of our senses, and our daily experience, we cannot be deceived in, and of this nature is the present case. For so little care was taken in the disguising an affair of this importance, that the *queen* was undetermined till just before the time where she should lie in, and of a sudden, without any previous symptoms of her labour, it must be at *St. James's*. It was not perceived that she was ill on the *Saturday* night, and the next day between nine and ten she was brought to bed, and in the language of the prophet a nation was made at once. Where were the heads of the *Jesuits* not to give a more solemn preparation, a more regular and decent management to an action on which all their hopes depended? So many, in short, seem to have been let into the secret, that the *time* was generally known among the *papists* to an hour or thereabout, and it is well known that some of them inadvertently told it before the pretended delivery.

But what gives still more shrewd suspicions that this is a true *Romish miracle*, is the time chosen to work it in; when all those whom it

most

most concerned to be present, were by stratagem ordered to be absent. The story is too well known, and still so fresh in our memories, that it needs not a repetition. I complained in the foregoing part of my discourse, that out of the great number of *wonders* that *church* bestows upon almost all countries, it had not vouchsafed to give *Britain* one; but I now own that *Rome* has made us amends for her past unkindnesses by *one* that exceeds all she has performed in the territories under her own yoke. We thank her, and shall from hence learn to measure the goodness of her inclinations to a land of *hereticks*, since she chose *that* for the scene of the most wonderful exploit she ever attempted.

And now, my brethren, if you can be persuaded in contradiction to your senses, and believe in opposition to common reason, and that in facts which all men are equal judges of, then listen to the voice of *Rome*, swallow down her *miracles* with implicit faith, and take up her yoke with implicit obedience. Let the gross impositions of *pretended saints*, and *pretended princes*, be the burthen of your necks, and the load of your consciences. If you can be reconciled to impossibilities, and think every thing *must* be true, that the *priest* tells you is so, then sit down tame contented creatures under a double blindness both of *reason* and *religion*. If you

have so unjust a notion of the *purity*, the truth, and the divine establishment of the *christian* religion, to think it stands in need of the assistance of new miraculous gifts and powers, for to evidence its certainty, then lay hold of those altars that promise these mighty works, adhere to *nodding images* and *smiling wax-work*; then fix your faith upon that monstrous absurdity, the *infallibility of meer man*.

But I am persuaded better things of you, brethren, from the *pure and sincere milk* of the word of God which you have received, from the untainted principles of reason, and that open integrity of heart which is the characteristic of this nation, and which disdains the mean artifices and disguises of a *Jesuitical* conscience. You have seen too plainly the spirit of that persecuting church, ever to be allured by its specious promises, or convinced by its fallacious arguments: as you have been taught not to bear a *spiritual* tyranny, so have you felt enough never to submit to a *temporal* one, knowing well that whichsoever begins first, the other naturally follows.

You know what you must expect if *infallibility* of any sort takes place in these *islands*, and that a *king who is above laws*, and a *priest who is above errors*, are equally dangerous to  
this

this constitution. Who can then doubt, but that out of a due sense of the duty you owe to God, to your country, and yourselves, nay to your memories, and your posterity, you will with a noble and generous disdain resent the impositions which wicked and cunning men would settle and entail upon your *church* and nation? You must expect that the old *Romish* artillery will be planted against you; - but thank God, there is courage left among us to resist them, and reason enough to confute them. Let them confine their *miracles* to the countries where the sword and the *church* (always friends in the cause of superstition) can enforce their belief; but we know not, I say again, either their *pretended saints*, or their *pretended princes*.

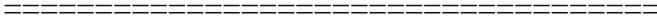
In short, as our ancestors have delivered to us such valuable blessings as a pure *reformed church*, a temperate *monarchy*, and *English liberties*, let us take care to deliver them safe to our posterity. And lastly, in defiance of all the fopperies of *Rome*, hold fast to that *faith* which was once delivered to the real *saints*, and which, if we take care to preserve, and practise according to the precepts of its divine author, will bring us to everlasting glory, and make *saints* of us all.

*Which God in his, &c.*

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A  
D I A L O G U E

Between the

Rev. Mr. JENKIN EVANS

Assistant Minister to the Curate of *White-chapel*,

A N D

Mr. PETER DOBSON,

A Man of SENSE and some LEARNING, and  
a CITIZEN of LONDON;

C O N C E R N I N G

B I S H O P S,

P A R T I C U L A R L Y

The Bishops of the Principality of *W A L E S*.

First printed in the year 1744.

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If every American does his or her best for America and for Humanity we shall become, and remain, the Grandest of Nations – admired by all and feared by none, our strength being our Wisdom and kindness.

Knowledge knows no race, sex, boundary or nationality; what mankind knows has been gathered from every field plowed by the thoughts of man. There is no reason to envy a learned person or a scholarly institution, learning is available to all who seek it in earnest, and it is to be had cheaply enough for all.

To study and plow deeper the rut one is in does not lead to an elevation of intelligence, quite the contrary! To read widely, savor the thoughts, and blind beliefs, of others will make it impossible to return again to that narrowness that did dominate the view of the uninformed.

To prove a thing wrong that had been believed will elevate the mind more than a new fact learned.

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A

## D I A L O G U E

C O N C E R N I N G

B I S H O P S.

*D.* **T**HE reverend Mr. *Evans* here!  
This is a favour indeed; I hope  
you have not been come long?

*E.* About half an hour; I have been amu-  
sing myself in your little library; upon my  
word you have a pretty collection of books  
and well chosen.

*D.* You know, doctor, I have in a great  
measure left off business; my friends gave me  
a tolerable education; I was brought up at *St. Paul's*  
school, and I was pretty near the top; I have  
taken care to preserve at least the learning I had,  
and can still understand a Latin author reasonably  
well; my father designed me for a clergyman, but  
having a dispute with the minister of the parish  
about his dues, he put me into trade; Mr. *Evans*,  
you are a happy man, you were brought up at  
the university.

*E.* I thank God, Mr. *Dobson*, I have suck-  
ed the breast of *alma mater*; I was sent to *Je-*  
*sus* college before I was twenty; in two years I  
was made *senior sph*, and had not seen four and  
twenty when I was *batchelor* of arts.

*D.* I see you have my *folio* common prayer-  
book before you: I bought it when I was church-  
warden of the parish.

*E.* I think I always find it open upon the  
table; I am glad you put so great a value upon  
that excellent book; I am fallen accidentally  
upon the *office* concerning the *ordaining* and *con-*  
*secrating* of bishops.

*D.* I am glad of it with all my heart; I  
have longed a great while to know something  
about that business, but you will never have  
patience with all my impertinent questions.  
[*Now must I humour th's choleric Welch divine,*  
*or I shall get nothing out of him: he is a strange*  
*mixture, God knows. Aside.*]

*E.* I shall be ready to answer any thing that  
lies in my power, but it is a serious matter, and  
requires great gravity and consideration.

*D.* To be sure it does; then Mr. *Evans*,  
since you are so good, pray tell me in the first  
place what's properly meant by a *bishop*?

*E.* A bishop according to the *Greek* deri-  
vation is an *overseer*.

*D.* Why is he called a *bishop*?

*E.*

*E.* He has that name from the *Saxon* word *biscop*, which we derive from the *Greek* *episcopos*, *speculator*, *explorator*, a *spy*, a *looker out*, a *sentinel* or *watchman*; in short, he is, as I may say, a *supervisor* of the business and affairs of the church: this before us you see is the form of *ordaining* or *consecrating* of bishops, that is of *English* bishops, of *christian* bishops.

*D.* God forbid there should be any bishops that are not *christian* bishops; sure there are no *heathen* bishops.

*E.* There were *heathen* bishops and good bishops too; the old *Grecians* had their *episcopoi*, and so had the *Romans*; I remember that the divine *Cicero*, in one of his epistles, tells us, that he was a *bishop*.

*D.* What was the business of those bishops?

*E.* To enquire into the manners of the people under their jurisdiction, and take notice of their conduct and behaviour.

*D.* But are there no *heathen* bishops now?

*E.* No not one upon the face of the earth.

*Rara avis in terris nigraque similima cygno.*

You'll excuse the *Latin* Mr. *Dobson*?

*D.* O dear doctor, I love it of all things. This sacred office, I find, begins with an excellent prayer. I wish those that are concerned would frequently reflect upon it with the

### 34. *The Pillars of* PRIESTCRAFT

attention it deserves——*Give grace, we beseech thee, to all bishops and pastors of thy church, that they may diligently preach thy word and duly administer the godly discipline thereof.* The venerable compilers of this form, I suppose, had no notion that a bishop, as soon as he was consecrated, was discharged from the duty of a priest, or was immediately to burn his commonplace book, as if it was beneath his dignity to *preach diligently*, that is *constantly* in his diocese; whereas a bishop has without doubt the principal care of every soul within his district, and is more especially bound not only to see the offices of the church, the duties of praying, preaching and administering the sacraments are faithfully and regularly executed by the parochial clergy, but to *preach diligently* himself in one or other of his churches, as he finds most conducive to the edification of his people, and the spiritual improvement of the flocks committed to his charge. This must be the meaning of the words, if they have any meaning at all, and how they acquit themselves in this important case, I should be glad to be informed.

E. That may be easily done; for when they are resident in their sees, they are a mighty relief to the parochial clergy; they travel from church to church in all weathers, through frost and snow, over hills and high mountains  
they

they preach here, read prayers there, catechize, expound, confirm. They are never idle, for they well know, that *woe be unto them if they preach not the gospel.* Do you think they wrap their talents in a napkin, and let them grow rusty? Can you imagine they do nothing but walk to the cathedral on a *Sunday* in state with the *vergers*, with their *silver-maces*, before them?

D. Why, Sir, some of them do not reside in their dioceses at all; others are there for a month or two, to take the benefit of the summer air, and taste the venison of the country, and then, perhaps, they may *preach* once or so, and a mighty favour it is; but the chief account of their *preaching* we have from the news papers; you hear now and then of a charity sermon, or a sermon before the *lords*. and exceedingly seldom, they will vouchsafe to ascend the pulpit of the parish wherein they live, and set all the congregation upon the stare. Some of them do not preach five times in a year, in their own diocese, and many of them not once. I would recommend to them the reading of old bishop *Latimer's* sermons, and particularly this remark, which I took down in my pocket-book. 'While they controul in great towns and about court, who is it that controuls the devil at home? Whether they reside or not, the devil is not wanting on his part, he is never unoccupied;

' he is ever in his parish, he keeps residence  
 ' at all times, he ever applies his business,  
 ' he is never idle, his office is to hinder reli-  
 ' gion. ——— Oh that *prelates* would be as  
 ' diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine,  
 ' as *satan* is to sow cockle and darnel. ———  
 ' The devil is no *unpreaching* prelate, he is  
 ' no *lordly loiterer* from his cure, he still ap-  
 ' plies his business; if you will not learn of  
 ' God, or good men, learn diligence in your  
 ' business even of the devil, *ad erubescendum*  
 ' *vestram dico*, I speak it to your shame.' This  
 indefensible practice of *non-residence*, must one  
 time or other be of pernicious consequence  
 to episcopacy: the church of *Rome*, with all  
 her absurdities, all her obligations to favour  
 ignorance and blindness, could never swallow  
 that monstrous contradiction of *non-residence*.  
 The council of *Trent* (as I have read) decrees  
 expressly, that every bishop who was six months  
 absent from his bishopric, of what title, or  
 preeminence soever he shall be, he should for-  
 feit a fourth part of the revenues of it, and  
 if six months more, another fourth, and the  
 contumacy increasing, the metropolitan was to  
 inform the pope against him, that he might  
 inflict some severe punishment, or remove him  
 from his bishopric, and place a better in his  
 room. What a miserable case it is that a  
 poor clergyman, whose family wants bread at  
 home,

hime, if he has any business with his bishop, must be obliged to run after him from one end of the kingdom to the other, and be forced to beg his way home again ?

*E.* There's no such thing. The bishop I assure you defrays every farthing of the expence out of his own pocket, and gives his poor brother something to buy a good book with when he comes home.

*D.* So much the better ; but we are rambled from the subject ; spare me a word more, when episcopacy was run down in the civil wars, a great objection against the bishops was that they never *preached*. They were called the most opprobrious names upon that account, *idle shepherds, blind watchmen, dumb*

—— I do not care to repeat the distinctions and characters bestowed upon them in those times : I remember Mr. *Fiennes*, in his speech upon that occasion, says, that ‘ the bishops  
 ‘ neither can nor will preach ; they cannot,  
 ‘ because they are so entangled with the af-  
 ‘ fairs of this world ; they will not, because  
 ‘ their dignities and honours make them so  
 ‘ stately, that they think it not *episcopal* to  
 ‘ *preach often*. They are so fat, and live so  
 ‘ much at their ease, that they are overrun  
 ‘ with idleness, and cannot bring their minds  
 ‘ to it. I wish as well to the *episcopal* order as  
 any man in *England*, nor do I think it reason-  
 able

able to argue against the use of an office from the abuse of it, but I am sorry to say—

*E.* To say any thing to the purpose you mean; why that *Fiennes* was a rebel, a republican, a fanatic; he was condemned to be hanged for the cowardly surrender of *Bristol* to prince *Rupert*. Have you no better authority than this; read on, read on.

*D.* What is meant by *duly administering the godly discipline of God's word*, as mentioned in this prayer?

*E.* That expression relates chiefly to the censures of the church, those dreadful and terrible weapons that God has committed into the hands of bishops to punish and cut off notorious offenders, that cannot otherwise be reclaimed, to shut them out of the pale of God's fold, and to deliver them over to *satan*, until by their penitence and submission they are qualified to be re-admitted, and to be restored to the common privileges of the *christian* church.

*D.* Is that *godly discipline* administered at this time according to the original design of its institution!

*E.* I hope so; the offender I suppose, is cited before the *bishop*, who sits in consistory with his *presbyters* about him, and takes immediate cognizance of the cause himself; there the sinner is examined, reprov'd, admonish'd, threatened,

threatened, and upon his continued obstinacy cast out of the church. The matter is not turned over to *chancellors, commissioners, officials,* and a parcel of hungry unhallowed *lay-officers* (who can pretend to no relation to the commission of *Christ* and his *apostles*) to persecute and squeeze the poor wretch, to torment him with cruel, tedious, and expensive processes, and when they have racked him to death, and ruined him in his fortune, then at last to excommunicate him, and for any little failure in the form of their enslaving proceedings, to throw him out of all spiritual and civil commerce and society, to banish him as a vagabond like *Cain*, and make him infamous to all about him; and as if this were not enough, to call for help from the temporal sword, to clap him up in a goal, and let him rot in a dungeon. — This would be setting up an *inquisition* with a vengeance; from which, and all other *popish* crafts and cruelties, good lord deliver us! Do you think this was the manner of *binding* and *loosing* intended by the commission delivered by *Christ* to his *apostles*, and by them to the *bishops*, their successors in the church? Can you imagine, that the sentence of such judges is *ratified* in heaven? That God will ever sign such dead warrants as these? Can this be the design of that petition offered up by the *archbishop* in the office of *consecration,*

*grant we beseech thee to this thy servant such grace that he may use the authority given him, not to destruction, but to salvation, not to hurt, but to help?*

D. If the bishop *himself* was to sit in judgment, and to execute the censures according to the design of his lord and master, the *sentence*, no doubt would be dreadful and of fatal effect, but when so many excommunications are thundered out and published in a *ludicrous* unedifying manner, for the most trifling occasions, which the bishop knows nothing of; when he never *hears* nor *sees* the offender, nor takes the least care of the happiness of his soul, but leaves that entirely to his officers to be saved or damned, as the subtle unrighteous forms of their *unscriptural* proceedings (first invented for the support of *papal* power, and spun out into a sort of trade, by *canon lawyers*, the spawn of *popery*) shall think fit to pronounce; to consign a poor creature to eternal flames for some pitiful matter, to enjoin him penance, perhaps, and then for a *little money*, to loose him and let him go; if this be the *due administering of godly discipline* according to this excellent *prayer*, let the consciences of those declare to whom it belongs. What a horrid profaneness and mockery of God, it is to give it solemnly in charge to a *bishop elect*, when he is consecrated *to exercise godly discipline, to be so merciful*

ciful that he is not too remiss, and to minister discipline that he forget not mercy; when at the same time, he never knows any thing of the offender, nor of the cause ——— I could say much more, but it has been often said to no purpose ——— This has been a continual subject of complaint from the *reformation* to this day; it remains still unredressed, and is a grievance of so high a nature; it is such a perversion, such a burlesque of the most solemn and tremendous act of church authority, that it hangs like a *millstone* upon the neck of episcopacy, which I am afraid will one time or other sink it to the bottom never to arise more.

*E.* God forbid; I hope things will mend, do not be so hot. Come, we will go on: *he that desireth the office of a bishop desireth a good work*; he desires the office of a bishop on purpose to enable him to promote the interest of piety, virtue and charity, and to do *more* good works than he was capable of doing before.

*D.* Do bishops desire the office only for those excellent ends? Have they no worldly prospects in view to advance themselves or their families? Have they no ambition to sit in parliaments, or to appear in the courts of princes? Do they do *more* good works in proportion to the increase of their revenue, and the advantages of their station?

*E.* Yes, marry do they; and were it not for those worthy ends they would be dragged by no violence from their studies in the obscurity of a college, or the privacy of a country parish; and as for their families, if they have any food or raiment convenient for them, they leave the rest to providence. Indeed, they have preferments in their gifts sufficient to support their sons in a handsome manner, but *detur dignissimo* is the word. If a bishop's son be the most learned clergyman in the diocese, as it generally happens under the influence of paternal example, *simile frondescit virga metallo*, as the poet, sings; and if the father upon a strict examination finds him so, then indeed he will advance him perhaps to an archdeaconry, or to a good living; but what of that? He sends him out bare, and without furniture, without giving him so much as a *little sense*, or his common-place book, or one old sermon, or the least hint or division, or general head, but leaves the poor young man, who is not used to hard labour, to work and sweat, and make it all out of his own brains; in short, it is a cruel thing to be a bishop's son.

*D.* It is so at this rate, but one would think they might make some allowance, and incline a little in favour of their own flesh and blood.

*E.* No doubt they have been often told so, but they will not bear the thoughts of it; they will

will have no respect of persons ; if my lady, the mother, was to beg upon her bended knees, it would signify nothing ; I do assure you, when a bishop examines his son for orders, he works him about the pig-market ; he asks him the hardest questions, and puts him to the crab-bidest place in all the book. And then for their daughters —

*D.* I knew a bishop that married his daughters to clergymen, and provided handsomely for them.

*E.* But how is that ? if a clergyman falls in love with a bishop's daughter (and, indeed they are the most beautiful and accomplished young ladies in the kingdom) he knows he is to expect nothing from the father but by his merits ; the bishop tells him so beforehand. ' If you have a mind to my daughter, God ' bless you both together ; but look for no preferment from me upon that account ; my ' favours are the rewards of hard study, of ' sound principles, and regular behaviour ; you ' must shine *sicut inter stellas luna minores*, to ' be distinguished by me.' So that if you see the son or relation of a bishop raised to the highest preferments in the church, you may depend upon it he is the most learned, and the best preacher in all the diocese. You'll find it a difficult matter to prove the contrary.

*D.* Does a bishop give his daughters no fortune in money ?

*E.* A very trifle besides his blessing; and how can it be? What with charity at home, and charity abroad, with endowing of *hospitals*, and founding of *exhibitions*, and buying books in all the *eastern* languages to convert the *Jews* and *Arabians*, what can be saved? I think the *natural* piety and virtue of a bishop's daughter is portion sufficient, and a competent stock for a young clergyman to begin with.

*D.* But I have heard that a female relation, or a waiting-woman in a bishop's family, is sometimes married to a clergyman, who has a living given him upon that account.

*E.* There is no such thing; I defy the rankest presbyterian to produce one instance of it since the reformation.

*D.* I hope then, they observe the same rigid impartiality in preferring any clergyman upon the strongest recommendation from others ?

*E.* They do I assure you; for between you and I, if the greatest king, or prince, or duke, or earl in all the world, recommends a clergyman to a bishop, he first examines him strictly in *Latin*, *Greek* and *Hebrew*, and if he catches him tripping he is rejected; there is no regard to the greatest power, or the highest title, he is sent away *re infectâ*, with a *flæa* in his ear, and  
makes

makes as silly a figure, as if he had been recommended by you or me.

*D.* Good lack !

*E.* I tell you it is merit only must do the business; and to encourage merit there is a most laudable custom now universally followed by all the governors of the church, which is, to keep a constant correspondence with the heads of all the colleges in both universities; and when they find a poor lad of promising parts, and a good sober behaviour; one of the bishops, whose turn it is, immediately adopts him for his own, makes him a handsome allowance to live comfortably, sends for him at proper times to his own palace to have him under his eye; there he directs him in the method of his studies, settles him in good principles, and particularly in a love and veneration for the doctrine and discipline of the established church; and when he is qualified for orders, he advances him gradually to the highest dignities, and gives him the preference to all sons and relations in the world.

*D.* But do not bishops generally appoint one of their relations to be their secretaries or so ?

*E.* Very rarely; their way is to look out for some worthy clergyman in their diocese, who is reduced to misfortunes, or some young student just in orders; such a one they take  
into

into their family, and allow him the small perquisites of that employment, and small enough they are, God knows: but if no such person can be found, which scarce ever happens, then they will make use of a nephew of shining parts, or some distant relation; and where is the mighty harm in this?

D. None in the least.

E. Then, as for pride and ambition——

D. Have bishops no pride or ambition?

E. No more than a sucking child; and though it is well known that the bishops in *England* are descended from the best and most ancient families in the kingdom, you never hear them talk of their pedigrees; they are rather the more humble on that account. One is the son of a duke, another the son of a —— I tell you they are not like mushrooms sprung up in a night, or raised in a minute like puff-paste; they have no occasion, like upstarts in other professions, to buy coats of arms at the *Herald's* office: they and their ladies have them by descent; *ab avis & proavis, & avi numerantur avorum.*

D. Do they not affect to make a figure at court?

E. Affect, a fiddle; they had rather live in a cell than undergo the fatigue of attendance at any court in Christendom; but there they go to discharge a good conscience; they are

a sort of protestant confessors ready to solve all difficult cases, to support the weak, to comfort the afflicted, to relieve the distressed, to cheer up the poor-spirited, to ease such as are troubled with evil thoughts, to deliver such as are under strong temptation. They have always before their eyes, that excellent canon of the council of *Sardis*. The fathers of that synod observing, that bishops used to go to court upon by-ends, and private designs of their own, ordained that no bishop should go to court, unless immediately summoned by the emperor's letters, or that their assistance was required to right the widow, or orphans, and to rescue them from the unjust grasps of potent and merciless oppressors. I will tell you a secret: if the greatest king, or peer in the world, was known to live in any habitual sin, they would not suffer the sin upon him one moment, they would reprove him to his face, though they were all sure to perish in a dungeon.

*D.* Well done, doctor; but do not bishops delight to sit in the parliament house?

*E.* They delight to serve their country, if you will: there they sit *facere vota pro republica*, to make *prayers*, or *vows*, or *votes* for the commonwealth; for so the phrase may be translated; thus we read in *Horace*, *voti compos*, a man has a good *vote*; *ex voto vivitur*,  
when

when a man lives according to his *vote*; *non voto vivitur uno*, when he keeps a good house by giving a double vote. They sit in parliament, *ne quid detrimenti capiat ecclesia*, that the church suffers no wrong. And it is most comfortable to observe, how they are all inspired with a wonderful spirit of concord and *unanimity*; for they all *pray*, or *vow*, or *vote*, the same way; yet every one severally follows the dictates of his conscience, and *votes* as the merits of the cause require. They act by a sort of divine instinct, without any manner of communication with one another. They are like the *seventy interpreters*, that translated the old testament into *Greek*, they were locked up separately in different cells, yet they say, there was not a syllable difference in their several translations; so these *interpreters* of holy writ, without speaking a word to one another, agree always in their *prayers* or *votes*; they rise up as one man, they are of one heart, and of one soul. Delight to sit in parliaments? so far from it, any more than their duty obliges them, that they never concern themselves about the *election* of parliament-men in the country where they live; they never offer to closet, to send circular letters to influence, or menace their clergy, their tenants, or their tradesmen, but leave them all to their liberty to vote as their consciences direct,

with-

without favour or affection. They do not hurry their servants abroad at all hours, night and day, and make them scour about the country on the coach-horses through thick and thin; or keep their cellars open to make a party, but every man that belongs to them remains free and unbiassed, according to act of parliament, and the established liberty of the subject, and fundamental rights of the constitution.

D. That is glorious! but have bishops no pride?

E. Did you ever observe them to strut or swagger, or puff out their scarves? Do they spread open or display their silken shining *circles* over their cassocks? No, they wrap themselves close in their holy vestments, they walk softly with their eyes downward upon the ground, inwardly lamenting and bemoaning the flagrant wickedness of a sinful nation. You may be sure those thin lean bodies, and pale sad countenances are the effects of long fasting, strong crying and tears, of hard study, and continual mortification.

D. I do not know what you mean by pale faces, but I have seen a bishop with a red face before now.

E. And have you not seen ladies with red faces, by drinking of too much water?

D. But dear doctor, are not bishops exceedingly pleased to ride in coaches?

E. What would you have those ride in, who have almost crippled themselves by a studious sedentary life, and their limbs are benumbed, so that they are scarce able to walk? But then they always pull up the *blinds*, for the huzza's and acclamations of the people would be troublesome to them, if they were seen as they pass along; *popularity* gives them offence. O Mr. *Dobson*, give me leave, indulge me, or my heart will burst: there is something so peculiarly noble in a *bishop's lady* as she sits in her coach, whether you observe the beauty and dignity of her person, the majesty of her appearance, the genteelness of her dress, nothing of the *dowdy* about her; with what gracefulness she sits, as if she was born for greatness: O they are the ornaments of their sex, the patterns of politeness, elegance, and decorum, the *deliciæ humani generis*, raised on purpose by providence, to be the nursing mothers of the — Did you never observe a *bishop's lady* in her coach at a *mercier's* door upon *Ludgate-hill*, how humbly she looks with her little daughters, pretty moppets! about her, teaching them to *knot*, and say their *catechisms*? You might swear she was an *episcopal* gentlewoman, without seeing the golden *mitre* on the outside.

D. It is wonderful, I confess; but, doctor, let us go on; a bishop must be the husband of one wife; no doubt of it, he ought not to have two at one time.

E. Pray, Mr. Dobson, leave the expounding of scripture to me, I think it is more my province. This injunction does not relate to a plurality of wives, but it is as much, as if one should say — what would you give to know?

D. Not much; but pray, doctor, was there ever any such a thing as a bishop's committing fornication?

E. No.

D. Nor adultery?

E. No, never.

D. But did a bishop never look upon a woman to lust after her, and so commit adultery with her in his heart?

E. Yes, *popish* bishops in abundance: they all commit adultery with the whore of *Babylon*, and with other loose hussies, or they are much belyed. But I never heard nor read of a *protestant* bishop's being a whoremonger, nor adulterer, name one if you dare.

D. Nor archbishop?

E. No.

D. Good lack! but do they never look upon a pretty woman with delight? Do they never drink tea among the ladies?

*E.* They look upon a fine woman as you do upon a beautiful horse, to admire the works of the creation, but without any manner of concupiscence I assure you.

*D.* And then, they wear such huge broad-brimmed hats, on purpose to keep their eyes from wandering upon strange objects.

*E.* Well observed, they do so; and as for drinking tea among the ladies, they do it to have the better opportunity to draw them off from the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. They are ever meditating upon these *verses*, which, (as you may see in the *office*) they sing when they are consecrated.

*Our weakness strengthen and confirm,  
(For, Lord, thou know'st us frail)  
That neither devil, world, nor flesh  
Against us may prevail.*

They do not spend their time upon trifling subjects, pinching of snuff, admiring the *ribbons*, or gallanting their fans, but in explaining the *catechism*, or expounding some difficult *text*. O, it is a heaven upon earth, to sit at a tea-table with a bishop, or, indeed, with a *bishop's lady*.

*D.* Do not some bishops keep *ladies* in their houses, whom they call *cousins*, or *nieces*?

*E.*

E. No, never; and in this they are truly primitive; for in the first ages of the church, particular care was taken, that no bishop, under penalty of being deposed, should entertain any woman in his family, either relation, or stranger, that so all pretence, either of temptation or scandal, might be cut off.

D. But, dear doctor, may not a bishop have wandering thoughts?

E. Mr. *Dobson*, ask pertinent questions: It is no jesting matter, *ludere cum sacris*: you will ask me by and by, if bishops do not go to plays.

D. Now you speak of that, I will not say, that bishops go to plays, but I am sure some of them read plays, and very smutty ones too. Pray, did not a bishop publish some *Latin* plays, *Terence's comedies*? I am sure there is bawdy in some of them; I have read them: *there is a plump juicy girl, would make your teeth water*: and then there is a plot to debauch a woman, by a man that pretends to have no *stones*. I thought a bishop might find himself better business, than to recommend and explain such stuff as that. I saw lately an A————'s name among a list of subscribers to a collection of old plays, in which are expressions so obscene, so filthy, lewd and impious.—Ah, doctor, there are

other *fluts* in the world, beside the whore of *Babylon*.

*E.* I have a good mind to cite you into the spiritual court for defamation: I see you observe no bounds: I will have no more to say to you: I renounce all communication with you: here am I taking all the pains to edify and improve your understanding, and you affront me to my teeth: I will never darken your doors again.

*D.* Pardon me, reverend Sir, this one time; do not, I beseech you, let me lose your learned acquaintance. I beg you would bring good *Mrs. Evans* to eat a bit of *roast pig* with me to-morrow.

*E.* Have you broached the barrel of *ale* you told me of? I am somewhat hasty, I own; but, upon your submission, I pass it by.

*D.* Do bishops love their *wives* as *Christ* loved his church?

*E.* Yes, they do, and would lay down their lives to save them.

*D.* Do bishops (as the office directs) *rule* their wives well?

*E.* Yes; mighty well.

*D.* Is not a bishop's diocese, said to be his *spiritual wife*? How then comes he, for the sake of a richer dower, to leave his *first love*,  
and

and to give her a bill of *divorce*, and to marry himself to another bishoprick?

*E.* The old *presbyterian* cant! a-bishop, you must know, is not married to any particular diocese, but to the church in general. I find you are nibbling about the *translation* of bishops; that practice, I do assure you, is justified by the use of the first and purest ages, from the apostles days down to the times we live in; it is *jure divino*, and may be proved by undeniable authority. Do not you read expressly that *Enoch* was translated?

*D.* You have convinced me; and yet, notwithstanding this plain proof, I have read somewhere of a bishop of *Rochester* in former days, one *Fisher*, who, when he was offered a richer bishopric, was used to say, his church was his *wife*, and he would never part with her because she was *poor*.

*E.* He was a *popish* bishop; do not mind him; foxes and firebrands! *papist* and *presbyterians*! all against the poor church of *England*! God help her!

*D.* I remember now; it was in *Collier's* church history, where I read that saying of the bishop's; and the same writer, in another place, speaks something of the *translation* of bishops, I will turn to the index; here it is; let me see; look here, doctor, he says, that "it is decreed by the apostles canons, that it

“ is not lawful for a bishop to leave his own  
 “ diocese, and remove to another, without a  
 “ justifiable motive; that is, unless he has a  
 “ fair prospect of doing *more service* to the  
 “ church upon such a *translation*. But even  
 “ in this case, he is not to remove without  
 “ strong solicitation, and by the order of a  
 “ great number of bishops. The council of  
 “ *Nice* says, if any bishop quits his own see,  
 “ and settles in another, his translation shall  
 “ be *void*, and he shall be returned to the dio-  
 “ cese to which he was at first consecrated.  
 “ And the council of *Sardica* complained, that  
 “ covetousness and ambition had brought an  
 “ ill custom upon the church; that it was  
 “ too common a practice for bishops to re-  
 “ move from a less see to a greater, and that  
 “ an instance the other way was seldom or  
 “ never to be met with; from whence it  
 “ was plain, they were governed by considera-  
 “ tions of interest.” Now, spare me a que-  
 “ sion or two. Are bishops *translated* merely  
 “ because they can do the church *more service*  
 “ in a *rich* bishopric than a *poor* one? Do they  
 “ deny to be *translated*, till they are pressed by  
 “ the strongest solicitation? Do all the rest of the  
 “ bishops go to him in a body, and beg of him  
 “ to be *translated*? Do they ever desire to be  
 “ *translated* from a *rich* bishopric to a *poor* one,  
 be

because they may be able to do more service to the church?

E. All forgery! *popery!* forgery! that *Collier* was a rank *Jacobite!* a *Nonjuror!* give me my hat and gloves. That book ought to be burnt by the hangman. I will not stay a moment, lest the earth should open and swallow us up, and the house tumble about our ears.

D. Patience, reverend Sir, I only refer you to what I have read; you know I have often told you I was pretty near the upper end of *Paul's* school, and, though I may not talk so learnedly as you gentlemen of the university, I have read a great deal of *English* history. But I am of your opinion all the while; I think as well of bishops as you do, and would go as far to serve them.

E. Sayest thou so! give me thy hand; then I will fill the other pipe. I tell you, once for all, that no bishop would endure the thoughts of being *translated*, unless he was sure it was for the good of the church; and what think you is the reason, that the same holy man will be a *bishop* of one church, *dean* of another, *prebendary* of another, hold a living or two in *commendam*, and take the trouble of other cures upon him, but only to qualify himself to do the more good in his generation? and if they thought that other clergymen would pro-

mote the business of charity and religion in those benefices, with an equal or superior industry and care, they would instantly renounce them all; but, alas! Mr. *Debson*, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few, very few! could they find persons proper to receive them, they would soon resign their pluralities; but when, upon strict enquiry, no such are to be found, they keep them in their own hands for those worthy and pious purposes. Nay, they are so eager and resolute to advance those excellent ends, that you will, sometimes, see a holy man refuse, as it were, a *bishopric*, unless he be, likewise, allowed to be a *dean*, a *prebendary* and a *rector*, for fear the duties of those places should not be so properly executed, and their revenues not conscientiously managed for the good of souls. I am well assured, they do not save a penny of the profits into their own pockets, but lay it out in the most useful and extensive charities, to support poor *vicars*; to supply the wants of the inferior clergy; to found libraries in market-towns, *in usum cleri*; to build parsonage-houses, that are now running into decay all over *England*; to repair the episcopal palaces, especially in *Wales*; to relieve the fatherless, and make the widow's heart to sing.

D. You were saying, doctor, that the bishops, sometimes, hold a living or two in  
*commendam,*

*commendam*; what is the meaning of that word?

E. Sir, I do not take upon me to be a regular *doctor*, but only am called so by the courtesy of *England*. Why, you must know, that in some of the small bishoprics, that do not exceed above five or six hundred, or a thousand pounds a year, (and what is that for the representative of an *apostle*?) there is sometimes a good living annexed, and, sometimes, the king (God bless him and his royal house for ever!) is so gracious as to permit the holy man to hold a living, or a dignity, which he had before, along with his bishopric, to assist him to support the character of his function, to enable him to keep a better table, and to enlarge his charitable heart; and these good designs, I dare say, are executed to a tittle; a very trifle is laid up to make provision for his family; the poor are his pensioners, they are his children.

D. But, how is it, that the same holy man should be the *head* of a church in one diocese, and be a *parish priest*, and subject to another bishop, in another bishopric; how such unbecoming condescensions, such shifting of scenes, such mean sinking in their characters, from being *bishops* to become *parochial priests* in other dioceses, how such a practice, such an irregular kind of *plurality* agrees with the ca-

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nons and discipline of the church, I could never yet be able to comprehend.

*E.* What signifies it whether you can comprehend it or not? Will you deny the king's supremacy? Pray, was not *Amos* a prophet of the lord, and, at the same time, one of the herdmen of *Tekoa*?

*D.* Very true, doctor; I am satisfied. Now, if you please, we will go on a little farther. *A bishop must be vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality.*

*E.* That is, he must be temperate, and not indulge the rapacious cravings of his stomach; he must keep a good look-out, and be upon the watch; and above all, and for the sake of all, support a generous and well-spread table, to entertain strangers, to receive his clergy, and welcome his neighbours; not that he is to make his house an inn, or a tavern, open at all hours, and free to all comers.

*D.* I take you right. But how can they be said to keep up to this precept of the apostle, when not one in six of them lives in his own proper diocese?

*E.* What of that? though they do not reside constantly in their country palaces, because they are obliged to take care of the church, and the king, and the nation in parliament, yet they provide that as plentiful a house be kept in their absence as if they were them-

selves upon the spot. They do not when they come away fasten up the doors, and let the *grass* grow in the courtyard, but they leave a regular table behind them. There is a *chaplain* to represent his lordship, a *steward* and proper servants, and the *bell* rings, and the *cloth* is laid, and sumptuously covered, where the clergy, the neighbouring gentry, and the yeomanry are handsomely received, and their horses put into the stable and well rubbed down, and the poor of the adjacent villages are comfortably fed, and sent away with full bellies, and sometimes with a piece of money in their pocket besides; there the *traveller*, and the *stranger* are welcome, at all times, to a slice of bread, and a cup of ale; the people of the country do not feel the want of monasteries and religious houses, which used to bestow their alms, and their hospitality so liberally among them, as long as their room is so well supplied by the bountiful distributions of the bishop of the diocese. — They remember faithfully the question put to them, when they are *consecrated*.

*Will you shew yourself gentle, and be merciful, for Christ's sake, to poor and needy, and to all strangers destitute of help?*

Answer,

Answer.

*I will so shew myself, by God's help.*

And, then, when the business of the nation calls them to *London*, they do not, like some members of parliament, hide themselves in obscure corners, that their people do not know where to find them. They do not take private lodgings, or hire little, pitiful houses of two rooms on a floor, in dark lanes or alleys, but (if they have no palaces in town that belong to their see) they chuse the most open and public streets, and the most spacious houses, where they live nobly and magnificently, like peers of the realm; here their *clergy*, when they come to town, are welcome; here they are entertained at bed and board; here they have the benefit of my lord's *library*, to employ themselves at leisure hours; the poor young *candidates* for orders remain here, and are supplied with every thing, till they are ordained: and the *poor* are daily relieved by the porter, in the great court. You may easily know where a bishop lives, by the crowd of poor people in the street before the door, so that passengers can scarce go along; it is really a grievance to the neighbours, they have hardly room to go about  
their

their lawful business, especially in *christmas* time, when the steward is delivering out the *beef* and *coals*, and sitting the elder sort with their *grey gowns*. To prove how unbounded is the extent of *prelatical* charity, how soft and tender *episcopal* bowels are toward the miseries of the poor, do but look into the list of benefactors for the relief of the sufferers by the fire at *Credition*. — O, Sir! when a bishop goes to sleep with his fathers; when he is taken from us by the stroke of death; when he is hid from our eyes, and is no more, what a thunderclap is felt throughout the nation! what running to the churches and the altars! what beating of breasts, wringing of hands, and disheveling of hair, as in times of national calamity and distress! *he is gone! he is gone! my father! my father!* the chariot of *Israel*, and the horsemen thereof! then; then we find the loss; *virtutem incolu- mem odimus, sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi*. Were he not like the *golden bough*, in the *evan- gelical* poet;

*Primo avulso, non deficit alter aureus;*

We should be utterly inconsolable——The death of the great *St. Basil* strikes full upon my memory. When that worthy prelate lay a dying, the whole city came about him, not  
able

able to bear the thoughts of his departure; they prayed as if they would lay hands upon his very soul, and by force detain it in his body; they were distracted with the thoughts of so great a loss. His funeral was solemnized with all possible testimonies of love and honourable attendance, and with the abundant tears, not only of *Christians*, but of *Jews* and *Heathens*. The confluence was so great, that many were pressed to death in the crowd, and sent to bear him company to his long home. — An exact *type* of the pious times we live in! saying, that not quite so many are trod to death now as were formerly.

D. But, Sir, I have often heard the *clergy* complain, that when they have dined with the *bishop*, and are coming away, they are forced to run the *gantlope* through a lane of impudent footmen and servants, who look upon them as the devil over *Lincoln*, if every one does not give them a shilling a-piece, when some of them have not one more in their pockets. This is a great hardship upon the poor clergy, who pay dear for their dinners. Where is the *hospitality* of this practice?

E. I do not believe a word of it; I never gave a bishop's servant a farthing in all my life; not the value of a *pipe* of *tobacco*.

D. Pray, Mr. *Evans*, who does *London-house* in *Aldersgate-street* belong to?

E. Why, to the *bishop* of *London*.

D. There are no such doings in that place as you talk of. No *bishop* has resided there for many years, nor any body to represent him. That ancient building is all ruinous, and strangely perverted; it is let into scurvy lodgings and apartments; turned into warehouses, shops and wine-vaults, and made use of by a sort of tenants that do small reputation to the fabric or the landlord. I believe the *bishop* would call the minister of a parish to a strict account, that should let out his parsonage-house to such odd uses, and suffer it to run to ruin in such a dismal manner. That venerable pile, where so many kings and princes have been entertained, and sat in council, so many learned and renowned prelates, *Ridley*, *Bancroft*, *Sandys*, *King*, and many other great reformers, and the glory of their times, lived with so much honour and hospitality, is now become a nest of ———

Would a christian believe, that one end of the archbishop's palace in *York* is converted to a dancing-school, and the other end into a play-house? The episcopal house at *Worcester*, and in many other sees, is all in ruins. ——— I do not suppose, but large sums have been received, from time to time, for dilapidations; they look sharp enough after that. Pray, Sir, if such monies are not honestly laid out, where lies the

the

the remedy, or who must call the *bishop* to account? I have looked into the *codex*, and cannot find a word upon this subject.

*E.* Let me tell you, your insinuation is vile and atheistical. The inferior clergy, if you will, look sharp, as you call it, after *dilapidations*, and, perhaps, are too rigid and hard-hearted upon that account; but the right reverend *prelates* proceed, in that respect, with all tenderness and humanity; they consider the circumstances of the family left behind, and are more likely to assist them out of the revenues of the ensuing year, than to harrass them with *dilapidations*. Come, call a new cause; read on.

*D.* A bishop must be *apt to teach*.

*E.* They must be qualified, by their study of the scriptures, and their great skill in explaining them, to instruct and feed the flock committed to their charge. And how can they be otherwise, when the whole business of their lives has been to turn over and meditate upon those sacred pages? when they have the bible *ad unguem*, and have spent the choicest of their time, their breath and strength in *catechising*, in *expounding* and *preaching*? They unravel all difficult places, all the similes, types, parables, examples, allegories; they reconcile seeming contradictions, and can repeat you all the parallel texts from  
the

the beginning to the end. They are no obscure persons that the world never heard of till they were called to the *chair*; they are no novices, or (as the old translation has it) no young scholars, lest they swell and fall into the judgement of the evil speaker; they are no fresh men, no raw, unfledged, pen-feathered divines, but ripe and in full plumage, the most staunch and celebrated doctors of the first class, the admired orators and preachers of the age. They have taken their degrees, regularly, in our universities, where their names will be immortal; they performed their exercises with applause, and the schools rung with the acclamations of the audience; they preached *Latin* sermons, read *lectures*, were solid and acute in *disputations*, famous for defending the primitive and pure doctrines of Christianity, against *Atheists, Deists, Socinians, Papists, Fanatics, Enthusiasts, Methodists, Turks, Jews* and *Heathens*; their doctrinal and controversial writings are admired, and almost adored all *Europe* over; their sound is gone out into all lands, and their names, and their *fames* too, unto the ends of the world. How can they be but *apt to teach*, when they have read over all the expositors, the commentators in all languages, all the doctors of the *eastern* and *western* churches? There is not a man of them,

them, but may safely say of himself, what the *Oxford* muse so sweetly warbles :

*Noior at nulli vox est sua quam mihi quicquid  
Graius, Arabs, Italus, Chaldæus, Hebræus  
et Assur,  
Æthiopeſve ſonant ſacrum aut Memphitica  
Coptos,  
Is ſum qui latices ex ipſo fonte petitos  
Malim, quam longo circum deducere rivo.  
Hinc, ut me laudem, legi Targumque, Ma-  
foramque,  
Onkelon et Kimchi, quæ te vel nomina ter-  
rent,  
Commentatereſ Rabbinoſ, Kabbala quicquid  
Implicuit nodis, cæcoque ænigmate textit.*

I was exerciſing my *poetic* fancy, ſometime ago, in tranſlating theſe lines into *Engliſh*, verſe; you know I have a pretty *knack*, at poetry, though I do not make it my profeſſion; but,

*Dignum laude virum muſa vetat mori.*

*My muſe forbids the worthy man to die.*

I am glad I can repeat them; for, I am ſure you will be pleaſed.

*There's no man's voice is to himself more known  
 Than is to me the holy religion  
 Of Grecian, Arabian and Italian,  
 Chaldæan, Hebræan and Assyrian,  
 What the Æthiopians teach, and what the  
 Copti,  
 I am the man; with bucket and a rope I  
 Chuse to draw water from the fountain-head,  
 Than from the wand'ring streams the rivers  
 shed;  
 And tho' I praise myself I have read the  
 Targum,  
 The Masora, Onkelos and Kimchi's Fargon,  
 Whose very names would fright thee, and the  
 devil into the bargain,  
 The Rabbins comments, and the Kabbala,  
 That foldeth up its meaning, I do say,  
 In twisted knots and dark ænigmata.*

What think you of that, my boy! but if you  
 chuse to have it rather in scripture phrase, it  
 will run thus: *Parthians and Medes, and  
 Elamites, and the dwellers of Mesopotamia,  
 and in Judæa and Cappadocia, in Pontus and  
 Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and  
 in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, stran-  
 gers of Rome, Jews and Profelytes, Cretes  
 and Arabians, we do all hear them speak in  
 our own tongue the*

The world would  
 not

not be surprized to see a new translation of the bible from the present bench of bishops; there is not one of them but is capable to execute the whole, had he but time and ——— They can repeat you every syllable of *More Nevoch, Medrasheoth, Prike Avoth, Kether Malcuth*. ——— And yet to look them in the face, you would not think it, such is the seeming *simplicity* of their venerable aspects; but *fronti nulla fides* ——— O *librorum belluones!* O gormandisers of books! they have swallowed and digested all the *fathers*, the *codes*, *provincials*, *decretals*, *pandects*, *councils*, *canons*; are masters of all the *schoolmen*, not to fill their heads, and stuff their writings with *quiddities* and *quoddities*, and far-fetched unintelligible distinctions, but to be able to reason closely, to argue solidly, to rebuke, to confute, to reply, to rejoin, to syllogize, to criticize, to apologize, to advertize, to sermonize, to decypherize, to ———

D. Heyday! the doctor is in a rapture.

E. They pass to the *episcopal* chair through all the *lower* ecclesiastical offices; they do not, as a learned writer observes, commence *divines* and *bishops* the same moment; nor are they like the *dragon's* teeth that *Cadmus* sowed at *Thebes*, which immediately sprung up giants out of the earth armed *cap-pee*, perfect men and perfect warriors in one day

day ——— Look into the *acta eruditorum*, there you will see their names mentioned with honour, and their worthy labours recommended to posterity. ——— O Mr. *Dobson*, could you but peep into a *bishop's* library, and see the holy man sitting in his *purple cap* and *slippers*, with his table covered with books in all the learned languages, and like *Julius Cæsar*, dictating to two or three *amanuenses* at the same time, and directing a correspondence among the *literati* over the known world ——— Their *Latin* is neat, chaste, elegant, and terse, and so is their *Welsh* ——— They are *classical* to the back-bone. The *British* bishops are better known abroad than they are at home: but a prophet has no honour in his *own* country ——— *Illustrissimi Angliæ præfules, doctissimi literarum fautores Britanniae episcopi, or indefatigabilissimi*, as they are called by the learned *Siberians*. These and such are the compellations used to our *prelates* when they are addressed by *foreigners*. ——— And then, as to that solemn injunction of the *archbishop* to the *bishop* elect;

*Are you ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine, and both privately and openly to call upon, and encourage others to do the same?*

In this case, I say, they are the *Mallei Hæreticorum, Papistarum, Paganorum*, the *Mauls*, the *Beetles* and *Wedges* of *Heretics, Papists*, and *Infidels*; if a blasphemous or wicked book creeps out, one or other of them soon cuts it to pieces, to the utter shame and confusion of the gainsayer. They have an antidote ready to expel the poison; they pray against it, preach against it, write against it, and encourage and sollicit their clergy to do the same. Such reverend champions they favour and distinguish, and prefer them before all the relations in the world. They buy and disperse their books, they assist them in their studies, and warm them in their bosoms. They do not as the great *dons*, in other professions, neglect, depreciate and brow beat writers of their own order out of a spirit of party, or from a principle of envy, as if they obscured their own characters, or ——— in short, *Heresy* and *Infidelity* never had fewer friends and followers than in these *blessed times*, and all owing to the unwearied industry and vigilance of these shepherds, these watchmen of *Israel*. I will tell you what, I was at church in the city about three *Sundays* ago, where two great *prelates* were in the same pew, and at the repeating of the *Athanasian* creed, they both reverently stood up, and made their responses aloud with their  
eyes

eyes towards heaven, to the great comfort of myself and all the congregation: neither of them took *snuff*, or lolled fauntringly over the pew, or talked to any body near him all the while.

D. You have taken a deal of pains to prove that the *bishops* are a *learned* body, which seems to be out of dispute; for you see here in the *office* before us, that the bishop *elect* shall be presented by two bishops to the *archbishop* of the province, in this form.

*Most reverend father in God, we present unto you this godly and well learned man to be ordained and consecrated bishop.*

But I have a small scruple upon me in this matter; how do these two bishops know that the bishop *elect* is *well learned*?

E. Do you think they give this testimony of him by hearsay, or by common fame, for favour or affection? Can you suppose they would present him in that solemn manner, in the presence of God, and in the face of all the congregation, unless they could do it with a safe conscience, and from their own express knowledge? No, no; they *examine* him strictly and severely in the *polyglot*, I suppose, *thesaurus rerum ecclesiasticarum, liber valorum*, and other godly books; and find-

ing him as learned as they expect, they justly bestow that character upon him, they would be unjust if they did not; I believe the whole world would not prevail upon them to go against their firm belief and conviction in that matter, even their enemies themselves being judges.

D. Who doubts it? But admit that the bishops are picked men, well disciplined, and culled out of the body of the priesthood on account of their profound *erudition*, yet if they be ever so *learned*, or so *apt to teach*, you will allow, I suppose, that it is impossible they should *teach* or feed their flock, unless they be able to *teach* the people in a language they *understand*:

E. I allow that, and what then?

D. Why then, I should be glad to know how a bishop of a diocese in *Wales*, is capable of doing his duty with a good conscience, when he does not understand one syllable of the *Welsh tongue*, and the people do not understand a word of *English*?

E. The answer is plain, I deny your supposition; you are to consider when an *eminent divine* finds himself *improving* in spiritual knowledge, and *spreading*, and *stretching*, and *thickening*, and *reaching* further, and *widening*, and *enlarging* his capacities, and *budding* and *blossoming*, and growing *ripe*, and

as it were *maturus episcopatu*, he then presently applies himself to the study of the *Welsh* language against the time comes; this he finds a most easy and delightful entertainment; for the *Welsh* is a soft, harmonious, and mellifluous tongue, all *music* and *melo-*  
*dy*, not thickened with *consonants*, nor throttling you with *gutturals*; it does not make your tongue strike double against the roof of your mouth, or knock out your *foreteeth*, or shake your *grinders* like many of your *Northern* dialects. And then it has abundance of *Hebrew* words intermixed, and so the holy man being perfectly master of the *Oriental* before, finds it an easy matter to attain the *Cambro-Britannic*. I verily believe, that *Adam* spoke something of the *Welsh* tongue in paradise, when he was talking to the *brutes*; and it is my firm opinion, that every bishop of a *Welsh* diocese, is qualified to instruct his flock, to preach and pray in the language of the country; I am sure the last good lord of *St. Davids* was, for he was a mighty *decyphrer* of tongues. The prelates of *Wales*, must, and do *preach* and pray, in season, and out of season, or else, what do they do there? A bishopric is as much, or rather more a *cure* of souls, than a parsonage or vicarage, and it would be strange they should cloath themselves with the wool, and take no care of feeding the

flock; but to *preach*, or *pray* to the people in an *unknown* tongue, would be *popery*, downright *popery*!

D. It would so; but not to urge this further at present, I cannot be altogether of your opinion, that the bishops in *Wales* understand the language of the country, for I have a little book in my *library*, (as you are pleased to call it) that gives a quite different account of this matter, and likewise of the *hospitality* that is preserved (as you say) in the palaces of *bishops* of that country, either when they do, or do not reside in their dioceses, You know the bishopric of *St. Davids*?

E. I had the honour to be born in that diocese; it is a fee of a very large extent, and takes in the counties of *Pembroke*, *Caermarthen*, *Cardigan*, *Brecon*, and all *Radnor*, except six parishes, a considerable part of *Glamorganshire*, and many parishes in the counties of *Hereford* and *Manmouth*; O it is a curious fine bishopric!

D. The book I spoke of is called, *A view of the state of religion in the diocese of St. Davids*; it was written by a *doctor of divinity* in that principality, and his observations are founded upon his own knowledge; here is such a scene of misery and distress, of barbarism and barbarity, such scandalous abuse of discipline and church power! but it is no wonder,

wonder, for a *Welsh* bishopric is commonly no more than a *stopgap*, an *earnest* of higher promotion; you seldom find a bishop die in possession of a see in that country, they hope not to continue there long, they have no time. if they had an inclination, to make themselves acquainted with their *clergy*, or their people; some never go there at all, and others but once, or so, to take possession, to settle their rents, and receive their presents, they go in *snug*, and so they go out, they keep their own counsel, their houses are tumbling down, and so there is no pretence for residence, one succeeds another, and takes things as he finds them, *alter et idem!* the country lies in a remote corner of the island, not much frequented or inquired after; the gentry and people of fashion make no complaint, they enjoy their *impropriations*, and generally live in *London*, and spend their money there, or in other places at a distance, and do not regard how the livings are served, how the people are taught, and how the *clergy* are starved; but I will reach the book, here it is, I remarked some particular passages, that made my heart bleed—and first, doctor, for your *hospitality* in the bishop's palace at *St. Davids*.

E. I never was at *St. Davids*, but I have been received with great *hospitality*, and drunk very good ale, at the palace of *Abergwyly*.

D. To begin then; ‘ *St. Davids*, once a  
 ‘ celebrated seat of learning, and an *alma*  
 ‘ *mater* of the muses, once the happy abode  
 ‘ as of our *archbishops* and *bishops*, so of our  
 ‘ *archdeacons*, *canons* and *prebendaries*, who  
 ‘ were encouraged, and thought themselves  
 ‘ obliged to maintain the honour of religion,  
 ‘ to attend the service of their church, to re-  
 ‘ pair their fabric, and their houses *creditably*,  
 ‘ to spend the rest of their revenues in *hos-*  
 ‘ *pitality* and *charity*, in kindly welcoming  
 ‘ and entertaining pious visitors and strangers,  
 ‘ and relieving the poor as liberally. These  
 ‘ were the good laudable practices of the an-  
 ‘ cient times: but alas! what an amazing  
 ‘ change has now befallen us; the college of  
 ‘ our students is long since dissolved, a great  
 ‘ part of our sacred and most ancient *cath-*  
 ‘ *edral*, is in rubbage, and of the *bishop’s pa-*  
 ‘ *lace*, there is nothing to be seen but *stately*  
 ‘ *ruins*, and almost all the habitations of our  
 ‘ dignitaries demolished, so that they have in a  
 ‘ manner left us, and consequently *hospitality*  
 ‘ and *charity*, are gone away too, and the  
 ‘ marks of forsaken poverty and desolation  
 ‘ seem to overspread the whole neighbour-  
 ‘ hood; there remains scarce any thing beside  
 ‘ poor lodgings, for the chapter to keep their  
 ‘ *audit*, for a week or a fortnight at *St. James’s*  
 ‘ *tide*, and then we are to hope for the plea-  
 ‘ sure

‘sure of seeing them no more till the next season comes again.’ That is as much as to say, that they come once a year to receive their money, and the church, and the palace, and the cathedral, and the service, *hospitality* and *charity* may go ——— The poor continue naked, miserable, and unrelieved, the revenue is carried away to *London*, and other places, none of it is scattered upon the ground from whence it came, it is consumed in other dioceses among foreigners, commonly in a *slovenly ungentle riotous* way of living, or an *awkward affectation* of greatness; for few of those sort of *clergy* die worth a shilling, but leave their families in the utmost misery and distress; as they are generally vain, ignorant, and haughty, so they are expensive, prodigal, and wasteful. They swagger among the little curates, and the gaping clowns in the country, under the title of Mr. *Dean*, Mr. *Archdeacon*; with this distinction they strut in a *title page* if they chance to write a *silly pamphlet* or print a *stolen sermon*, but as for the functions of their office, to visit their jurisdictions, and regulate the disorders of it; *Gallio* cares for none of these things. And the case I am afraid is much the same in all the other bishoprics of the principality.

*E.* Go on, have you any more? I shall come over you by and by.

D. Truly I have much more than I could wish. The same pious regard observed in supporting hospitality in the palace of the *bishop*, appears notoriously in keeping up the *houses* of the *parochial clergy*, and providing them habitations comfortable and proper for their residence and abode; the case, in short, is this. ‘Did you but see what very sorry and mean cottages (if any) that are left for *parsonage* and *vicarage* houses? In most parishes there are no provisions of any kind for that use, no glebe, no ground to build upon; but where there are any, they are commonly so mean and inconvenient, as that the clergy, poor as they are, cannot think them habitable for themselves, and therefore are obliged to part with them to any one that will please to rent them; but very often they fall to the *sexton’s* lot, who to get a sorry maintenance is allowed the privilege of selling *ale* by the church-yard side.’

E. How can this be, when to my knowledge there be so many *rocks* and *stones* in that country ready at hand? When the *archdeacons* of the diocese, and the *rural deans*, who are officers under them, are solemnly appointed to visit the houses of the clergy, and to order the repairing of them, that they may be kept in order, and not be suffered to run to ruin. The *bishops* have authority to  
compel

compel the *impropriator* to find a suitable habitation for his curate, as well as to provide him a comfortable maintenance; the *archdeacon* is *alter oculus episcopi*, as the *dean* is the other; he is one of the *eyes* of the bishop, and his jurisdiction extends chiefly to these affairs; if the house of the minister be out of repair, the churchwardens are obliged to present it at the visitation, and the *archdeacon* is bound to take cognizance of it, and to provide against it.

D. What signifies where the power is lodged, if it be never executed? The archdeacons do not *reside*, though they are obliged to residence by law; and the bishops take no care to compel them to it. *Watson* in his *Compleat Incumbent* (which I bought when I was *churchwarden*) says expressly, if an *archdeacon* be wilfully absent from his dignity for the space of a *month* together, or for the space of *two months*, to be accounted at several times in the space of one year, and for such a time resides in any other place, he shall for every such default, forfeit *ten pounds*. What havock would the execution of this law make among the *Welsh* archdeacons, and among many of the *English* ones too? What advantages would accrue to religion, what scandalous imputations would be silenced by the constant enforcing of it? It is

their duty to visit two years in three, yet if they chance to come into the diocese at all, they do not hold their *visitations* in any regular manner, so that neither clergy nor people know when, or where, or how to apply. An *archdeacon* may be one of the *eyes* of the bishop, yet that officer must have a very strong sight to see from *Highbate*, into *Cardiganshire*. And then to help the matter, the bishop, who seldom *resides at all*, sometimes holds an *archdeaconry* or two, along with his bishopric, and so deprives the church of that useful officer, when there are many valuable clergymen in the diocese (notwithstanding the poverty and distress of most of them) who are well qualified to fill the place, and discharge the duties of it. The bishop of *Bangor* (I think) is archdeacon of *Bangor* and archdeacon of *Anglesey*; the bishop of *St. Asaph* is archdeacon likewise of *St. Asaph*; what a monstrous thing is this? What a strange accumulation of preferments, in their own natures utterly inconsistent and untenable, and of the most fatal tendency to the discipline and good order of the diocese, the clergy and people? If they appoint archdeacons, they do not oblige them to *reside*, or hold their *visitations*, as the law requires; and if they are archdeacons themselves, it is impossible they should do their duty in that

*office,*

*office*, when, as they are bishops, they do not live in their diocese, and consequently cannot be absent as bishops, and present as archdeacons at the same time; and yet *Watson* declares it for law, that though a bishop perhaps be not tied to residence, by the statute of the 21st of *H. VIII.* yet he is thereto obliged by *ecclesiastical law*, and may be compelled to keep residence by *ecclesiastical censures*. And if a bishop hold in *commendam* an *archdeaconry*, *deanery*, or like inferior dignity, parsonage or vicarage, with his bishopric, he is punishable by the same statute, if according to the same, he be not resident upon such dignity, parsonage or vicarage, and that though he be constantly resident upon his bishopric, he shall not be excused thereby. But the difficulty is, how to put these laws properly in execution. The bishops dispense with the residence of their archdeacons, and it would be strange they should insist upon it, when they make so light a matter of dispensing with their own; but (as the poet sweetly warbles) *defendit numerus junctæque umbone phalanges.*

*E.* Is the man mad? What a terrible thing would it be to see a bishop *excommunicated* by his metropolitan for *non-residence*?

*D.* I cannot help that. And now I am upon this subject, I must take notice, that the bishops, conscious of their own neglect of re-

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*fidence*, are obliged as it were to dispense with the *residence* of those parochial clergy, whose livings are *sufficient* to afford them a handsome and comfortable maintenance; for though many churches are stript of their revenues in a deplorable manner, yet some of them (I have heard) do still enjoy their *full endowments*, and afford provision for the incumbents whereby they may live reputably upon the spot, and do good service to religion, and support their character with credit and honour. But these sort of clergy leave their flocks to wretched miserable *hirelings*, and run out of the country into a *warmer sun*, and hunt after preferments generally in *London*; there they creep into *curacies*, and little *lectares*, (and their modesty will sometimes raise them into a paitry popular *chaplainship*) where their broken and unintelligible *English*, and their squeaking *Welsh* dialect give great offence to all serious and devout christians, and administer mirth and mockery to *giggling girls* and *young fellows*, who make their *reading* and *preaching*, and even their common conversation, a matter of sport and ridicule.

E. What is that you say, Sir? Do not I speak as proper *English* as any of you all, though I would not forget my *Welsh*, for all your linsey woolsey mungrel gibberish?

D.

D. You, Sir, have had the advantage of a good education; your language is polished by keeping the best of company, you dine once a year with the doctor of the parish, your accent is softened by your frequent speaking in public. I have heard you preach at *St. Antholin's* in a morning, with the general applause of that elegant and distinguishing assembly. — You shall now see what regard is had by these *spiritual governors* to the decency and conveniency of divine worship, by taking a short survey of the miserable and ruinous condition of the *parochial churches* in that country. ‘Some churches are totally neglected, and very rarely, if at all, have any service performed in them, and which, if they are not converted to *barns and stables*, do only serve for the solitary habitations of *owls*, and *jackdaws*. In some places we have churches without *chancels*, in others we have but some piece of a church, that is, one end, or a *side isle*, and the desolate appearance of most of those that are yet standing, speak how difficult they subsist, and how miserably they are neglected. In some not only the bells are taken away, but the *towers* are demolished, and in many others, there are scarce any seats, except here and there a few ill contrived and broken *stools* and *benches*; their little *windows* are with-  
out

'out *glass* and darkened with boards, mats,  
 'or lattices; their roofs decaying, tottering,  
 'and leaky; their walls green, mouldy, and  
 'nauseous, and very often without wash  
 'or plaster; and their *floors* ridged up with  
 'noisome graves, without any pavement, and  
 'only covered with a few *rushes*. Did you  
 'see so many *parochial* churches and cha-  
 'pels of the bishops palaces, and of almost  
 'all the parsonage houses in the diocese; it  
 'might well tempt you to think, that we  
 'had lain in the road of the *Turks* and *Sa-*  
 '*racens*, in some of their wild excursions,  
 'or that we had but very lately passed the  
 'diligence and reformation of an *Oliverian*  
 '*army*.' Such are the blessed effects of the  
 due administration of *godly discipline* in that  
 country! such ———

E. What is the man talking of? I do not  
 say our churches in *Wales*, are as fine as  
 yours in *London*; and adorned with *pictures*  
 and *paintings*, and God knows what; it is  
 not the *walls*, or the *bells*, or the *pews*, that  
 make a church. Do not you read, that *Moses*  
 made the altar of burnt-offering of *earth* and  
 rough *unbewn stones*? Our churches are built  
 of the very same; there is a great deal of *plain-*  
*ness* and *simplicity* in them, nothing to draw  
 the eyes of the congregation into *superstition*  
 and *idolatry*.

D. You are right; you shall next see what *simple* sort of clergy are appointed in these *simple churches*, as you call them. You came somewhat young out of the country, and therefore it may be a curiosity to hear the description of a *Welsh curate*. ' In some places the *christian* service is totally disused, ' there are other some, that may be said to ' be but half served; there being several ' churches where we are but rarely, if at ' all, to meet with *preaching, catechising, or* ' administering the *holy communion*. In others, ' the service of the prayers is but *partly* read, ' and that, perhaps, but once a *month*, or ' once in a *quarter* of a year; nor is it indeed ' reasonable to expect, that they should be ' better served, while the stipends allowed for ' the service of them, are so small, that a ' poor curate must sometimes submit to serve ' *three or four* churches for *ten or twelve* ' pounds a year, and that, perhaps, when they ' are almost as many miles distant from each ' other. And when it is thus with them, ' with what order, or regularity are they ca- ' pable of doing that service? And having ' so little time, and so many places to attend ' upon, how precipitately, and if as out of ' breath, are they obliged to read the prayers, ' or to shorten and abridge them? And what ' time have they, or their congregation to ' compose

'compose themselves for their devotion, while  
 'thus forced to a kind of perpetual motion,  
 'and like hasty itinerants, to hurry from  
 'place to place? There is no time fixed to  
 'go to church, so it be on *Sunday*; so that  
 'the poor man must begin at any time with  
 'as many as are at hand, sooner or later, as  
 'he can perform his *round*. He then ab-  
 'ruptly huddles over as many prayers as may  
 'be in half an hour's time, and then returns  
 'again to his road fasting, till he has dis-  
 'patched his circuit, and that weariness or  
 'darkness obliges him to rest, or perhaps,  
 'for want of a little necessary refreshment at  
 'home, to go where he ought not, where  
 'it is odds, but he will meet with many  
 'of his congregation; who, when their short  
 'service is over, are too apt to think them-  
 'selves at liberty to spend the remaining part  
 'of the day at an *alehouse*, or at some pastime  
 'or diversion, as they are disposed. What  
 'hospitality to neighbours, or to strangers, or  
 'charity to the poor, can they afford to give,  
 'who are themselves so very indigent as to  
 'be most in the need of *charity*? How conform-  
 'able to the canons in their *dress* and *ba-*  
 '*bits*, such as are required, and becoming of  
 'their orders, *viz.* in their *gowns* and *caffocs*  
 'are they capable of appearing when their  
 'mean salaries will scarce afford them *shoes*

‘and stockings?’ It seems, they *literally* obey the evangelical precept: they provide neither gold nor silver, nor scrip for their journey, neither two coats, neither shoes; alas! they have scarce cloaths to cover their nakedness; whence comes the common proverb, *As ragged as a Welsh curate*. Would not any man of sense, and common piety stand amazed, how such wretches could ever get into orders? How a *bishop* could devote such ignorant poor creatures to minister in holy things? What a sort of *examination* must pass upon them before they are ordained? A *bishop* is commanded to lay hands *suddenly* on no man, without a strict inquiry into his life and abilities; but surely he could not upon the least *deliberation* lay hands upon such itinerant *vagabond* hirelings as these. But so it is, and with a good conscience no doubt ——— And now, as this worthy writer observes, ‘What christian knowledge, what sense of piety, what value for religion are we reasonably to hope for in a country thus abandoned, when persons are ordained that are contemptible in themselves, when any little *a-b-c darian school-master*, a gentleman’s *butler*, a *mountebank*, or what not, shall be so cheaply admitted to commence *clerks*, on the prevailing merit only, perhaps, of some potent *impropriator’s* recommendation, who  
‘ may

' may be solicitous for a cheap chaplain or to pack off an useless servant.'

What is the meaning of that solemn charge given by the bishop to the archdeacon, when he presents a person to be ordained, either deacon or priests?

The bishop.

*Take heed that the person whom you present unto us be apt and meet for his learning, and godly conversation, to exercise his ministry duly to the honour of God, and the edification of his church.*

The archdeacon shall answer.

*I have enquired of him and also examined him and think him so to be.*

What is the intention of the answer given by the bishop elect to the archbishop, when he is consecrated?

*Will you be faithful in ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others?*

Answer.

*I will do so by the help of God.*

How does he *do so* when he *ordains* such fellows who are scandalously illiterate, and are incapable in any sense to do *honour* to God, or to *edify* his church?

When I reflect upon these things, I am utterly confounded, they can never be reconciled. I shall say no more, than that all these miseries, all these prophanations and scandals, it is in the power of the *bishop* and his officers, in a great measure to remedy and suppress; there are laws to support them in the execution of their duty, the consequences must therefore lie at their own doors.

*E.* Between you and I, Mr. *Dobson*, I am afraid this is too true; but I beg of you for the love of God, and out of respect to the *club*, that you would not say so much abroad; O tell it not in *Gath*!

*D.* I am come now to that absurd and indefensible practice of holy men (as you call them) who accept of bishoprics in *Wales*, when they are utterly, and in any sense incapable of doing their duty, because they do not *understand the language* of the people they are to instruct; how can they (as the office of consecration enjoins) *feed* the flock over which the *Holy Ghost* had made them overseers, and for which *Christ* died, how can the sheep know the shepherd's *voice*, when they do not know the meaning of one *syllable* he says?

With

With what reverence and complacency must they receive his *benediction*, when he *blesse*s them in an *unknown tongue*? To see a bishop lay his *hand* upon a person's head, and mutter a few words over him *not to be understood*, looks more like a *charm* than a *bleſſing*. In the office of *consecration*, God Almighty is addressed to endue the bishop *elect* with his *Holy Spirit*, that he *preaching* the word may not only be earnest to *reprove*, *beseech*, and *rebuke* with all patience and *doctrine*, but also may be to such as believe, a *wholesome example* in word and *conversation*, &c. But what a scene is this, when he is appointed over the souls of people, to whom he cannot speak a word *to be understood*, and is utterly incapable to *reprove*, *beseech*, or *rebuke*, or to hold any manner of *conversation* with them? What is the meaning of this *solemn* question and answer, much too solemn to be used only for *form*?

The archbishop.

*Will you instruct the people committed to your charge (which shews a bishopric is a cure of souls) and call upon God for the true understanding of the scriptures, so as ye may be able by them to preach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers?*

Answer.

Answer.

*I will do so by the help of God.*

How can he *teach* and *preach*, and *exhort* with wholesome doctrine, and instruct the people, *withstand* and *convince* the gain-sayers in his diocese, when the people perhaps, never once saw the face of him, or if they had, he may as well talk to them in *Arabic*, and be as well understood? For God's sake, have not bishops *souls* to be saved? Is religion a thing *real*, or is it *priestcraft* and *juggling*, and a *trade* to live by? Is this *office* no more than playing of a *farce*, or acting of a *droll*? Is God the sure *avenger* of breaches of promise and trust, made and published in his own most sacred *name*? What can the people think, or what respect can they entertain of their pastors, when ——— But this *honest writer* represents the case in a much better light; though he speaks with great wariness and caution (for the subject it seems is exceeding *tender*) yet he says enough to expose and explode so unjustifiable a custom, so opposite to common sense, and which can admit of no gloss or shadow of reason to commend it.

E. I wish you had done with your *book*; for my time is almost come, I expect the *clerk* every moment.

D. ' The disposing of *Welsh* preferments  
 ' to such as are wholly ignorant of the lan-  
 ' guage, has contributed not a little to the  
 ' decay and *desolation* of our religion. The  
 ' benefits of the *church* should be accepted  
 ' for no other end, but of being *useful* and  
 ' doing the service of the *church*, whose  
 ' bread they eat; it being just and equitable  
 ' that they should be qualified for the *duty*  
 ' where they receive the *profit*; and it can-  
 ' not be supposed that they are so, till they  
 ' make themselves *intelligible* to the flocks  
 ' they are to guide and oversee. For as St.  
 ' Paul observes, when the voice of him that  
 ' speaketh is not understood, then both he that  
 ' speaks, and he that is spoken to, are mutu-  
 ' ally barbarians to each other; and a greater  
 ' yet infinitely than St. Paul hath told us,  
 ' that it ought to go into the character of  
 ' a good shepherd, that the sheep should know  
 ' his voice; which plainly enough signifies,  
 ' that no one can be said to be an useful  
 ' and good pastor whose speech or voice is  
 ' unintelligible to his people. The reason of  
 ' the thing is so clear and unanswerable, as  
 ' that it is in truth amazing, that *ambition*  
 ' itself, with all its subtle inventions, should  
 ' think

' think to find out arguments to justify the  
 ' contrary; for of what use can any one be  
 ' (let his *learning* in other respects be ever  
 ' so great) to *instruct*, and *teach* those whom  
 ' he cannot *speak* to? And therefore what  
 ' benefit are the people to expect as to  
 ' knowledge, or information from the mini-  
 ' stry of such, who can neither *preach* nor  
 ' *pray*, so as to be *understood* by them? Will  
 ' after-ages believe, that there should arise  
 ' among the learned, and the knowing those  
 ' who should not doubt of their sufficiency  
 ' for, or of their faithfulness in, the discharge  
 ' of this most *solemn trust*, without either  
 ' *understanding* the language, or ever *seeing*  
 ' *the faces* of those they are spiritually to  
 ' *feed* and *oversee*? While things continue  
 ' thus, with what kind of decency can we  
 ' declaim against the *popish* practice of *teach-*  
 ' *ing* men, it is neither necessary they should  
 ' *read* the scriptures, nor *understand* the prayers,  
 ' when what amounts to so much the same  
 ' thing, and is so like it, is practised and  
 ' allowed among ourselves, by assigning *pa-*  
 ' *stors* that are *unintelligible* to their congreg-  
 ' *ation*?'

*E.* On my word, your author speaks good  
 sense, his observations are just; and whatever  
 has been the practice of late in filling the  
*Welsh* bishoprics with pastors that are *strangers*

to the language, yet that the case was otherwise formerly, appears by an act passed in the reign of *Charles II.* which enjoins, that the bishops of *Hereford, St. Davids, Asaph, Bangor, and Landaff,* and their *successors,* shall take such order among themselves, for the soul's health of the flock committed to their charge, that the *liturgy* of the church of *England,* be truly and *exactly* translated into the *British* or *Welsh* tongue, and the same so translated, and by them, or any three of them at least, *viewed, perused, and allowed,* be imprinted, and the whole divine service be used, and said by the ministers and curates throughout all *Wales,* in the *British* or *Welsh* tongue; and therefore it is that if a clerk be presented to a church in *Wales,* who does not *understand* the language, the ordinary may lawfully *refuse* him, because he is *incapable* of the cure.

*D.* It is certain by the *act* you mention, that *bishops* were in those days appointed to the *Welsh* sees, who perfectly *understood* the language; for to what purpose were they ordered to *view* and *peruse* the translation of the *liturgy,* if they were not able to *understand* it? Their *successors,* by this *act,* are likewise supposed to be capable from time to time to *view,* and *peruse,* and see the *liturgy* imprinted in *Welsh;* and how sufficient the present *set* are to discharge, or attend such

a business may be easily conjectured, when I believe not one of them can read or understand one sentence in the whole book. I find there is a design at present to publish a large impression of *Welsh* bibles under the *direction* of the *bishops* of the principality; tenderly expressed! I should be glad to know which of them *peruses* the sheets, or corrects the press? How shocking is it to consider that the bible, on which the salvation of so many thousands depends, should be left to the mercy of a hackney translator, to add, to omit, or alter what doctrines he pleases? What havoc may be made with the article of the *Trinity* at this rate? And then, with regard to the power they have by law to refuse a *clerk*, who does not *understand* the *Welsh* tongue, and to keep him out of the diocese, and to secure by that means, that the divine service may be performed in the language of the country, they are so far from exercising this authority, wherein religion and the good of souls are so nearly concerned, that they frequently present to livings in their own gift, and admit by the presentation of others, such *clerks* as are *Englishmen*, and sometimes *refugees* of other countries, who cannot speak *one syllable*, and understand as little of the language as themselves.

*E.* What think you of Dr. *Trevor*, the bishop of *St. Davids*? There are many families of the *Trevors* in *Wales*.

*D.* That may be; but let me go on with my book, I have almost done. ‘The eminently pious bishop BEDEL, when he was promoted to an *Irish* see, thought himself obliged to *learn* that language, to which he so applied himself, as to be so great a master of it, and such a critic, as to correct a translation which he ordered to be made of the *old testament* into *Irish*, in order to be joined with the *new* and the *common-prayer*, which were done before. Having given this example in his own person, he with the more authority could require his *clergy*, as he accordingly did, to conform themselves unto it; he therefore plainly told them, that such only he would encourage and prefer there, who could *officiate* and *preach* in the *Irish language*, which was, he said, a qualification *absolutely necessary* in every minister that had the care of an *Irish* congregation.

‘It was upon the same view, that is, of being as useful as possible to his diocese, that the late most *learned* and *pious* bishop *Lloyd* of *Worcester*, on his promotion to the bishopric of *St. Asaph*, thought it his *duty* also to *learn* the language of the country, so far, at least, as to be able to *read* it, to

‘ administer the sacraments, to confirm them,  
 ‘ and to officiate publicly among them in their  
 ‘ own tongue; which was a means, not only  
 ‘ to render him more serviceable, but of  
 ‘ mightily endearing him to his people, who  
 ‘ could not be insensible of the goodness, and  
 ‘ singular condescension he expressed, by be-  
 ‘ ing at the pains of learning their language,  
 ‘ for no other end, but to shew his earnest  
 ‘ desires of doing them more good. Again, it  
 ‘ was upon the same principle, (as I am in-  
 ‘ formed) that Dr. Bradford, the worthy and  
 ‘ learned bishop of Carlisle, though there were  
 ‘ many motives to induce him to it, did yet  
 ‘ decline of accepting a bishopric in Wales,  
 ‘ because he was a stranger to the language;  
 ‘ and that he therefore conscientiously feared  
 ‘ he should not be able to be so useful to his  
 ‘ diocese, nor so capable of edifying and in-  
 ‘ structing them, as he thought himself obliged  
 ‘ to be.’ What think you of such men as these?

E. Those were brave men indeed; but I  
 admire, Mr. Dobson, why gentlemen of Eng-  
 land will give themselves the trouble of learn-  
 ing a strange language, and clambring with their  
 portmanteau’s and cloak bags into the cold hilly  
 country of Wales for bishoprics, when there are  
 so many of the natives, who are used to the  
 roughness of the roads, and the sharpness of the  
 air, that are sufficiently qualified by under-

standing the *Welsh* tongue, to execute that venerable office; for *my own* part, I can only answer for myself; I shall be always ready upon the least notice, when God and my king shall please to call me to that laborious and important trust; and I may say without *vanity*—— but, I see one of the *bearers* coming; they stay for me in the *church-yard*; I must take my leave.

*D.* Remember the *pig* to-morrow.

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A N  
A D D R E S S

TO THE  
Univerfity of Oxford,

Occafioned by a SERMON, intituled, *The divine Inftitution of the Ministry, and the abfolute neceffity of Church-Government*; preached before that Univerfity by the Rev. Mr. *Joseph Betty*, on the 21<sup>ft</sup> of September, 1729.

---

By I. W. L.

---

———*We know their holy jugglings,  
Things that would ftartle faith, and make us deem  
Not this, or that, but all religions falfe.*

*By education moft have been miffed,  
So they believe, becaufe they fo were bred,  
The prieft continues what the nurfe began,  
And thus the child impofes on the man.* DRYD.

Nothing is more dangerous, nothing more dreadful than for men to affume to themfelves a power which heaven has denied them; fuch men may indeed poffibly deceive the world under a falfe character, but God will not be mocked, the All-wife will not be over-reached by the crafty prefumptions of feigned ftewards; nor will the monarch of heaven be impofed upon by the pretended credentials of falfe embaffadors. Mr. BETTY'S Sermon.

First printed in the year 1730.

A N

## A D D R E S S

T O T H E

*Univerfity of Oxford.*

G E N T L E M E N,

**I** Believe you will agree with me, that it is very juft and reasonable, to expect fomething *uncommon*, in a fermon preached before the *Univerfity of Oxford*; the perfons who are appointed to entertain fuch a learned audience, being fupposed to be every way qualified for fuch an honourable employ. This expectation of mine naturally led me to purchafe and perufe a fermon lately published, which recommended itfelf by being preached before that *Univerfity*. I was pleafed with the hopes of being agreeably entertained and inftructed by an *addrefs* to fo learned and polite an audience; but how far, and for what reafons, I was difappointed, will appear by the fequel.

I chuse, Gentlemen, to address myself on this occasion to you, who are undoubtedly the most competent judges of an affair of this nature; and because I apprehend it is in some measure incumbent upon the *University*, to take care that no discourses should be preached before them, at least not *published to the world*, which are *deficient in point of just reasoning or charity*.

That the discourse above-mentioned is remarkably deficient in both instances, throughout almost every paragraph, is what, in my opinion, appears not difficult to prove, to the satisfaction and conviction of any, but those who have the happiness of the same *profound learning and intellects as Mr. Betty*: and all such I freely leave to that *venerable Person, who hath an undeniable right, and undoubted authority, to instruct, reprove and exhort, direct and govern them*.

In the first place, Gentlemen, I think your orator somewhat unhappy in the choice of his text; which, I suppose, he would insinuate as a divine proof out of the holy writings of the main position in his sermon, viz. *the divine institution of the ministry*: whereas there is not the least foundation in the words themselves for any such fancy, they being applicable

cable to the apostle St. *Paul* himself, and no one individual person besides. In the beginning of his epistle he tells the *Galatians*, that he was an *apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father*; which is very little different from his usual manner of expression, as is evident if we review the beginning of any of his epistles, for in them he calls himself, *an apostle by the will of God*, an expression which is very easy and obvious, and which none who are acquainted with his history could possibly mistake: the reason why the apostle varies from his more general form of expression, in the beginning of his other epistles, none need be a stranger to, who will give himself the trouble of reading the whole chapter.

But what reference hath this to the institution of a ministry seventeen centuries after? what connection hath the appointment of St. *Paul* to the *apostleship*, which certainly was by the will of God, and that revealed in a particular and miraculous manner, with the *institution of Mr. Joseph Betty to the ministry*? or how doth it follow, that because the former was by divine appointment, that this is equally true concerning the latter? I fear if Mr. B—— had not taken orders till he had the divine appointment intimated in the

words of his text, the world must have been for ever deprived of his *instructions, reproofs and exhortations.*

But if it was not our preacher's intention to make this use of his text, yet as he hath separated it from the words preceding and following, it was very likely to be understood in such a sense, agreeable to the tenor of his whole discourse. He ought in justice therefore, to have *expresly guarded* his audience against understanding the words in that sense, which his choice of them would naturally lead them to.

After our author hath given us a specimen of his *profound judgment*, in the choice of a text which hath no relation at all to the discourse which is supposed to be founded on it; for with equal reason, and the same propriety, he might have chose the first verse of the first chapter of *Genesis*; I suppose he had a mind to surprize his audience with somewhat *bright and uncommon.* I am indeed an entire stranger to the person and character of our preacher, but upon reading his *first paragraph*, I presently imagined, that when he was preparing this great and wonderful performance, he was somewhat diffident of him-  
self

self and his abilities, for which reason, lest the audience should immediately settle themselves to sleep, he took extraordinary care, and uncommon pains about it: certainly the wonderful discoveries in this first paragraph, must be the product of great study and mature deliberation; there are some very deep and hidden things, which a genius less sagacious and profound than Mr. B———y's could hardly discover. He tells us, that

“ though the loveliness and beauty of religion  
 “ are motives strong enough to engage the  
 “ esteem and admiration of the world; though  
 “ religion itself be highly agreeable to all the  
 “ laws of reason; though it be necessarily al-  
 “ lowed to be the ornament and perfection of  
 “ our nature, yet were its dispensers entirely  
 “ unauthorized, had their precepts received  
 “ no sanction, nor they themselves any com-  
 “ mission; were there indeed no divine po-  
 “ sitive institution, all the plausible argu-  
 “ ments, all the powerful obligations, which  
 “ are generally pleaded in its behalf, would  
 “ then be very precarious and uncertain;”

*i. e.* in other words, that all our obligations to virtue and religion, which are founded upon its intrinsic beauty and loveliness, upon its conformity to the eternal nature and reason of things, and moreover upon its being the

express will \* of the Deity, who as the author of our beings, hath an undoubted right to our obedience, yet that all these *powerful obligations*, would be *very precarious and uncertain*, except the *dispensers of these truths*, had been *authorized or received a commission* to tell us, that we are obliged to a *life of virtue and religion*. Strange indeed! that the *certainty* of our obligation to virtue and religion should depend upon a person's being *authorized or not authorized* to tell us our duty: this is bad reasoning, but worse divinity; and yet no less a person than a *master of arts*, and an *university orator*, out of his abundant zeal for he knoweth not what, hath been pleased to assure the world, that all their obligations to religion, and the necessity of their obedience to the precepts of christianity, which arise from the *moral fitness* of the duties and virtues which it recommends, and the *relation* which we bear to a Deity, to *our fellow creatures*, and to *ourselves*, which depend upon the *nature and reason*

\* I add this, because if our author hath any meaning to this expression, *had their precepts received no sanction*. he must, I think. mean, had not the precepts which the clergy deliver to the people (which by the way are improperly called theirs, because if they deliver none but what are agreeable to the will of Christ, and the rule of the Gospel, they are the precepts of Christ, and not theirs) received the sanction of divine authority.

son of things which is *eternally unalterable*, neither to be *changed* or *destroyed* by the *caprice of men*, nor by the *arbitrary will of the Deity himself*: yet I say that the certainty of these divine principles, and the necessity of our conformity to them, depends upon an appointment and designation of some *whimsical and chimerical powers*, in the hands of a particular set of men. Whether by such a conduct, and *such principles*, our preacher hath recommended the christian religion, and the constitution of our church in particular, which in their *nature and tendency* they are *inconsistent* with, and directly contrary to, I leave to the impartial world to determine.

What he immediately adds, is not indeed a confirmation of what he hath said, a thing that is false, being for that reason, incapable of a confirmation; but our author points out his meaning, in yet stronger terms, by adding “ a voluntary choice might indeed recommend, or a discretionary power would perhaps naturally enforce its doctrines; but an absolute necessity of actual obedience would be entirely cancelled.” *A voluntary choice recommending, and a discretionary power naturally enforcing*, are certainly flowers of university-rhetorick; perhaps indeed peculiar to the fellows of *Exon* college. I suppose our  
author

author means, that if there were no *dispensers* authorized to instruct us in our holy religion, yet that some persons would chuse to be virtuous, and others from prudential considerations would conform to its precepts and doctrines; but yet that upon the above-mentioned supposition, an absolute necessity of actual obedience would be entirely cancelled. What! not only cancelled, but *entirely cancelled*; in the former paragraph he only told us, that except *dispensers were authorized*, all the *powerful obligation* to religion would be *precarious and uncertain*: but upon second thoughts, I imagine that appeared too favourable; wherefore he now adds, that the necessity of our obedience would be entirely cancelled.

And by way of illustration, our orator tells us, "That the harsh and more severe precepts of christianity would easily find too good a friend in our corrupted natures to be rightly observed and embraced." In my opinion, the words themselves carry their own reason along with them; the *harsh and more severe* precepts of religion, for that very reason, and because our *natures are corrupted*, are not rightly *embraced and observed* by us; but then this doth by no means follow, which our preacher intimates to us, from the want of *authorized and commissioned dispensers*; for  
the

the supposition, of such authorized dispensers would be of no service to us in the present case; for without all doubt, these *harsh and severe* precepts would find the same good friend in our *corrupted natures*, whether we had a divinely commissioned ministry or not: neither will the odd and fanciful observation which is immediately subjoined clear up this matter at all.

And though Mr. B. doth *conceive*, (wondrous modest!) that the truth of the above assertions are too plainly evident to be denied; yet for fear others should not conceive in the manner that he doth, he is pleased to *quicken and promote* their *conception* with a familiar observation, "That the most proper advices, the most prudent counsels, the most useful admonitions, unless given by a person who has a warrantable right of admonishing, and an uncontested power of instructing, are commonly looked upon as unseasonable, trifling, and impertinent." From hence our preacher would infer, that except the clergy had a warrantable right of admonishing, and an uncontested power of instructing, their preaching would be looked upon as unseasonable, trifling, and impertinent.

And really, if I may speak my own opinion of this matter, I do not apprehend that the case differs much at present; for though they are allowed to have a warrantable right, and an uncontested power of instructing, yet I fear their discourses are generally esteem'd, and if managed in the same manner as our preacher's, very deservedly, *unseasonable, trifling, and impertinent.*

But because Mr. *B.* conceives that this observation confirms the truth of his assertions, it may not be improper to enquire into its nature and pertinence.

It is certainly a very just remark, that when a person *unasked* interferes in the common affairs of life, we generally think him *impertinent*, and his advice *unseasonable*; but then this will not, as I apprehend, be of any service to Mr. *B.*'s cause; for if we ask or desire the advice, I think then we very seldom, (I am sure we ought, never) esteem it *unseasonable or impertinent*; nay, I doubt not, but such a request would be looked upon by any person, as a better warrant and power, than any commission or warrant which another forward to give his advice should pretend to from heaven: but our preacher's observation must be

be enlarged, in order to do him any service, for as it now stands it answers no end; he must observe farther, that the advices and counsels of a person, who hath a *warrantable right of admonishing*, are (and for that reason, I mean, because he hath such right) well received, are esteemed *seasonable and pertinent*; and in the case before us, that this warrantable right cannot be as well given by the people who are to be instructed, as by divine appointment, *i. e.* he must observe, that of two persons, the one of which hath his *powers from the people*, who are to be instructed, who authorize and pay him for so doing; and of the other, who *pretends a divine commission* to teach: I say, he must observe, that the *instructions* of the former are reckoned *unseasonable and impertinent*, and those of the latter attended with success. Except Mr. B. is pleased to observe thus much, his observation might as well have been spared; for as it now stands, to use his own words, it is *unseasonable, trifling and impertinent*.

Our preacher adds, “The truths themselves, how important soever, are generally neglected, and he that too zealously propagates them is, not always undeservedly, ill treated.” This, I think, is very oddly expressed, for who would imagine that by too  
zealously,

*zealously*, should be meant *persons not authorized*? He goes on, “ But what if noisy and “ impudent pretenders are justly punished, for “ presumptuously arrogating to themselves a “ claim to which divine laws have never gi- “ ven, and to which human laws can never “ give, any title?” I am somewhat at a loss to know who are these *noisy and impudent pretenders*; it must certainly refer to those in the former sentence who *too zealously* propagated unseasonable truths, but then I think it is strangely connected: in the former sentence, they are ill treated for propagating truth *too zealously*, in this truly, though he certainly means the very same persons, and those guilty of the very same crimes, yet they are justly punished for arrogating a claim, to which divine laws have never given, and human laws never can give them a title. But what, pray, is this mighty claim, for the arrogating of which these persons are punished, and to which divine laws have not, and human laws never can give a title? All the claim already mentioned, and to which this can possibly refer, is that of some persons instructing others without a warrantable right; and it is certainly somewhat very strange and unaccountable, that human laws cannot give a person a right of this nature. That divine laws have never given *noisy and impudent pretenders* any title to teach and instruct

instruct others, I am indeed very ready to acknowledge; and this makes me inclinable to believe, that our *preacher's ministry is of men, and not of God.*

After this, our orator goes on in a very moving and pathetic strain, to lament and mourn over “some venerable persons, who  
“have an undeniable right, an undoubted  
“authority, a legal commission, to teach and  
“instruct, to reprove and exhort, to direct  
“and govern.” He hath not told us who these venerable persons are, but whoever they are, I cannot see any reason we should pity them, for it seems they are “the angels  
“of God’s church, the stars in his right hand,  
“and have a power superior to \* angels and  
“archangels themselves;” and doubtless, these wonderful privileges and powers are able to support them under all their calamity and distress.

But what is it that these venerable persons have an undoubted right to? It is, he tells us, to teach and instruct, to reprove and exhort, and at last comes out, to *direct and govern;*

\* I think our preacher should have acquainted us with the nature of this power, and wherein it consists.

*govern*; which is, I fear, the grand secret and main spring of this mighty machine, which gives motion to all its parts: in the former pages, we had never a word about *government*, though were it not for the sake of this, I imagine, we should not have heard any thing about warrantable powers to *admonish, teach and instruct*: I doubt not, these venerable persons would have been very easy in their demands of such a power as the latter, and the people as easy in the grant of it; but when once they come to talk about *government*, and presumptuously arrogate a claim, to which neither divine nor human laws, ever gave them a title, no wonder then, that they meet with that scorn and contempt, which our preacher laments in such a moving strain. But it seems, he is not willing barely to lament, and deplore their hard and unhappy fate; no, he thinks it not unseasonable “to vindicate their  
 “mission, to prove their authority, and mag-  
 “nify their office;” and I think it not unseasonable to see how he hath acquitted himself.

He begins with *endeavouring* to demonstrate (wondrous modesty!) “First, that God has  
 “instituted and established a ministry by Christ  
 “and his apostles, to act between himself and

“man-

“ mankind, in the great and important affair  
 “ of their salvation.”

He begins the proof hereof with a remark, that there have been priests in all ages and nations, and that these priests were constantly looked upon, in a *pious sense*, as successful \* mediators between God and men.

It is indeed a truth too great to be denied, and at the same time a melancholy instance of the *degeneracy of the human mind*, that in almost all ages and nations of the world, there have been some persons of an infamous character; who, to carry on some mean and base designs, to promote their own interest, vanity and pride, have taken advantage of the weakness and ignorance of their fellow-creatures; and it is not improbable to suppose, sometimes under the particular direction and assistance of their master the devil, *whose servants they were, and whose proper work and business they were doing*, have put in practice  
 all

\* A very odd expression in a christian divine; for though our great *high priest*, and author of our holy religion, is stiled the *mediator* between God and men, yet to apply this character to the priesthood, and call it a *pious sense*, is an instance of uncommon *vanity and weakness*, not to call it worse.

all possible and plausible arts to impose upon the *judgment and imagination of mankind*, and vainly pretended to greater degrees of favour with the deity, or some imaginary superior beings, and under that pretence have seduced their respective followers and admirers into gross and scandalous errors, unworthy of men, or of reasonable beings; insomuch that they forfeited their proper character, and acted far beneath the rank and dignity of intelligent creatures, by an *abject and servile submission* of their reason and understanding, to the guidance and direction of their priests, and by a conformity to all their *silly trumpery and ridiculous rites*, under the *false and equally foolish* notion of religion toward the Gods. This hath been the constant business, this the true character of those *priests* which our orator refers to: but why he hath thought proper to bring this miserable state and condition of mankind into our view, except it be to raise our abhorrence against those vile seducers, and their successors in the office, I cannot possibly imagine; for this, I hope, is far from being a proof, that *priests are of a divine appointment*; not only far from being a direct proof, but likewise far from adding the least force or strength to his argument.

But having done with these, our preacher proceeds to tell us, that the true religion hath had its *ministers*, if not from the beginning of the world, yet certainly from the *patriarchal* ages, and that the priesthood was lodged in the first-born, which he would insinuate as an argument of its dignity; or, as he hath expressed it, that *the dignity of it was reputed very great*. In the preceding section he tells us, that it was the business of the priests, to *teach, exhort, and instruct*, and here, oh admirable discovery! he says the priesthood was lodged in the \* first born, so that they were *kings* and *priests* at the same time; and from hence he draws his argument for its dignity. I wonder much who our preacher would have to teach and instruct his family, but its master or head; ought not he therefore, who is its king, to be its priest? Certainly none is so fit and proper for that office; which, in my opinion, entirely destroys his curious argument for its dignity, which perhaps he was conscious of: for though he says, *from hence it doth manifestly appear*; yet he

\* I suppose our preacher means the *master of the family*, for it is hardly to be imagined, that the *first-born* was *king* of the family while his father was living; or that after his decease he was king in the family of his brethren.

he immediately adds, *but be this as it will*; intimating, as one would imagine, that no great stress ought to be laid on it; and if he is content thus easily to yield up his own arguments, I see no reason why I should be concerned for them: wherefore let us attend to what follows, which is, “that the office was really executed, and that to no insignificant purpose, that its *threats* were neither looked upon as mere *niceties* or *dreams*, nor its censures esteemed as altogether *vain* and *ineffectual*, is, I think, *indisputably certain*, from the famous story of *Abraham* and *Abimelech*.” The office, as he before described it, was to teach and exhort, but by this which immediately follows, it seems to be of a different and contrary nature, for he talks of *threats* and *censures*. But he hath *abused* Abraham, and *perverted* the *scripture* in a most scandalous manner, in the instance which he hath made choice of, as a divine proof of the truth of his position; for if *Abraham*, as a *priest*, did *threaten* and *censure* *Abimelech*, in the instance before us, he too much, I fear, resembled some priests of our days, and was without all doubt a *very wicked priest* for so doing; for *Abimelech* had the testimony of the deity himself, that what he did was done in the *integrity of his heart*; see the sixth verse of the same twentieth of *Genesis*,

*Genesis*, which our author himself quotes: nay, if we more narrowly examine the history, and consider it according to the account which our preacher hath given us of the *priesthood*, he seems entirely to have mistaken the character of the persons; for *Abimelech* seems to be the *priest*, and not *Abraham*: however he certainly assumed the office in *reproving* Abraham; for he tells him in the ninth verse, he did deeds which he ought not to have done, which was undoubtedly true. I hope when our preacher is disposed to favour us with another sermon on the divine institution of the *priesthood*, he will please to review this instance.

In the mean time, as though he was sensible that this instance was nothing to the purpose, he tells us, “ that it will be *more* “ *fully* confirmed, by the consideration of “ *Noah’s* blessing *Shem*, and cursing *Canaan*; “ of *Isaac’s* blessing *Jacob*, and of *Jacob’s* “ authoritatively dispensing his paternal bene- “ dictions to his children.” If it be confirmed at all by these instances, I very readily agree with him, that it will be *more fully* confirmed by the latter than the former; though, I must confess, I am utterly at a loss to know what the *patriarchs blessing or cursing* their children hath to do with the *priesthood*,

except it be that our orator would insinuate, that our priests have the same powers now, that the patriarchs had then ; and when Mr. *B*— or his brethren can give an instance of this their power, when we have reason not to look upon their *threats* as *mere niceties and dreams*, or not to esteem their *cen- sures* altogether *vain and ineffectual*, then, and not till then I fancy, will mankind believe their divine institution, in the sense in which *He* contends for it. But to keep up the shew and appearance of an argument, our preacher adds, “solemnly to pronounce a benediction “in the name of the Lord Jehovah, is a “full and undoubted act of authority, and “can never be valid without an express com- “mission from God.” What he means by this, I profess I know not, nor indeed is it very material. How the pronounciation of a blessing, which must be either praying God to bless, or else a declaration that he will bless, can in any tolerable propriety of speech be called an *undoubted act of authority*, is what I can by no means comprehend ; though I easily imagine, that none can truly declare that the divine being will bless any particular person, either in general, or in any particular instance, except he hath received an express commission to make such a declaration : but what then ? To what purpose hath our orator asserted this, and

and in so pompous and rhetorical a strain? The reason, if we are to have any, is still behind, which is ushered in with a “*now*” “*that* these blessings, and these curses, were really ministerial acts, and must be absolutely considered as such, is plain even to demonstration; because when they were once delivered, it was not in the power of him by whom they were published, though ever so willing, or ever so passionately desirous, to reverse or alter them.”

What our orator means by calling these *ministerial* acts, where the whole stress of the affair lies, is hard to determine; the nature of his argument requires him to mean, that they are *such acts as are peculiar and confined to the office of the priesthood*; but then the reason which he adds, is so far from making this matter plain, even to *demonstration*, that it makes it neither *plain* nor *probable*, nor doth he mention any medium to prove it by: and there is neither reasoning nor connection in his argument; for it doth not by any means appear, that because the person *pronouncing the blessing* could not *reverse* it, that *therefore* he acted in the character of a *priest*. It is true, indeed, this act may in a proper sense be called *ministerial*, *i. e.* that the person who pronounced the blessing, did not act, as we may say, *in propria persona*, but as the *mi-*

*nister* of another, and as the publisher of the divine will; which indeed is sufficiently proved by the reason which our preacher gives, that it was not in his power to *alter* or *reverse* the  *blessing*; but then what can be inferred from hence? Or what relation doth this bear to the *priesthood*? In the former sense of the word, his reason is no manner of proof; in the latter, though it be a proof, yet it is nothing to the purpose.

But moreover, if these acts were entirely *ministerial*, and it was not in the power of the *publisher* to *alter* the  *blessing*, how can this be called an *undoubted act of authority*? How doth it argue either power or *authority*, to *deliver*, or *publish* the will of the divine being, in any particular instance; which will, as to its effects, doth not depend upon its being published or declared; for if it could not be altered after it was published, there doth not seem to be the least reason to suppose it would not equally have taken place, if it never had been published: but suppose we grant our author even more than he desires, that the fate of the person did in some measure depend upon the pronunciation of these blessings and cursings, the divine being having regard to these in the dispensations of his providence towards the particular persons thus

thus blessed or cursed, which I think seems not improbable from the history of the patriarchs; but then this, which must be allowed to be an undoubted act of authority, a power of a superior nature to any thing which our preacher contends for, who resolves all this power into *no power at all*, viz. the publishing and delivering the blessing, hath not the least reference to the priesthood, or our preacher's argument.

The true state of this affair is, that the patriarchs were favoured, by the divine being, with a privilege, which none since them seem to have enjoyed in so great a latitude, of blessing or cursing their immediate descendants; but that this power extended to other indifferent persons, doth by no means appear; and something analogous to this obtains amongst us even at this day, which hath given rise to that common and well known saying, that the *curse of a parent falls heavy*: but then in several instances this ought not to be considered under the character of a *power*, but rather as a mere privilege only, of *fore-seeing* and *declaring* the divine counsel and will. God *ab origine* designed to bless *Jacob*, for *Jacob*, says he, have I loved, and *Esau* have I hated, even before they were born, or had a being; it was therefore upon

all accounts necessary, that by some means or other, *Jacob* should have the blessing of his father; for if the patriarch had actually blessed *Esau*, as this was contrary to the will and design of the supreme being, *Isaac's* blessing would have been *vain* and *ineffectual*, and would never have been confirmed by God. Agreeably therefore to this privilege, granted to the patriarchs by the divine being, of blessing their offspring, some peculiar circumstances in that affair procured the declaration of the blessing in favour of *Jacob*, the person designed to be blessed by God.

But what hath this privilege, peculiar to the patriarchs, and to them not as *priests*, but as persons in a particular manner favoured by the divine being, to do in the present case? What reference hath this to the *priesthood*? What foundation is there, either in the nature of the thing, or in the holy writings, to imagine that they acted in the character and capacity of *priests*? Or even supposing they did, yet where is the connection between them thus acting, and the divine institution of a christian priesthood in our days, which confessedly hath no powers of this or the like kind? I shall therefore leave it, with this farther remark only, that even in circumstances of a lesser and more indifferent nature,

nature, our preacher is mistaken; for I think it will puzzle him to give us an instance of any one, who after the blessing was published, was *passionately desirous to reverse it*; and if he cannot, his position, as it now stands, is very lame and defective. What he seems to refer to, is the affair between *Isaac* and his sons; but it doth by no means appear, from their history in the holy writings, that \* *Isaac* was at all *willing*, much less *passionately desirous* to have it reversed, but certainly there must be allowed to be a vast difference between the *father* and *son*. But this is not the first instance our preacher hath given us, that he is above consulting his *bible*.

\* It is indeed said, that when *Isaac* discovered how he had been imposed upon by *Jacob*, and that he had given him the blessing, which he designed for *Esau*, that he trembled exceedingly; but this is no argument of his desire, nor indeed doth it at all appear, that it was his desire, after *Jacob* had the blessing, to *reverse* or *alter* it, but rather the contrary; for we are told, in the following chapter, that at a time when there doth not appear to be any occasion for it (*Jacob* having already had the blessing, and *Isaac* had told *Esau*, that by virtue of that blessing he should be blessed) I say, we are there told, that *Isaac* called *Jacob*. and blessed him.

But our preacher not willing to dwell on the “scanty beginnings of a religious ministry,” (though, by the way, according to his own account, these beginnings were not so very *scanty*) and I having as little inclination to dwell there as he, will very contentedly follow him to those brighter times, when our blessed lord “founded and established that church, which, our preacher assures us, all men must enter into, who will be intitled to the benefits of Christ’s incarnation, passion and resurrection.” I profess he is once more got above my reach; if he had been so good to tell us what he meant by *entering into that church*, or whether he meant joining in communion with the present established church, which by the rant that follows I shrewdly suspect, I could then have given some answer to it; but till he is pleased to explain himself, I must even leave it as I found it.

He then proceeds to acquaint us with the methods which our Lord made use of in the establishing his kingdom, which he doth in a pompous and rhetorical strain; but if less regard had been had to this, and a greater to the sense and meaning of the words, it might have been altogether as well. In one line  
 he

he tells us, that “our Lord’s divine mission  
“ was fully confirmed by his surprizing mi-  
“ racles;” and in the next he adds, “that  
“ the great seal of heaven gave an authen-  
“ tic testimony to what he did:” where,  
though the expression is different, and he  
would be thought to convey a different idea  
to his audience, yet certainly he means one  
and the same individual thing: but after this  
follows, what every one, who hath read the  
history of our Lord in the holy gospels, must  
know to be false, “that he was glorified  
“ by all that heard him.” Afterward he  
acquaints us, that Christ made choice of his  
apostles to preach his gospel to mankind, and  
that after they had received their commission,  
he tells us, “that they respectively propa-  
“ gated their uniform doctrines, and imposed  
“ the observance of them upon all christian  
“ converts, as absolutely necessary to salva-  
“ tion.” These are some of our orator’s  
flowers, which, in my opinion, need a small  
explanation; for what those uniform doctrines  
were, the observance of which were imposed  
on the christian converts, as absolutely neces-  
sary to salvation, is somewhat hard to deter-  
mine. The manner of his expression seems  
to refer to those doctrines of our holy reli-  
gion, which are the articles of a christian’s  
faith or belief, separate from his practice;

and then these *uniform doctrines* must be reduced to this *single one* of the divine mission, or messiahship of Christ.

After he hath given us a relation of the acts of the apostles, in the first planting and settlement of the christian churches, he comes to “and lastly, to keep up a lawful succession  
 “ of men qualified to adorn and explain the  
 “ doctrines of that great and glorious high  
 “ priest, God their saviour, in all things; and  
 “ that none might profanely intrude into the  
 “ sanctuary of our Lord, or sacrilegiously in-  
 “ vade the altar of God, they constitute and  
 “ ordain officers in such a regular subordina-  
 “ tion, as should be most effectual to preserve  
 “ a lasting establishment of peace and good go-  
 “ vernment in the church of Christ, which  
 “ was to continue till all its faithful members  
 “ should be triumphantly received up into  
 “ glory.” He seems to have reserved this to the *last*, as being the most important and material action of the apostles, and certainly in his present argument, all that goes before is *unseasonable, trifling and impertinent*. But that we may have a clear and just notion of his argument, (for by the way, he hath aimed at none before) let us add what immediately follows, which is “*now*, the adversaries of our church,  
 “ may *then*, if they please, be informed, or  
 “ rather

“ rather fully convinced, that from hence it is  
“ we receive our power, from hence we claim  
“ our authority, from hence we derive our  
“ commission, and from hence also, in a very  
“ justifiable sense, we sufficiently prove our  
“ uninterrupted succession.”

Here is a great show of words, and by his *now then*, somewhat like the appearance of an argument: but really there is nothing but a mere empty shadow, without the substance. He says, the apostles ordained officers in the christian churches: and what then? What have these officers to do with *government* and *authority*? Or how doth it appear, that because the apostles ordained them, that they were to ordain others? This our preacher ought to have proved, either out of the holy writings, or from the nature and design of the office; the only proof, which in the nature of the thing, the point in debate is capable of: but I imagine, that he was conscious of his want of proof; for which reason he thought it proper to substitute some bold assertions to supply the place of evidence. The truth is, as it was inconsistent with the design of the apostles constantly to reside any where, when they left any particular place, where they had met with success in making many converts to the religion of Christ, they thought proper to make

choice of some persons to supply their place in their absence, to *teach* and *instruct* their brethren, and confirm them in the principles of their holy religion; but that they conferred any *power* or *authority* upon these persons, as our preacher would seem to intimate, doth by no means appear: or that they had a right of appointing persons to succeed them in their office, is very unlikely; for though great regard was paid by the primitive christians, to the judgment of the apostles, and for a very good reason, because they were *divinely inspired*, yet it doth not from hence follow, that equal regard was paid to those who succeeded them. It is not improbable, for the reasons just mentioned, that they should apply to the apostles, to make choice of a fit person to teach and instruct them; and no wonder likewise, that the apostles “composed differences, determined controversies, received accusations, punished offenders, and censured the scandalous;” but if the same spirit rested not upon their successors, where is the reason that the same regard should be paid them? The people, no doubt, were as proper judges, and in some sense more so, who were the fittest persons to supply the place of the immediate successors of the apostles, and were as capable to give them a *power* to *teach* and *instruct* them, as their predecessors

decessors in that office; nay, it is undeniably certain, that no predecessor could commission his successor, to teach and instruct any particular church, without the churches concurrence and approbation.

But suppose we should grant our orator, that it was customary for the ministers of the gospel, and them only, to examine all such as were candidates for that office, and upon their being satisfied of their abilities to *teach* and *instruct* others, to give them in an *improper sense*, a *formal order* to execute it: yet what mighty service would this concession do his cause? Or what reason have we to imagine, that this custom had its rise from a divine institution, when another more probable and natural cause may be assigned for it: for it is not at all unlikely, that the people might judge it necessary, that the abilities of such candidates should be inquired into, and who more competent judges of this than their teachers? It may therefore be very easily supposed, that they left this affair entirely to them: but if they made an ill use hereof, and by their orders pretended to confer any *power* or *authority*, in a strict and proper sense of the word, which the person had not prior to such their order, they abused and deceived both themselves and the people; for what

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foundation is there for this? Or what possible reason can be assigned; why these persons had not the same power and authority to teach and instruct mankind, before, as after they received this order? certainly the very same; with this difference only, that probably the people without this approbation of their ministers, would not be equally disposed to attend to their instructions: and if the continuation of that ceremony of the *laying on of hands*, which obtained in the first ages of the church, led people into this error, it was continued to very ill purpose. We grant, indeed, that the *Holy Ghost* was conferred by laying on of hands, but when the Holy Ghost was no longer conferred, the laying on of hands, was a mere form, and insignificant ceremony; and if any was so weak to imagine, that by the continuance of this rite, any powers were conferred, it would have been much better, that it had been entirely laid aside; better, when the substance was gone, that the shadow had in like manner vanished and disappeared; and if it had, possibly our preacher would not have been so mistaken about the imaginary power and authority of the priesthood. But suppose we grant our author all that he can desire of us, I much question whether he will ever be able to make his argument bear; for though we should

should allow it to be the will of our Lord, that none should publish his law but those whom he appointed, and that they, and they only, appoint their successors, and so on to the end of time; yet I fear, notwithstanding what our orator says, that “from hence, in a very justifiable sense, we sufficiently prove our uninterrupted succession,” (a manner of expression I do not very well understand) that he will be at a great loss to prove his uninterrupted succession; for if one link of this long chain should happen to be broke, and strange if in seventeen centuries it hath not been broke at least seventeen times; down goes christianity and our holy religion at once. I admire our preacher should place his own power and authority upon such a weak and sandy foundation; for it is certainly very improbable, that he hath derived his powers in an *uninterrupted succession* from the *apostles*.

Our preacher proceeds to acquaint us, that we have the very same ministry, that was established in the apostles days, which, says he, “is plain even to demonstration, because the first writers are silent about any new or different institution:” but this is a very odd way of demonstration as ever was heard of; their silence about any new or different institution, doth by no means demonstrate, that  
there

there was none; for though the remark may possibly have some force in it, yet it can never amount to *demonstration*. Or how doth Mr. B. know that no intimation hath been given us hereof in some writings that are lost? But I wonder much, why our preacher should refer us to councils, and the authority of fathers on this head; for if it was the will of our Lord, that these particular offices should obtain in his church, if he had laid that stress on them, which our preacher seems to do, without all doubt, we should have had an *express declaration* of this in the holy writings, the *only rule* of a christian's faith and obedience, with a particular description of the nature of their respective offices, and the proper boundaries and limits of the one, in contra-distinction to the other: but to make use of our author's words, with a small variation, to which I think I have much the best right, "these being entirely silent  
 " in this affair, it amounts to demonstra-  
 " tion, that the three orders of ecclesiastics  
 " we now have, were never instituted by  
 " Christ and his holy apostles;" but that this affair was left wholly indifferent by them, that christians might hereafter make choice of such officers as would best answer the end of religion, and at the same time should be best suited to the different circumstances  
 of

of the several respective christian churches and nations in the world.

The paragraph which our author adds to confirm his assertion, hath certainly something in it very *remarkable* and *uncommon*, God forbid he should have many followers; "that the truth of this, *i. e.* of the divine institution of bishops, priests, and deacons, stands upon the *very same basis*, and is confirmed by the *very same* arguments, by which the authority of *scripture itself* is demonstrated." I leave this to our preacher's serious consideration and review, without any remark.

But to proceed, I think our author had much better have omitted the argument from the promiscuous use of the terms, except he had given a more satisfactory answer to it; for it is certain and undeniable, that no argument can be drawn for *distinct* offices from the use of *different* terms, if these *different* terms are promiscuously used, and indifferently applied to these supposed *different* officers: I mean, that no argument from the mention of the terms \* *bishop* and *elder* in the holy wri-

\* Perhaps, the following instance may explain this matter; suppose there is mention made in any author,

writings, (which by the way, is the only argument made use of) is conclusive for a *different order or office* comprehended in and denoted by the *different* terms, when they are allowed to be indifferently applied to the same

author of the terms *constable* and *headborough*, yet none, I believe, would imagine, that merely because he made use of two words, that he meant two distinct offices, but rather that he meant one and the same by both, if he made a promiscuous use of the terms, and indifferently applied them to one and the same person, calling him sometimes a *constable*, and sometimes an *headborough*: neither can I imagine any so weak to think, that because I sometimes call Mr. B. an *orator*, and sometimes a *preacher*, that I mean a different person, or distinct order; when it is certain, I make an indifferent and promiscuous use of the terms, and apply them to the same individual person.

But our author seems not to have apprehended the nature of the argument, or where the force of the objection lies, which doth not consist in this only, that the promiscuous use of the terms, is a direct proof of the identity of the offices; but where the matter, which is the present case, is left unsettled and undetermined by the apostles, where we have no express declaration that the offices are different or distinct, nor any thing in the nature of the thing which supposeth such a difference, there no argument can be drawn from the use of two different terms, if these terms are allowed at the same time to be indifferently and promiscuously used.

same individual person; so that he who is called an *elder*, is called *bishop*, and *vice versa*.

But our preacher not being disposed critically to pursue this fruitful point, adds this unanswerable remark, "that what he hath advanced is acknowledged by catholicks, by hereticks, by schismatics, by men of opposite interests, different sentiments, and contrary parties, who have all agreed to acknowledge the fact, as being insuperably overcome by the native evidence of truth." If what he hath advanced refers to the divine institution of the three orders, which I think it seems to do; If Mr. *B.* hath assurance enough to assert this, there is nothing, I believe, but what he may prevail upon himself to say.

After what hath been already said, I think it needless to remark upon the use which he hath made of the fathers; though, probably, if a narrow inquiry was made into this affair, our preacher might appear as *sullen* as St. *Jerome*, whom he is pleased to compliment with the character; I shall therefore beg leave to pass on to his sixteenth page, where, having once established his *power*, he grows outrageous, raves and rants in the most scandalous

lous extravagant manner; by virtue, says he, of their divine mission, “the evangelical priesthood translates us out of darkness into God’s marvellous light; raises men from the earth, and brings God *himself* down from the regions of heaven. By blessing visible elements, it makes them invisible grace. It disposes of that body which was given for the life of the world, and that blood which was poured out to redeem mens precious and immortal souls. Oh miracle of goodness! oh adorable bounty of God! that such transcendent power should be given to the sons of sinful men! what amazing dulness is it therefore not to admire! what shocking *prophaneness* is it not to *revere* so great an authority!” and he immediately adds, “temporal princes have indeed a power to bind, but that affects the body only, whereas *ministerial* power binds the soul, is extended beyond the grave, reaches even to heaven, and triumphs even with eternity itself.”

But now let us see what we can make of all this *rant*. That the evangelical priesthood *brings God himself down from the regions of heaven, and by blessing visible elements, makes them invisible grace*, is, in my opinion, a very odd expression in a *protestant* divine; it smells very strong

strong of *popery* and *transubstantiation*, not without a mixture of *conjuratiō* and *legerdemain*: for no sooner are the words *hoc est corpus* (or in the corrupt conjuring stile, *hocus pocus*) pronounced, the mighty wonder working words from the mouth of the *priests*, but the *visible elements* we are told, vanish at once, and what pray have we left in their room? why it seems, *invisible grace*, or rather *God himself*; for if our preacher did not design him for this purpose, I cannot possibly conceive, what other reason he had for *bringing him down from the regions of heaven*; and therefore well might he in rapture and extasy cry out, oh miracle! oh transcendent power! and well might he call it *shocking prophaneness* not to *revere* so great an authority, an authority it seems infinitely superior to that of kings, for *their power affects the body only, but this same ministerial power binds the soul, and is extended beyond the grave, and triumphs with eternity itself*: so that if his majesty, or the state should happen to be at variance with our preacher or his brethren, I fear, they would come off by the worst; for though he might bind their bodies, yet I dread to think what a vast and mighty revenge they would take; a revenge, I doubt not, equal to the very utmost extent of their power; which brings to my mind the noble earl of *Warwick's* wish, which,

which, upon our preacher's principles, is neither unseasonable nor impertinent at present.

\* *Oh might I live, to bless the happy day,  
When Rome no more usurps tyrannick sway;  
Or, that deny'd, may our descendants see  
The land throughout from superstition free:  
With kings, who fill an independent throne,  
And know no power supreme besides their own.*

But sure our preacher is not in earnest, when he thinks himself possessed of this mighty power; God forbid he should have it, for I fear he would make furious work: nay, I am somewhat in pain, lest I should be made to feel its dreadful and wondrous effects. I think whoever gave Mr. B. orders should have previously consulted the temper and disposition of his mind, and not have intrusted so great a power in the hands of a person, who seems so very unfit for it; but however, as he hath not that same *temporal* power, which he seems to despise, which affects the body, I am, methinks, pretty easy, and should not be very much concerned if he did try his other power upon me; though perhaps, I might be in the wrong, for he says, "that it is  
" the very utmost extravagance of madness, to

\* *Humfrey duke of Gloucester.*

“ despise or deny a power, without which we  
 “ can hope for no salvation.” How! not  
 hope for salvation without the power of a  
 priest? Very sad truly: but how doth this  
 appear? Why, for our comfort, the next sen-  
 tence begins with a *for*, and there I suppose  
 we are to look for the reason, if perchance  
 we can find any, “ for if none, says our  
 “ preacher, none in a *regular* way, can enter  
 “ into the kingdom of heaven” (but by the  
 way, I hope none enter there by an irregular  
 way, or if they do, if they are once there,  
 I believe it is much the same thing) “ un-  
 “ less he be first regenerated with water and  
 “ the Holy Ghost; if he that eateth not  
 “ the flesh of the Lord, and drinketh not  
 “ his blood, is *absolutely* deprived of eternal  
 “ life; and if it be by the *hallowed* and *up-*  
 “ *lified* hands of the *ministry*, that all these  
 “ things must be done; how can either the  
 “ inextinguishable fires of hell be avoided,  
 “ or the radiant crowns of glory prepared  
 “ for men in heaven be obtained, without  
 “ their help and assistance?” We have abun-  
 dance of *ifs* here, and yet if any one be de-  
 ficient, I fear our preacher’s fine scheme is  
 entirely destroyed; and according to Mr. B.’s  
 usual manner of reasoning, it would be no great  
 wonder, if they are all defective. By the  
 first and second, I apprehend him to mean,

if none can enter into the kingdom of heaven except they are *baptized*, and receive the *communion*: his argument and manner of reasoning supposeth they cannot; whereas nothing is more true than the reverse, nay, our preacher seems to be an entire stranger to the principles of that church whereof he is a member and priest, which never esteemed *baptism*, and the receiving the *communion*, necessary to salvation, and much less according to our preacher's manner of expression, that he who did not receive the communion was *absolutely* deprived of eternal life: nor doth there seem to be the least foundation for this *idle fancy* of his in the holy writings, or in the nature or reason of the thing. Is baptism, or receiving the communion, recommended or enforced in any *particular manner* in the scriptures, upon christians? not in the least, there is no *stress* laid on them, nor are they *pressed* upon us as our duty; mentioned as such they are indeed, and that is all. As to the *eucharist*, I do not remember, that throughout the whole gospel or epistles, the apostles do in a particular manner *insist* upon this as a christian duty; it is mentioned, I think, but once by St. *Paul*, and that is a bare narration of the method observed by our Lord, in its primitive institution; whereas was the practice hereof necessary to salvation,

he

he would, without all doubt, have recommended it in the *strongest terms*, and have frequently pressed it upon Christians. And it is a yet wilder imagination, to suppose baptism necessary to salvation; for as infants themselves are incapable of having it done, if they should die in their nonage, or when they are adult, they should omit it upon supposition they had been baptized, when at the same time, we beg leave to suppose they had not, this necessarily makes their salvation to depend not upon their virtuous or vicious conduct, but upon the will and conduct of another; which is so precarious and foolish a foundation, as is utterly unworthy the God of infinite *mercy* and *wisdom*. But suppose we grant our orator his assertion in both these particulars, which, by the way, he ought to have proved, and not place the main stress of the controversy upon an *if*, and then presently tell us, he hath proved the point in debate; yet except his other *if* be proved true, which unfortunately for him and his cause is manifestly false, it will be to no purpose: “and if, says he, it be by the hallowed and uplifted hands of the ministry, that all these things must be done,” *i. e.* that baptism and the sacrament of the supper must be administered.

In answer to which, I beg leave to observe, that there is not the least foundation in the holy writings, for us to suppose that baptism ought to be administered by the hands of the clergy *only*; nay, our preacher is condemned, if not by his own, yet by the church of *Rome*, which is too fond of power to share any part of it to the laity, but upon a just and proper occasion; which, though it prefers the practice of baptism by the clergy, as most agreeable to order and decency, yet doth not esteem this *essential* to baptism, she allowing it to be valid when administered by the hands of a *midwife*; and certainly there is nothing in the nature of the thing, that it cannot be performed as *well* and *effectually* by the equally *hallowed* and *uplifted* hands of the *latter* as the *former*. The same holds good with regard to the other sacrament; but as I design to resume this argument before I conclude, I beg leave to dismiss it at present, with this farther remark, that what hath been already said, doth entirely destroy the imaginary force and strength of Mr. *B's* reasoning upon this head.

We are now arrived at our preacher's second *observable*, (any one but an university orator, it is very probable, would have  
been,

been content with the old word observation) which is, “that all opposition to this ministry, really is, and must be looked upon as exceeding sinful.” He begins his proof of this point thus, “if the religion of Christ cannot be duly propagated and performed without a constant succession of preachers and ministers; if the office and succession of the ministry be actually implied and instituted in the holy scriptures; if these very men, who by God’s own appointment are the ministers of his word, are also the ministers of his holy sacraments; if they who have laboured in the ministry, without being regularly appointed to it, have been constantly condemned by the whole church of Christ; then it is certain, that all opposition to this ministry, is an opposition to religion itself, and consequently must be a sin.” But if all these *ifs* should prove to be false, which it would be no difficult matter to make appear; nay, I doubt not but most of them appear so already, then the consequence drawn from them is weak and invalid; nay, if all of them are allowed to be true, yet no such conclusion can be justly drawn from such premises: for upon supposition of their truth, how will Mr. B. make it appear, that all opposition to this ministry, is an opposition to religion itself? None

are so foolish to oppose a minister of the gospel, merely as such ; for where is the wrong done to any people or party in being taught or instructed ? or why should they oppose such for no reason ? No ; our preacher hath certainly mistaken the true state of the case. If the ministers of the gospel do not act agreeably to their character and profession, if instead of *teaching* and *instructing*, they are only desirous of *rule* and *government*, no wonder they are opposed, and certainly not without just reason, and consequently this is far from being an opposition to religion itself. To which, in answer to his premises, I beg leave to add, that if these men had never been born, our holy religion would have been *duly propagated* and *performed*, with equal, or rather greater success ; perhaps indeed, by persons not *regularly appointed*, in the sense of our preacher ; and perhaps, for want of such an appointment, they might have been *condemned* by some very *weak* and *ambitious* men ; yet this would have done *them* no disservice, nor have been any hindrance to the progress of our holy religion.

But our author was perhaps conscious, that what he advanced was no service to his cause ; he goes in his next section a step farther : “ But farther, says he, if Christ has received

“ men to salvation upon terms and con-  
 “ ditions proposed and offered by him, not cal-  
 “ culated and contrived by them, then it is ne-  
 “ cessary that these terms and conditions should  
 “ be nicely weighed, and seriously regarded ;  
 “ if Christ has a power of making any in-  
 “ stitutions, the impious consequence of de-  
 “ nying which I dare not pursue ; if Christ  
 “ (I say) has a sufficient power, or a divine  
 “ right, of making any institutions, then cer-  
 “ tainly these institutions ought strictly to  
 “ be observed. And lastly, if Christ has a  
 “ right to our obedience, he has undoubtedly a  
 “ right to prescribe the rules, the forms, the  
 “ measures of that obedience ; and for men  
 “ to violate these rules, would be a profana-  
 “ tion of his laws and injunctions, and there-  
 “ fore cannot but be a scandalous contempt  
 “ of heaven.” I cannot but remark, that  
 this section differs from the preceding ; in the  
 former, neither *premises* nor *conclusion* were  
 true, but in this they are both so ; but at the  
 same time, they are attended with this unhap-  
 piness, that they are nothing at all to the  
 purpose ; therefore our preacher is disposed to  
 try it *again*, to see whether he can mend the  
 matter at the third trial.

“ Again, says he, if christianity itself en-  
 “ titles us to salvation, no otherwise than as it

“ is a covenant of grace, if the only ade-  
 “ quate and proper obedience to christ’s laws  
 “ is strictly obeying them in the very same  
 “ sense that Christ really intended them; if  
 “ for very weighty reasons we are obliged  
 “ to assent to some of Christ’s doctrines, in  
 “ the same sense in which he taught them,  
 “ it will also for the very same reasons *fol-*  
 “ *low*, that we are indispensibly obliged to  
 “ obey some of his institutions in the very  
 “ same manner in which he has prescribed  
 “ them ” This section is of the same na-  
 ture with the preceding, both its premises and  
 conclusion are true, but have no relation to  
 the present argument, wherefore our preacher  
 is willing to try it *once more*. “ Once more,  
 “ says he, either divine institutions are to be  
 “ complied with, or they are not. If they  
 “ are not, (why I pray) may not divine re-  
 “ velation also be laid aside? This we are  
 “ sure of, they stand on the very same foun-  
 “ dation; the reason and nature of their  
 “ obligations are perfectly and entirely the  
 “ same, they are both the indisputable will of  
 “ God discovered to mankind; the one of  
 “ them to be nicely observed, the other to  
 “ be fully believed. If, therefore, we are  
 “ not bound to comply with his will in the  
 “ one case, it will seem very difficult, to any  
 “ impartial judge, to determine upon what  
 “ grounds

“ grounds we are obliged to submit to it in  
 “ the other.”

Here, I must confess, I am somewhat at a loss to know what our preacher drives at: suppose we grant, which I believe none will deny, that divine institutions are to be complied with; what then? What service will it do him? Why then, the order of the priesthood must be complied with; but what is meant by *complied with*? Doth any one refuse to be *taught* or *instructed*? But perhaps this is not sufficient; for besides this, they must submit to be *ruled* and *governed*: but this is a thing of a quite different and contrary nature, which is by no means *essential*, *proper*, or *fit* for the office of the priesthood; no wonder therefore, if they are not complied with here. But if any one should be so fullen to deny, that divine institutions are to be complied with; What then? says our preacher, “ why, pray, may not divine revelation also, “ be laid aside? And perhaps, the same persons may be willing to oblige him in this instance also; and what then? Why then ——— nothing at all. It was certainly our author’s business, to have proved these principles, and then have applied them in a strict proper way of reasoning and argument, and not talk with his *ifs* and *ands*, in such a loose,

rambling way, about an affair which hath long been, and, I doubt not, ever will be, matter of debate.

Our preacher having trifled so long under this head, is willing at last “briefly and effectually to dispatch it;” and, I confess, I think it time; let us therefore attend to him, and see how he acquits himself: he adds, “If the power, the mission, the authority of the ministry be constituted of heaven; if it be commanded of God for a perpetual ordinance; if it be imposed upon us by him, whom all things in heaven and earth gladly obey; if it be appointed to be forever observed in his church, woe! eternal woe be to him that fighteth against God!—— The true, the humble, the pious christian, can no more be the creature of his own frail \* opinions, than he can be the author of his own eternal salvation.” This is as little to the purpose as

\* It is certainly a very mean argument, either of piety or humility, for a person to be guided by the opinion of others; so that upon a stricter enquiry into this affair, I doubt not but our preacher will allow it to be the duty of every christian to be guided and actuated by his own sentiments, though really never so weak in themselves, or in the opinion of others.

any thing that goes before ; our preacher seems to be contending only with some adversaries of his own *fancy* and *imagination* only ; for, I dare say, no person living would oppose the preachers of the gospel so long as they kept within their proper province ; his eternal woes might therefore have well been spared for those, who, for juster reasons, are the objects of his displeasure.

We are now at last happily arrived to our preacher's third and last observable, which is, " that no excuse can possibly be found out by men, which will induce God to pardon those that obstinately persevere in opposing the established ministry."

I am really weary of following our author, step by step, through his several wanderings, I shall therefore beg leave only to make some general remarks on this head, not forgetting to take particular notice of what appears most remarkable ; with a promise, that if ever it be required, I will submit to the drudgery of examining every individual paragraph, and doubt not to point out the folly and inconsequence of his reasonings, I might have said ravings, throughout almost every sentence, to the satisfaction of any reasonable person.

In the mean time I beg leave to observe, that our preacher is an entire stranger to the nature of *schism*, which he makes to consist in a separation from the *established church of a country*, whereas nothing is more true, than this is false.

A separation, or the not joining in communion with the established church, is in itself a thing of an harmless innocent nature, and ought by no means to be considered in the odious light wherein our orator represents it. Is not the dissenter a christian equally with our selves? Doth not he equally believe that Jesus is the messiah? Doth not he equally depend upon the merits and intercession of the same common saviour and mediator, for his acceptance with God? Have we not one hope, one faith, one baptism? Where then is the difference between us, or where doth *schism* lie? Why, it seems he differs from us about the use and significancy of some *external modes and ceremonies*, which, it is agreed on all hands, are not at all *essential* to our holy religion: but this difference in opinions is no matter of strife and contention, and though he disagrees concerning these lesser trifling things, yet he still continues in peace and charity with us, so that here is no rending the body of

of

of Christ, or destroying that harmony, union and peace which ought to obtain among the followers of the blessed Jesus. But perhaps it may be objected farther, that he doth not join in communion with us, which, though granted, does not prevent, or cut him off, from being a *member* of the same *undivided body*; for though he joins in communion with those, whose modes of worship are in his opinion, more agreeable to the will of our Lord, yet he may in a strict and proper sense be said to be in union with us, and that equally so, as if he should receive the communion in our churches, and according to our manner. The nature of *schism*, which the apostle so earnestly guarded us against, consists in a *factious contentious temper*, and disposition of mind, discovering itself in our malice, envy, or hatred against our brethren, against those members of Christ's holy body, whom it is our duty to love, cherish, and assist: this is truly schism, of which the members of the same particular religious society are as capable, as those of different communions; and this, according to our preacher's description of schism, "is directly opposite to that spirit of love and union, that meekness and goodness, that candour and tenderness, that patience and long suffering, which is the peculiar mark,

“the distinguishing character, the bright and  
“essential badge of Christ’s disciples.”

A person of this temper and disposition of mind, is a *schismatick*, in the strict and proper sense of the word; but he that differs from his brethren in small and trifling matters, though we suppose him to differ in what are generally esteemed the *fundamentals* of christianity, yet if he continues in charity with his brethren, (and a meer difference in opinion hath certainly no natural tendency, to destroy peace and charity amongst mankind) doth by no means deserve the severe character, or treatment of a *schismatick*; for the bounds of peace and love are not broken, nor the body of Christ rent or divided, but the same divine harmony subsists, as though they agreed in every the most minute particular.

But to pursue this argument a little farther, the dissenters have an equal right to insist upon our agreement with their modes of worship, and our joining in communion with them, and to charge us with *schism* upon our refusal: for what right or pretence have we to insist upon their compliance, more than they have of ours? Perhaps it may be said, that our modes of worship are preferable to theirs; but how doth this appear? We indeed think  
the

the one, and they, perhaps with equal reason, think the contrary. But then our author says, that we are the *established church*, and they ought to comply upon that account: a weak argument truly, and if it proves any thing, proves too much; for truth is not established by number, nor reason by a majority; and though the minority in lesser indifferent matters, for the preservation of mutual peace and charity, ought to submit to the majority, yet when this end is not to be answered, as in the present case, (for why must any want of peace or charity be supposed to attend our different religious sentiments) then the argument is of no force, and the minority may as well preserve their christian liberty and freedom, there being no reason to the contrary.

But if the dissenter is obliged to pay that deference and regard to the *established church*, merely because it is *established*, I fear our preacher, if he had lived in 48, or goes but on the other side of the *Tweed*, must either renounce his religion, and those favourite principles on which he lays such a mighty stress, or else yield up his cause as entirely defenceless; for the same arguments on which he founds the absolute necessity of conformity to the *established church of England*, are equally  
valid

valid in *Scotland*, with respect to the *kirk*; for, as he observes, though with what justice applied, I leave others to judge, “that the  
 “ eternal and immutable nature of things can  
 “ never be altered; and that it is absolute-  
 “ ly impossible that truth, always simple and  
 “ uniform, should ever become falshood, or  
 “ that falshood should become heavenly truth.”

“ As long therefore, adds he, as the church  
 “ requires no terms of communion, but what  
 “ are in themselves *lawful* (and no longer  
 “ is it the true church of Christ than when  
 “ it does so) as long as the church imposes  
 “ no articles either of faith or religion, but  
 “ what are entirely consonant to the holy  
 “ scriptures; as long as the authorized mi-  
 “ nisters preach no doctrines, but what are  
 “ grounded upon these very scriptures, so long  
 “ will all opposition to the *established* ministry  
 “ be a rending the body and bowels of our  
 “ blessed saviour, be a destroying the peace,  
 “ order and government of the church, be  
 “ a promoting the designs of hell, and en-  
 “ larging the spacious kingdoms of intolerable  
 “ darkness.”

But cannot this be pleaded with as good a grace by a presbyter of the *kirk* of *Scotland*, as by a priest of the church of *England*? If  
 these

these arguments, and this plea are valid *here*, they must necessarily be esteemed equally valid there; for that the kirk of *Scotland* requires *unlawful* terms of communion, or imposeth articles of faith *dissonant* to the holy scriptures, or that their ministers preach doctrines, which are not grounded upon these scriptures, is what, in my opinion, will not be asserted, much less proved in haste: or suppose our preacher should think so, yet he seems to have entirely precluded himself from the benefit of this plea, by telling us, “ That  
 “ as for the plea of conscience, which men  
 “ so loudly trifle with in this important point,  
 “ it must be superseded by the only great  
 “ and adequate rule of conscience, which is  
 “ no other than the scripture itself, which  
 “ highly condemns *all schisms and separations*,  
 “ and openly denounces the severest anathemas against them:” by which he would seem to intimate, that in the present case, there is no possible relief, but that our obligation to a visible union with the *established church*, is *absolutely and indispensably necessary*, and that *nothing* can excuse it; though by reviewing the paragraph just above quoted, one would be apt to imagine, that this is not his sense and opinion: for there he seems to place our obligation to *communion with the established church*, upon this supposition, that

she requireth no *unlawful* terms of communion. But then, who is to be the judge in this case, concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the terms required? If the persons themselves, then I think our author must admit, that their judging the terms of communion required to be unlawful, is a sufficient excuse for their separation. But I can hardly suppose, he will allow the *laity* power and authority to *judge* in *spiritual* matters; no, this power must certainly be lodged in the priesthood: but then, without all doubt, one priest who hath equal power and authority with another, hath an equal right of judging for the laity; so that a *French*, a *Remish*, a *Spanish* (or even a priest before the reformation) has a right of judging in the room of the people equal to Mr. *Betty*.

But notwithstanding I have examined our author's meaning very exactly, I am still at a loss to know whether he doth allow any *thing whatever*, to be a just ground of separation from the *established church*; for though by the paragraph last referred to, he seems to do it, yet presently, as though he had made too large a concession, he seems to retract it, by telling us, "That the eternal nature of things is the same, that notwithstanding people's scruples and pretences, schism is  
" schism

“ schism still, and can never be made to be  
“ union ;” and then he adds the paragraph last  
quoted, “ that the plea of conscience must  
“ be superseded by the scripture, the only  
“ great rule of conscience, which highly con-  
“ demns all *schisms and separations.*” Here  
again, he seems to own and deny it in the  
same breath : first, he calls the scripture the  
great rule of conscience, intimating, as one  
would imagine, that a christian ought to act  
pursuant to the guidance and direction of  
the scripture, which is the very *plea* that all  
our *separatists* use for their *justification*; and  
then immediately adds, that the scripture high-  
ly condemns all *schisms and separations*, which  
intirely destroys what he had just granted :  
for it is impossible, that the scripture should  
both *justify* and *condemn* men in the same *in-*  
*dividual* action; for if, as our *separatists* assure  
us, that the scripture is the rule of their con-  
science in their separation (whether this be  
reality, or pretence, does no way concern us,  
that must be left to the great searcher of  
hearts) that same scripture cannot at the same  
time condemn them for separating.

With regard to the truth and foundation  
of this plea, whether, I mean, in their sepa-  
ration they act according to the direction of  
the scripture, is a question of a different na-  
ture ;

ture; possibly they may be mistaken concerning the true sense and meaning of those particular parts of the holy writings, upon which their separation is grounded; but if they have taken due and proper means to inform their judgment, and act in the integrity and sincerity of their hearts, nothing is either more *true* or more *plain*, than that they are excusable for their error; and our preacher himself, I doubt not, upon second thoughts, will admit the justice of their plea, and acquit them of this grievous sin of *schism*: for who, I pray, must be judges, whether they understand the scripture in its true and proper sense, they or we? *they* without doubt have the same right to judge for *themselves*, as *we* for *ourselves*, and an equal right to judge for *us*, as *we* for *them*.

The next thing which our preacher takes notice of, is *episcopacy*, and there he goes on in his usual ranting pompous strain: to give him his due, he doth not aim at an *argument*, I shall therefore only point out some of his *flowers*. He says, "episcopacy is the  
 " *very pillar and foundation* of all pure re-  
 " *ligion*, and the *best and greatest*, if not the  
 " *only security* of our present happy establish-  
 " *ment*." If this be true, I am very sorry  
 for

for it; we are, I think, in a very unhappy condition, both our *religion* and the *state* have but a very slender *pillar* and *support*. This account of our religion and government, though perhaps it may be agreeable to the character of an *Oxonian orator*, is certainly unbecoming a *christian divine*, and a *true Englishman*: I trust in God our holy religion hath a much stronger pillar and foundation, and would subsist in all its *purity*, and *splendor*, if there was no *bishop* in being: nay, I cannot discover any reason we have to boast of greater purity than our neighbours in the *north*, or our brethren of the *reformed churches* abroad. As to our present *happy establishment*, if *episcopacy* was its only, or its *best*, or *greatest* security, I should sincerely mourn over and lament its weak condition. Nor, by the way, can I see any reason why our preacher should mention this, if he did not design it as a tacit reflection upon the *dissenters* for their want of *loyalty*; and if so, he doth, in my opinion, deserve a severe rebuke; for they, to their *honour*, and our *shame* be it spoken, have always approved themselves to be hearty friends to the present happy establishment.

Much of the same nature with the foregoing, is what follows in the same page, "the spiritual powers that be, are ordained  
" of

“ of God ; to rebel against them, is to rebel  
 “ against heaven ; to invade their authority, is  
 “ to infringe upon Christ’s peculiar property.  
 “ And we have demonstrative arguments, drawn  
 “ from the worth and excellency of the soul,  
 “ to prove that our obligations to ecclesia-  
 “ stical obedience, are stronger than those  
 “ that flow either from civil or natural re-  
 “ lations.” Our preacher seems here to be  
 got into the third heavens, or into the gloomy  
 regions, where, surrounded with clouds of thick  
 darkness, he is far out of our reach : what  
*worth*, or *excellency* there is in *ecclesiastical* obe-  
 dience, or indeed what obedience is due, or  
 how any argument to this purpose can be  
 drawn from the worth and excellency of the  
 soul, is all above my comprehension ; but as  
 he thought it needless to mention his argu-  
 ments, I think it equally needless to give any  
 guess, or be at any concern about them. The  
 next remarkable thing our preacher presents  
 us with, is the character of those *vile* and  
*wicked* persons who have presumed to instruct  
 their brethren, without *episcopal* ordination ;  
 and here he hath set his invention on the  
 rack to *abuse* and *vilify* his brethren. One  
 would think it impossible, that any thing in  
 the shape of a *man*, much less a *gentleman*,  
 (though upon second thoughts, there are not  
 many

many priests who deserve the character) should discover so much *malice*, *envy* and *rage* against his innocent brethren, guilty only of the imaginary crime of teaching others their duty, without first receiving an order from a bishop to do what they can as well do without. “ They profane, says he, the sacred  
 “ function, and make a trifle of the *most*  
 “ *dreadful* sin. They crucify their blessed  
 “ Lord afresh, and put him to an open shame :  
 “ they are incessant troublers and seducers  
 “ of the people: they are infallible subver-  
 “ ters and destroyers of souls. They take  
 “ away all distinction between the shepherd and  
 “ the flock. They are usurpers of the broad  
 “ seal of heaven. Blind as *Samson*, they exert  
 “ all their strength, to pull down the pillars of  
 “ our ecclesiastical constitution; and bold as  
 “ *Phaeton*, with a glaring *ignorance*, and uncon-  
 “ scious impudence, they *burn up* the spiritual  
 “ world.” After our preacher hath painted them in these colours, no wonder he should add in the next paragraph, that “ with regard  
 “ to those presumptuously arrogant teachers,  
 “ and their obstinately blind *followers*, charity  
 “ herself, that heaven-born virgin, repines  
 “ that it is not in her power to think so  
 “ favourably of them, as *Origen* did of *their*  
 “ *father* the devil, who falsely imagined he  
 “ might be saved.”

Much of the same nature and strain is the last which I shall take notice of: “After all, says our preacher, how rigidly severe, or exalted soever, our notions of a divine mission, or the absolute necessity of church government may seem; yet in case of a real and absolute, not a false and pretended necessity (not the daring and presumptuous plea of the *kirk*, not the feigned, but more plausible excuse of *Geneva*, not the boasted moderation of those who falsely call themselves *churches* reformed) we would not *willingly think* those men, who, though unauthorized, piously preach the religion of Jesus, to be guilty of sacrilege, or to incur the dreadful penalty of damnation. No; in pity to their unavoidable misfortune, in compassion to their unconquerable necessity, we consign them not to the indolent state of a gloomy deprivation, nor shall we commit them to the merciless and irreversible fate of eternal misery. They are in the hands of a merciful creator, we leave them to their guardian angels, and to that providence which continually preserveth all things.”

I believe these three paragraphs last quoted are *originals* in their kind; I scarce think

they are to be paralleled by any thing to be met with, in any controversial dispute, since that famous one which the devil had with *Michael* the archangel: and it is possible, as being agreeable to his temper and character, that he might manage his dispute against the archangel, much in the same manner that our preacher doth against his brethren; but whether such conduct is consistent with the character of a *divine*, a *christian*, or a *gentleman*, I leave to the impartial world to judge. As for myself, I profess I stand amazed at his consummate impudence, weakness and uncharitableness; for *though I would kindly draw a veil over every human ill, yet in vain I strive, in vain I labour to excuse him;* and if this be a specimen of university reasoning and charity, God forbid it should have any admirers or followers.

Our preacher hath at one stroke consigned to *eternal damnation* about one third of the *English* nation, all *Scotland* in general, with only a very small exception, the church and state of *Geneva*, and the whole body of *reformed churches* abroad; and for what? Why only because they happen to differ from him in their opinion concerning the use, necessity, and divine institution of the *episcopal* order; wherein it is certain, except our preacher is

*infallible*, and I can hardly imagine him vain enough to pretend to it, they may be in the right, and he in the wrong.

As for those amongst us, who wickedly and impiously presume to instruct their brethren in the principles of our holy religion, with regard to such, I say, and their blind followers, it seems *charity herself, that heaven-born virgin*, cannot think so favourably as *Origen* did of the devil; but I fear, that charity, which cannot think thus favourably of them, instead of being an *heaven-born virgin*, ought rather to be esteemed an *hell-born whore*.

As for the *kirk of Scotland*, whose plea it seems is daring and presumptuous; and *Geneva*, though it hath a plausible excuse, and though the *reformed churches* have moderation, yet these are guilty of no less than *sacrilege*, and incur the dreadful penalty of *eternal damnation*. But our preacher is not *willing to think* (a manner of expression which seems to intimate, that he is somewhat *dubious* about it) thus hardly of those, who under a real, absolute, unconquerable, and unavoidable necessity, (pray observe how it is guarded) though *unauthorized*, do *piously* preach the religion of Jesus “such he doth not  
“ *consign*

“ consign to the indolent state of a gloomy  
“ deprivation, nor commit to the merciless  
“ and irreversible fate of eternal misery.”  
but yet notwithstanding this great necessity,  
it is observable how unwilling he is they  
should be saved; for he only leaves them in  
the hands of a *merciful creator*, and their  
*guardian angels*, where I am in like manner  
desirous to leave them and our *orator* too;  
for I thank God I have at last done with  
him, and perhaps, *gentlemen*, you think it time,  
for it is not improbable that I have wearied  
*you*, I am sure I have *myself*, in following him  
through all his wanderings, uncharitableness,  
scandal and raillery.

I thought it improper to destroy the con-  
nection of the remarks, by any particular ap-  
plication to *you*, but now I beg leave to re-  
sume my address, and ask you how you think  
your orator hath acquitted himself? Has he,  
in the performance under our consideration,  
behaved like a *scholar*, or a *divine*? He himself  
tells us, methinks he might have had it more in  
view, “ that the gentleman, the scholar, the  
“ wit, and the politician, the philosopher and  
“ the christian, should complete the character,  
“ and exhaust the idea of a divine;” but what  
there is peculiar to either of these characters  
in this discourse, lies, I fear, in a very nar-

row compass. Are such harangues as these any credit to the university? or rather, if they are encouraged, will not our nobility and gentry fear to send their sons thither, lest their tender minds, capable in their youth of almost any impression, should be poisoned and corrupted with such *pernicious* principles? Principles not only *false* in speculation, but when reduced to practice, having a fatal and natural tendency to destroy the *peace* of every *society*. What encouragement, or rather what discouragement, doth this give our gentry, for the endowment of schools, or places of literature, or to join in the expence, or any way promote the education of one of their poor neighbour's sons; when they are no sooner sent to the university, but presently they imbibe false and pernicious notions of the grandeur, power, and authority of a *priest*? Upon which account, it ceases to be a wonder, that after they have been instructed in these principles, by persons for whose superior knowledge and learning, they have entertained a great veneration and esteem, and at an age, when they themselves are incapable of judging between right or wrong, truth or falsehood; I say, it is no wonder, that when once they get *orders*, they should be puffed up with pride, self conceit and arrogance, and upon account of their imaginary power and authority, should look down with scorn and contempt upon

upon the laity, thinking themselves superior to their patrons and all mankind: and it is this, that doubtless gives rise to the bickerings and quarrels, so common between the *esquire* and the *parson* in most of our *country villages*: this very easily and naturally accounts for the small progress of our holy religion, and the small success which attends the preachers of it: for when their heads are turned with *fancied powers*, and instead of instructing their parish in their duty toward *God*, their discourses tend only to direct them in their duty toward *themselves*, no wonder, that they meet with that scorn and contempt, which their *arrogance* and *pride*, and that manifest *abuse*, and *perversion* of their *office*, do so justly deserve.

Would it not, upon these accounts, have been more agreeable to the character, of a *christian* divine, and an *Oxonian* orator, instead of attempting what he calls, the proof of his *mission*, and the *divine institution*, of the *ministry*, to have proved what is certainly of vastly more importance; I mean the *mission* and *messiahship* of our *Lord*; and to have vindicated the *divine institution* of *christianity* itself, which at present, with grief and concern I speak it, seems to be the only subject of controversial debate? If our preacher had done this, he had acted worthy of his character,

and had deserved the thanks of every christian: but instead of this, he hath done all within his power to *weaken* and *destroy* it, and hath given the adversaries of our holy religion an *unanswerable* argument, if true, against its divine origin: nay, upon the supposed truth of our author's *principles*, I will at any time undertake to demonstrate the falshood of *christianity*, and shall think it no hard task; for his principles, when pursued through their just and natural consequences, which I have charity to think Mr. *B.* might not see, would introduce nothing but *confusion* and *disorder* into the world, are *directly contrary* to the *peace, happiness, and good* of society, and are *entirely destructive* of all the *civil and religious* rights and privileges of mankind. Are we therefore guilty of any wrong or injustice to such a religion, in calling it *diabolical*, instead of *divine*, and in judging it impossible, that such an institution should come from God, which is so contrary to the *purity and perfection* of his nature, who is a God of *peace*, and in all his dispensations consults the good and benefit of his creatures? For it is inconsistent with all our notions of infinite wisdom and goodness, that the *divine* being should fix the happiness and salvation of mankind upon a *foolish* foundation, and make it so *precarious and uncertain*, as to depend upon

the will of a *proud* and *ignorant* priest: for suppose, what has often happened, that a man should not be able to procure sponsors for his child, or that he mistakes the use of the cross in baptism, as favouring, in his opinion, too much of popery and superstition, it being, without all dispute, no essential part of baptism, neither appointed by our Lord, nor for aught appears, in use amongst the apostles; and suppose the above mentioned person should address himself to a priest of Mr *B's* temper and complexion, and he should, as is very likely in either of these instances, refuse the child baptism, is it possible for any man to be so weak as to imagine, that this child should be damned for want of it? Or suppose, which is another very common case, that a christian should be disposed to receive the *communion*, but should have some scruples, relating to the *gesture*, esteeming a *table posture* most proper, (it being evident that our Lord and his disciples, at its first institution, received it so) and should be unwilling to comply with *kneeling*, not only for the reason just mentioned, but because, in his opinion, it might seem to countenance the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, or the *corporal presence*, which, I make no doubt, first gave rise to the change of the posture; and suppose this person should offer to receive the communion from the above-

mentioned priest, and he, which is not unlikely, should refuse him; can any imagine that the folly of our priest, should occasion this man's eternal damnation? The very mention of these instances without farther reasoning, may suffice. *Res ipsa loquitur.*

Once more: would it not have been more agreeable to the character of a minister of the *gospel of peace*, (of that dispensation which recommends nothing more to its profession than charity and love, insomuch that it seems to make that the criterion and distinguishing characteristic of a *christian*) to have preached up *peace and charity*, that greatest of all virtues? Might he not very agreeably have entertained his audience with a particular description of the person and character of that *heaven-born virgin*, set her forth in all her *shining graces*, and made her appear as lovely and amiable to *them*, as she is really in *herself*? Here his oratory and rhetoric would have been well employed to his own credit, the honour of the university, and the advantage of his audience: but instead of this, he breathes forth nothing but *fury and rage*, stirs up the coals of *wrath and contention*, preaches up *envy and hatred* among christians, rails against, and abuses his brethren, with all the eloquence he is master of, miscalls them

*schis-*

*schismatics* and *heretics*, and consigns them over to *eternal torments and damnation*; and doubtless, if he had power equal to his inclination, would consign them over to *temporal burnings* as well as eternal: nay, it is very probable, this is one of the powers which he expressly claims, but if not in words, in just consequence he doth; for if the *peace and security* of the church should require it, of which they, and they only, are the supposed judges, it would, without all doubt, be reckoned expedient and necessary to have such obstinate adversaries to the church's peace removed: but though as yet, he hath not thought proper to speak his mind fully and plainly, yet he hath made a very handsome beginning, and hath one paragraph in his sermon, that, in my opinion, looks very much this way; where he tells us, that "it was  
 " a very serious consideration of this important affair, *i. e.* the dreadful nature of  
 " schism, that animated the first christians to  
 " the practice of so laudable a custom, that  
 " whenever \* *heretics*, or *schismatics* were  
 " pro-

\* The same reasoning holds good with respect to the promotion of any heretic and schismatic in the state, as in the church, and, I doubt not, our preacher would be understood in this sense; but as he hath only pointed out the promotion

“ promoted to any eminent post in the church,  
 “ both clergy and laity remonstrated to the  
 “ emperor, and the patriarch or metropolitan  
 “ piously refused the consecration.

It is no difficult matter to know where our preacher, and those of the same mind with him, would stop; for the same principles, *viz.* the dreadful nature of schism, and the good of the church, which justify the one, would quickly leave them, if other milder methods should be found ineffectual, and not sufficiently answer their end entirely to root out and destroy their adversaries: these principles, and these alone, are the main support of that grand-mystery of iniquity, the *papal inquisition*; for if once the clergy are allowed to direct and govern, there is nothing left for the laity but a state of mere slavery and bondage, and how or by what reasons to account for it

of *heretics* and *schismatics* in the church, he doubtless had his eye upon some particular person, or persons, under this character, who have been promoted; and designed this observation (for it certainly answers no other end) as a tacit reflection on his majesty for promoting, and on the bishops for not piously refusing to consecrate, some particular *heretical* and *schismatical* bishop. I shall now leave it with him, whether this ought not to be esteemed high-treason and rebellion against the spiritual powers.

to know not, but by fatal and constant experience throughout all ages and nations, it hath been found that the *clergy* are the least fit of any persons whatever to be entrusted with power and authority.

Having done with our preacher, and his performance, I beg leave to subjoin my own sense and sentiments concerning the institution of the ministry, and some incidental remarks about the nature of the christian religion.

When the divine being thought proper to make choice of the *Jews* to be his peculiar people, whom he would in a particular manner favour with the knowledge of himself, as the *only true and living God*, in opposition to, and distinction from, that vast variety of *idols and gods*, whose worship obtained throughout the several habitable parts of the earth \*, he found it necessary in compliance with the *froward temper and genius* of that *perverse* generation, to give them a religion full of

\* Nothing but this can, I think, reconcile the *divine* institution of the Jewish religion; a religion, I was going to add, unworthy of its divine original, and fit for no other people, but those to whom it was given, and to whose genius it was in a particular manner suited and adapted.

numerous rites and pompous ceremonies; and as God himself tells us, to "give them statutes that were *not good*, and judgments whereby they should not live:" for the *Jews*, by being so long conversant with the *Egyptians*, whose priests were famous, I mean infamous, for their *holy jugglings* and *pious trumpery*, had entertained such a fondness for a ritual scheme of religion, that even the divine indulgence above mentioned, could scarce restrain them from idolatry: but in order to preserve them from it, and keep them within the proper boundaries of their duty, he sent them one prophet after another, to teach, guide and direct them, but these they abused and evil entreated, and their religion they rendered wholly void, by the neglect of the *moral* and *truly religious* part thereof, and an attendance to nothing but its *mere rites* and *beggarly ceremonies*. Now therefore, when the fulness of time was come, it pleased the almighty, from a tender and compassionate regard to the weakness and ignorance of mankind to send his beloved son and our blessed Lord, to retrieve the languishing dying state of religion, to teach and instruct the world in their duty toward their God, their fellow-creatures, and themselves: having received his divine commission, the blessed saviour of mankind came to dwell amongst us, and not only  
give

gave us a pure and perfect religion, but was himself a bright pattern, and example of that purity and perfection which his religion recommends. He abolished the numerous rites and ceremonies of the Jewish polity, and substituted in its place, a religion every way worthy of its divine original, worthy of a deity to give, and of rational creatures to receive and observe; for the christian religion, like the great founder and author thereof, is holy, just, and pure; its doctrines, those I mean which relate not to \* practice, have nothing dissonant

\* Such as the resurrection of the body, or I might even add the divine mission and messiahship of our Lord; for the truth thereof being supposed, which, by the way, admit of as easy proof as any fact at equal distance of time, yet it cannot, I think, be said in a *strict and proper* sense to have any *other* influence upon our practice or conduct in life, than that we have a *divine* testimony, that the practice of those duties, which arise from the eternal nature and reason of things, and the relation we stand in to a deity, mankind and ourselves, are agreeable to the will of God: and it is in this light, that *christianity*, as a *system of religion*, ought to be considered as an improvement, and enforcement of natural religion *only*, from which it differs *merely* in the institution of the two sacraments, of which more hereafter; so that separate from these, nothing can be said to be the duty of a *christian*, which was not the duty of a *man*, prior to the institution of christianity.

dissonant to the reason of mankind; its precepts, or the duties which it recommends, are founded upon, and conformable unto the eternal

As for those doctrines of a *mere speculative* nature, peculiar to the christian institution, they cannot in a strict and proper sense be said to be any part of *religion*, the belief, or disbelief of these being no otherwise religious, or irreligious, than as a person is *open* and *disposed* to conviction, and gives a greater, or smaller *attention*, to the evidence on which the truth of the doctrines depend: for a *mere belief* or *disbelief* of any principle, argues neither *virtue*, nor *vice*, because neither the one, nor the other depends on our will, or any thing within our power; the very *make* and *constitution* of the *human* mind being such, that when the evidence of any truth appears great and strong, we cannot, how much soever we may be disposed to the contrary, refuse our belief or assent to the truth of that principle: and on the other hand, if the evidence appears *weak* and *defective*, our inclination, how strong soever, cannot supply the place of evidence; and in that case, it is absolutely impossible for us to believe, or to assent to it: whence it appears, that we are no otherwise *commendable* for our *belief*, or *blameable* for our *disbelief*, than as we are more or less willing to attend to the evidence on which the truth of these doctrines depends.

The considerations above-mentioned, give us a clear insight into the nature and importance of the present controversy concerning the truth of christianity, and which all our writers seem to have taken no notice of; though one would imagine,

eternal nature and reason of things, and are perfective of the human mind. His religion, even as our blessed Lord did himself in person, recommends nothing more than peace, charity and \* love amongst his followers: would to God, that a greater regard was paid to the example and precept of our Lord

gine, that when they were disputing concerning the truth of christianity, they ought first to have defined and settled what christianity was; which considered under its proper character, as to its sum and substance, is not at all affected by any objections brought against it by its adversaries: and if these persons designed their present attack only as introductory to their future designs upon *true and real religion*, I mean the *practical* part of christianity, which, for reasons just mentioned, may not improperly be called its *sum and substance*, better they had began here, and not have vainly amused both themselves and the world, with what is entirely foreign to the main intention and design which they have in view; for by their *plausible* objections against some particular parts of the christian system, they have *artfully misled* some *weak and inconsiderate* persons to doubt concerning the *truth and reality* of religion itself.

\* *A new commandment*, says our Lord, *I give unto you, that you love one another*: a manner of expression which seems to intimate, that besides the practice of those duties, our obligation to which arises from the nature and reason of things, it was the design of our Lord, that his followers should in a very *particular* manner express a regard to the *duty of charity and love*.

Lord in this instance. But as our Lord himself was but a small time on earth, that he might complete his great and good design, and diffuse the knowledge of his divine religion throughout the world, he gave particular directions to his apostles to teach and instruct mankind in the knowledge of the deity, and of himself their saviour; and that their mission might be attended with suitable and desirable success, amongst the great variety of barbarous nations, who in all probability would be fondly tenacious of the rites peculiar to their own religion, he qualified the apostles in an extraordinary manner; for they were divinely inspired by the Holy Ghost, and endowed with a power of working miracles. And thus qualified, they went and preached the gospel to various people and nations; and their success, as is easy to imagine, was different, according to the different tempers of the people to whom they addressed themselves: some of them despised the apostles, and the holy religion which they taught; others, persuaded of its reasonableness and purity, forsook their former folly and idolatry, and became professors to the christian religion; but as it was impossible (it being inconsistent with their design of visiting other people and nations) that the apostles should reside wholly with any particular city or province, they,

left

lest their labour should prove vain and ineffectual, appointed some particular persons amongst the people, who had a superior knowledge in the principles of their holy religion, that in their absence they might confirm and strengthen their brethren in the faith, and that by their pious conduct, and the purity of that religion which they taught, they might make converts of others. These, as is very natural to suppose, were chosen from amongst the seniors of the people, which probably gave rise to the name of *presbyter* or *elder*; and that due care might be taken of the *poor*, that office was assigned to some or other particular persons, called *deacons*, lest, if both offices were joined in one, they might be burdensome and inconvenient. That these officers were appointed by the apostles, under the notion of their conferring distinct powers or authority upon them, or of their giving them any particular commission to do what others were not allowed, or were forbid to do, doth by no means appear. Another plain and obvious reason may be assigned, why they were appointed, or at least approved, by the apostles, because they were certainly the most competent judges, who were the properest persons for such an office, I mean the office of an *elder*; for I think any man of tolerable sense and common honesty, is sufficiently qualified

lified to take care of the poor; nor does there seem the least occasion for an apostolical appointment, or approbation of such. Nor indeed is it at all improbable to suppose, that the people very often made choice of their own \* elders without the privity of the apostles; for doubtless it very often happened, that they had no opportunity, or conveniency of consulting them; and that one elder upon his decease, bequeathed his church as a legacy to another, is what I cannot see the least foundation for. That there was a particular form made use of, when these elders were appointed, or set apart for that office, is not unlikely to suppose; it being very probable, and certainly very proper, to implore the divine blessing upon their future instructions; but that any circumstance obtained, which should denote their receiving any *distinct powers, or proper authority*, which they had not before,

\* It is certain and undeniable, that when the *deacons* were first instituted, they were chose by the *people*, on whom the apostles praying *laid their hands*, which in the present case had something particular in it, and ought not to be considered as a mere empty form; for it is immediately added, that *Stephen*, who was one of them, full of faith and power, did great *wonders and miracles*. This indeed is *power* in the strict and proper sense of the word, and which in all probability was conferred by the laying on of hands.

fore, more than by such a form it was evident that the elder was disposed to instruct, and the people disposed to be taught, is a mere groundless conceit, a conceit fraught with nothing but pride and vanity.

It is not at all improbable, to suppose it to be the will of our Lord, that these officers should continue to the end of christianity, if we consider the corruption and degeneracy of mankind, how prone they are to vice and impiety, how regardless of their duty, and unmindful of their obligations to the practice of virtue; whence it appears, if not *absolutely* necessary for the good of mankind, yet *very* fit and expedient, that there should be some particular persons, whose more immediate business and design it should be, to teach and instruct their fellow creatures, and remind them of their duty. This account of the nature of their office, represents the *clergy* in a just and proper light, and convinces us of the service and advantage which *that order* is of to mankind; and so long as they act agreeably to their character and profession, they not only *are*, but doubtless would be esteemed by all persons worthy of *double honour*: and those libertines, both in principle and *practice*, who make the clergy the constant subject of their insipid jests and raillery,

raillery, only discover their own folly and want of judgment, in making that the subject of their *scorn* and *ridicule*, which in itself is neither *contemptible* nor *ridiculous*, but when performed as it ought, is both useful and honourable, and tends to promote the happiness and good of society; upon which account it must be acknowledged, that the legislature acted a very wise and prudential part, and consulted the benefit and advantage of the nation, in making such a provision for the clergy, as should set them above poverty and want, which would necessarily expose them to do some things unworthy of their character, and beneath the dignity of their office.

But then on the other hand, if the clergy, forgetting their duty, and the nature of their office, instead of preaching peace, charity and love, stir up envy, strife and contention amongst christians, they are then the ministers of satan, and not preachers of the gospel of peace. If instead of instructing and teaching mankind their duty, their discourses are full of fancied grandeur and power, and instead of *reasoning*, they *rant* and *rave* about *government* and *authority*; if they misbehave themselves in so scandalous a manner, and act a part so very disagreeable to their character and profession, it is no wonder that they

meet

meet with that scorn and contempt which their conduct so justly deserves ; for, blessed be God ! the mists of error and superstition, which formerly darkened and overshadowed the land, are now vanished and gone ; truth seems to have resumed her empire amongst the sons of men ; we no longer now are fond of a state of darkness and ignorance, but a disposition to a free and rational enquiry into the nature and reason of things seems universally to prevail. The *English* clergy have it no longer in their power, (would to God that none had an inclination !) to abuse and deceive the people with their *pious frauds*, and *consecrated trumpery* ; for they seem determined to make a *proper* use of their faculties, and see that with their own eyes, which none can so well see for them, and to *judge and think* for themselves (the indisputable and unalienable right of mankind, and which it is not in their own power to give away) in matters relating to their eternal salvation, in matters which concern none but themselves, and wherein no man's judgment can be of any service to them, because they must eternally *stand and fall* by their own.

That the three orders of *bishops, priests* and *deacons*, did obtain in the apostolical ages, or were designed to be continued in the future, is

is so far from being certain, that it is not even probable. The two latter we have already accounted for ; but then it must, I think, be allowed, that the office of our *deacons* is vastly different from theirs ; so that we have retained the bare name only, and given their office to officers of our own choice and appointment, I mean the *church-wardens* ; but if we rightly consider the nature and reason of the thing, the office of a *bishop* seems to have no foundation in the holy writings, or in the truly primitive practice.

When christianity was first preached in any particular place, and the apostles substituted one or more elders amongst the people, to teach and instruct their brethren, it must be supposed, that these persons were best skilled in the principles of our holy religion, and yet doubtless their knowledge was but comparatively small ; no wonder then that in matters of difficulty they should apply to the apostles for their advice and direction, or if they had no opportunity of consulting them, or after their decease, that they should apply to some particular elders of neighbouring churches, who, by their longer standing in the church, by a greater acquaintance with the apostles, or other intelligent christians, had attained to a superior knowledge in the  
pria-

principles of their religion : but that they apply to these, I mean the latter, under the notion of their being a different order of priests, or having superior powers, is a vain and silly opinion : and yet doubtless this gave rise to the order of bishops. Men are fond enough of power and authority, and desirous of lording it over their brethren ; no wonder then that some more ambitious than the rest, tho' perhaps less knowing, made a handle of this, and usurped a power, which neither God nor nature designed them : for when all inspiration ceased, and one elder was upon a level with another, what possible reason can be assigned, why one should be obedient or subject to another ? But suppose this was so originally, and so designed by the apostles, yet when one bishop died, what became of the clergy ? I hope the bishop did not bequeath them by will, as a man doth a flock of sheep ; it is very likely, in that case, that the people made choice of another to supply his place, or that the clergy agreed amongst themselves, upon a proper person to preside over them, and set him apart to that office by the laying on of the hands of the *presbytery* ; but in either case, I fear, we have an instance of persons conferring a power, which originally was not in them.

But before we close this account, it may not be improper to settle the affair of the *divine institution* of a gospel ministry.

We will therefore suppose, that it was the will of our Lord, and that will of his expressly revealed in the holy writings, the only rule of our faith and obedience, that there should throughout the several ages of the world, be such officers as *bishops, priests, and deacons*, in the christian church; and this in a general sense may be called the *divine institution* of the three orders, is the very same sense in which it may be said, that the authority of princes is a *divine institution*: for, no doubt, it was equally his will, that for the general good and peace of society, and to prevent the ill effects of mens impiety and wickedness, there should be such persons as *princes and governors*; for the powers that are, says the apostle, are of God, and we are to be obedient to them for conscience sake. But then having granted it to be the will of our Lord, that there should be such officers in the christian church, yet how doth it appear that any power or authority was designed to be lodged in the hands of such persons: there is nothing in the nature of the offices themselves, which includes or comprehends

hends any power of any kind whatever, except that the bishop must be supposed to have some power over the inferior clergy, but this is vastly different from any imaginary power supposed to be lodged in the clergy, over the laity: they are indeed to teach and instruct them, but this argues neither power nor authority; except we must consider them under the character of *school-masters* that if the people will not be taught, they must be *corrected and chastised*.

But suppose we advance a step farther, and grant all that can be desired of us, that some powers of an *odd unaccountable nature*, neither fit or proper in themselves, nor agreeable to the nature of the office, were designed to be annexed to the priesthood, then this spiritual power hath the same foundation, and is exactly upon the same footing, with *temporal* government, there being a *divine* institution of both powers alike; but who should be the particular persons with whom these powers should be intrusted, must be left to the people to judge and determine, so that at last the power in both cases is derived from the *lords the people*: for we may with equal reason suppose, that one king should hand down his power and authority to his successor, without the consent of his kingdom, and so on to the

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the end of time, as that the priests, without the concurrence or consent of the people, should bequeath theirs to whom they please.

This account is not only agreeable to the nature and reason of the thing, but likewise to the very constitution of our *church* itself, and the *laws* of the *land*. Is not his majesty supreme in *all causes*, and over *all persons*, *ecclesiastical* as well as *civil*? Are not the powers which our clergy have, derived from him their supreme head? For it is he who makes *bishops*, who *ordains* them, and by their orders gives them these mighty powers which they are so proud of: for except his majesty first granted the *conge d' eslier*, what follows consequent upon it would be but *trifling* and *ineffectual*; for the whole bench of bishops without him are not able to create another, whereas he by his sole authority can do it without *them*; for all, **excepting** his choice and appointment, that is **done**, ought to be considered, strictly and properly, as no more than a mere form and empty pageantry. Nay, we have had a late instance, not only of his majesty's power to create, but even when created and conferred in all its due and proper forms, of the state's power to destroy this *episcopal power*. Is not bishop

*A. terbury*

*Aiterbury* a melancholy and recent instance of this truth? Was not his bishopric taken away from him? His power to teach and instruct in the *British* dominions entirely destroyed, all relation between him and his clergy dissolved, and all their obligations of obedience to him superseded and cancelled? Nay, I much question whether a *deacon's* order, granted by him in his present unhappy condition, would be valid in *Great Britain*.

And though our orator hath told us in his curious sermon, that "no human laws can give a person a title to teach others," yet if we advance a step higher, and review the common and well known case of *Dr. Sacheverell*, that dear brother of his, both in his reasoning and divinity, it will be very evident, that though no human laws could give the title, they could take it away; which, by the way, is somewhat strange, that they should have a power to destroy, what they have none to create: the legislature thought proper to suspend him for three years; and the very same power, if it had been agreeable to them, and if they had punished him equal to his crimes, might have done it for his whole life, have taken his orders from him, and have entirely silenced this *authorized dispenser*,

notwithstanding his pretences to a *divine* mission and institution: but what need we recur to these particular instances? It is, I think, a principle universally acknowledged, that by the laws of the land, a clergyman may be degraded for some crimes of a heinous and particular nature; and if a sentence of this, or the like import should be pronounced against him in a civil court, it would be altogether valid and effectual, though it should not pass through any particular forms in use in the spiritual court.

Upon the whole, it appears impossible, that any person, who is but tolerably acquainted with the constitution of our church, with the laws of the land, and with the nature and end of an ecclesiastical ministry, should run into any error concerning its divine institution, or whether any, or what powers are annexed to its respective offices.

Before I dismiss this point, I desire that nothing which I have said, may be understood in such a sense as to suppose me to be an enemy to our ecclesiastical constitution, or to episcopacy in particular. With regard to the order of the priesthood, or the inferior clergy, I have I think, sufficiently explained myself already; to which I beg leave to add, that I have a  
great

great regard for the episcopal office and character: and though I may not entertain the same high opinion of it as others do, nor believe it to be, in the strict and proper sense of the word, a divine institution, and consequently think, that an undue stress ought not to be laid upon this order, nor that it should be matter of strife, or contention among christians, yet I esteem it highly useful and expedient, of great service to our church, and in a particular manner suited to the temper and genius of the *English* nation: and though several may not agree with me therein, yet there are few, I believe, but what will allow it to be of use, if for no other reasons, yet for this, that it may be a check upon such preachers as our orator.

I could easily point out some of that venerable order who are a *credit* and an *ornament* to their profession, who are an *honour* to the *British* nation, who are hearty *friends* to their *country*, and the present happy establishment, and steady *advocates* for our *civil* and *religious liberties*. I believe no *prot-stant*, or true *Englishman*, but what will agree with me, that this character doth in a particular manner suit the *great and good bishop of Sarum* \*, for whom, I must confess, it was principally drawn.

\* Dr. *Headly*, late bishop of *Winchester*.

Perhaps some persons may be surprized, that in our account of the institution of the christian religion, I have taken no notice of the two sacraments of *baptism* and the *eucharist*; but these I have reserved till last, that we may make a more distinct and particular inquiry into their nature, and the design of our Lord in their institution.

It will be very easily granted, and indeed I believe denied by none, that the author of our holy religion, had a right to appoint some *positive* institutions, which it is for that very reason, (I mean, because instituted by him) the duty of a christian to observe: but then, as the obligation of our obedience in these instances, is not founded upon the nature or reason of things, there being no natural goodness, religion, or virtue in the actions themselves abstracted from, and prior to, their institution, but is resolvable entirely into the sole will of our Lord; it is necessary that we inquire into the nature, end, and design of these institutions, lest we lay an undue stress, and pay a greater veneration and regard to them, than was ever designed by our Lord.

The mere actions themselves, separated from the circumstances, which, according to usage  
and

and custom, generally attend them, and which ought not to be considered as essential to them, are of a common indifferent nature; what is there in *washing the body*, or in *eating bread and drinking wine*? Neither goodness nor virtue: when therefore these actions are adopted into our religion, and the performance of them required of christians, we are to carry our views farther, to consider the nature and design of the institutions, and what are the principal things signified and represented to us by these ceremonies; it is this that we are *chiefly* to attend unto, for the mere outward action was instituted, and is performed, for the sake of that *only*, which it signifies and denotes. If therefore the thing signified is sufficiently attended unto, and regarded by us, we do, I think, answer the great end and design of the institution, though we omit the outward action. Thus, for instance, we are to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of our saviour, and of his body broken like bread, and his blood poured forth like wine, for the remission of our sins; but if this be done as well and effectually (and without all dispute it may) without the performance of the outward material action, is not the end and design of our Lord in the institution of this ordinance, as well and effectually answered, as with it: I

say this, not that I think, that if it is the express will of our Lord, that these outward actions should be performed, we may dispense with our obedience, and refuse the performance of them; but to abate and take off that undue stress which persons place upon the mere actions themselves: and if we make a strict and narrow enquiry into this affair, I doubt not it will appear, that christians generally lay a greater stress upon these ceremonies, than our Lord himself did, or ever designed they should: for it is not at all improbable, that our Lord instituted them, *principally* and *chiefly*, in compliance with the temper of the Jews, the ceremonial part of whose religion he having entirely abolished, he knew it would be almost impossible, to prevail upon that people to accept of a new institution, so contrary to their former, that should be perfectly simple, and without any rite or ceremony whatever; for we find, notwithstanding the institution of the two sacraments, how fondly tenacious they were of the law of *Moses*, and that they would have imposed the observance of it on the christian converts, insomuch that the apostles found it necessary to comply with this froward temper of theirs in other more material instances.

Thus

Thus much is certain and undeniable, that our Lord took the two sacraments from the Jews: baptism is allowed by all our best writers, to have been in use amongst them, which custom of theirs, is Dr. *Wall's* chief and principal argument for infant-baptism. That the feast of the supper, with all the minute particular circumstances attending it, were taken from the custom and usage of the Jews, in their religious feasts; that the particular appointment of bread and wine for this sacred repast, the method of their being consecrated, the breaking the bread, the distribution of it to the company, the giving thanks, and lastly, the singing a psalm or spiritual song; that these were severally taken from the customs and usages of the Jews, will appear plain and evident to any who will give themselves the trouble of reading Mr. *Godwyn's* account of the Jewish feasts. Upon these accounts it seems not improbable to suppose, that our Lord's chief end and design in the institution of the sacraments, was, as I hinted above, in compliance with the temper of the Jews, and to recommend christianity to them, by making it more agreeable to the Jewish institution, and to their ceremonial temper and disposition.

It is very certain, however, that neither our Lord, nor his apostles, laid any great stress upon the sacraments: baptism seems to be mentioned by them only *en passant*, and we never find the observance of the supper recommended by him or his apostles, as necessary to salvation, or as what in any particular manner was required of christians. As to the former, as our Lord never gave any particular directions concerning it, the custom of the Jews must, I think, be necessarily supposed to be the rule of christian baptism, with whom, as it was customary to baptize their proselytes *only*, it is not at all improbable, to suppose it to be agreeable to the will of our Lord, and consistent with the original design of the institution itself (which doubtless was to make a distinction between a christian and a gentile) that the use of it should be \* discontinued, when a whole people and nation became christians; for if the root is holy, so are the branches.

\* This matter is set in a very clear light by the author of Dr. WALL's history of infant-baptism improved, printed in the year 1709, an author of indisputable learning, and good sense. Vid. also Mr. *Emlyn's* previous question, which, in some parts of it, seems unanswerable.

As for the sacrament of the supper, it doth by no means appear, that our Lord laid that stress upon it, which his followers have done since; the notion of the corporeal presence, which obtained in the early ages of the church, (which doubtless was a contrivance of the priests, in order to promote their own power, and advance their office and order in the opinion of the people) was what first gave rise to the manifest abuse and perversion of the nature and design of this religious feast.

It doth not appear, from its original institution, from any part of the holy writings, or the nature of the feast itself, that it was the will or design of our Lord, that the administration of it should be confined to the *priesthood*. As our Lord left this affair undetermined, nor gave us any particular directions concerning it; the custom and usage among the Jews, from whom the institution itself was taken, ought alone to determine this matter, I mean, what is essential to it; and it is certain, that the master of the house, or any other indifferent person, presided in their religious feast; he consecrated the cup and the bread, and gave thanks. And what reason can be assigned why this feast should not be performed in the same manner? What hinders,

ders, when any number of christians are met together, that they may not eat and drink in remembrance of Christ, and that any one of the number may not consecrate the elements and return thanks? And this seems to have been the practice amongst the primitive christians in the apostolical ages, according to the account which we have in the holy writings, who feasted in this religious manner as oft almost as they met together: neither, by any thing which appears, did they apprehend it necessary, that these feasts should be confined to the place of their religious assemblies, or consecrated churches, or that their teacher should preside over them, though it is not improbable to suppose, that when their teacher was one of the number, they passed the compliment upon him in desiring him to consecrate the bread and wine, and return thanks; (in like manner as is usual amongst us, when any clergyman happens to be in company with us at our common meals, for the master of the house to desire him to crave a blessing and return thanks) and from hence it is not unlikely, came the custom of their teachers constantly officiating at these religious feasts, till at last for the reasons above-mentioned, they thought fit to deny this power to the laity, and confine it to their own order.

Having now finished my account of the origin and nature of the christian institution, and of the office of the priesthood, as it stands opposed to Mr. B's, I leave the world to judge whose is most agreeable to the general nature and reason of things, to the particular institution of christianity, to the constitution of the church of *England*, and the sense of mankind. For some reasons I have not thought proper to subjoin my name at length; though, as on the one hand, I have not the vanity to imagine, that my name would have been of any service to the cause wherein I am engaged; so, on the other hand, I am far from thinking that it would do it any disservice or discredit.

I have only farther to observe, that if Mr. B. will apprise me of having either through haste or inadvertence omitted any material argument of his, or that in any part of his performance, I have neglected to give his reasonings their just weight (which may not be improbable, if we consider the short distance of time between the publishing of his sermon, and the sending these remarks to the press, the far greater part of which was taken up by more necessary business) I say, if he will apprise me hereof, I assure him, that I will take a more accurate review of the argument, and will consider his principles

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in their full extent, and the several consequences arising from them. In the mean time,

*I am,*

GENTLEMEN,

*With great regard,*

London, Octob.

29, 1729.

*Your most humble servant,*

L. W. L.

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If every American does his or her best for America and for Humanity we shall become, and remain, the Grandest of Nations – admired by all and feared by none, our strength being our Wisdom and kindness.

Knowledge knows no race, sex, boundary or nationality; what mankind knows has been gathered from every field plowed by the thoughts of man. There is no reason to envy a learned person or a scholarly institution, learning is available to all who seek it in earnest, and it is to be had cheaply enough for all.

To study and plow deeper the rut one is in does not lead to an elevation of intelligence, quite the contrary! To read widely, savor the thoughts, and blind beliefs, of others will make it impossible to return again to that narrowness that did dominate the view of the uninformed.

To prove a thing wrong that had been believed will elevate the mind more than a new fact learned.

Emmett F. Fields  
Bank of Wisdom

Bank of wisdom  
P.O. Box 926  
Louisville, KY 40201  
U.S.A.

The NATURE and EXTENT of the Office of the  
CIVIL MAGISTRATE;

---

Considered in a

# DISCOURSE

Preached before the Right Honourable

*Sir George Thorold, Knt.*

Lord-Mayor of the City of *London,*

AND THE

Court of ALDERMEN,

AND THE

Liveries of the several COMPANIES,

AT THE

PARISH-CHURCH of *St. Lawrence-Jewry,*

On *Thursday, September 29, 1720.*

*Being the Festival of St. Michael the Archangel, and the Election-Day of the LORD-MAYOR for the Year ensuing.*

---

By BENJAMIN IBBOT, D. D.

Rector of *St. Paul Shadwell,* and Chaplain in  
Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

---

NE QUID RESPUBLICA DETRIMENTI CAPIAT.

Cic. pro Milone.

---

First printed in the year 1720.

## ACTS XVIII. 14, 15.

*And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lawdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.*

**T**HE crime which the Jews here laid against St. Paul, and for which they brought him before Gallio, was \* *blasphemy* against their religion, affirming, that the religion established by the law was now no longer obligatory, and professing a religion different from that, and persuading others to embrace it. For thus they represent the case to Gallio, at the 13th verse, saying, *this fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.* To which accusation the apostle was going to reply; but Gallio prevented and saved him that trouble, and put an end to their pleadings on both sides, by declaring at once, that the case did not come before him, nor fall under his cognizance.

\* Acts xvi. 13, 14.

*Gallio said unto the Jews, &c.*

This chapter is the only place of scripture, where we find any mention made of *Gallio*; but from the account which we here meet with of his behaviour upon this occasion, as well as from the character which other writers have given us of him, we may justly conclude, that he was a man of great candour and humanity, as well as a wise and discreet magistrate.

He was the *Roman* præfect of *Achaia*, a consular province under *Augustus*; and a brother of *Seneca*, who gives him this character, \* that he was a man of a sweet temper, universally beloved, free from all vices, and the greatest hater of flattery. *Tacitus* † also makes mention of him to his advantage, and *Statius* gives him the same testimony ‡.

\* Solebam tibi dicere, Gallionem fratrem meum (quem nemo non parum amat, etiam qui amare plus non potest) alia vitia non nosse, hoc etiam (viz. adulationem) odisse, ab omni illum parte tentasti——Nemo enim mortalium uni tam dulcis est, quàm hic omnibus, &c. *Senec. Nat. Quest. l. 4. Initio.*

† *Annal. l. 15.*

‡ Aut dulcem generasse Gallionem. *Statius, Sylvarum l. 2. Genethliac. on Lucani.*

Notwithstanding this, some have severely censured his conduct in this affair, as if it proceeded from carelessness and indifference in religious matters; and to render him the more infamous, have invented a new name for this sin, and called it *Gallionism*. But I hope to justify the *Deputy's* behaviour and to shew, that what he spoke on this occasion, was wisely spoke; and that if he had acted otherwise in this matter than he did, he had transgressed the bounds of his duty.

It is worth while to take a nearer view of his words, and examine more closely into their drift and meaning.

*If it were a matter of \* wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews —* If you could accuse this man of any injustice, whereby he had invaded any one's *right and property*, or could lay to his charge any other flagitious and villainous action, done with a mischievous design, and whereby he had disturbed *the public peace*; † *reason would that I should bear with you*. It would be but right and just, that I should bear with this trouble which you would now give

\* Ἀδικημά τι ἢ ραδιέργημα ποιεῖν.

† Κατὰ λόγον αἰ ἠεσχόμεν ὑμῶν.

me, and hear with patience what you have to say. I should then be obliged by the duty of my place, to take cognizance of your matter. *But if it be a question of words, and names, and of your law.* If the *controversy* as it seems to me, be, not about *civil*, but *religious* matters: as about the *word* which *Paul* preached, and the truth of that *word*, and whether it be agreeable to your law; or about *names* of different sects in religion, and of their founders; as whether the name of *messiah*, or *Christ* belongs to that *Jesus* whom *Paul* preaches, and what appellation is to be given to his followers; or about the sense and meaning of those prophecies which *Paul* applies to *Christ*: or if the dispute relates to the rites and ceremonies of your *law*, as whether *circumcision* be still in force, and all that are *uncircumcised* are out of God's favour: I say, if the matter about which you are at variance be concerning your *messiah*, who he is, and what is agreeable, or contrary to your *law*, or any thing else of this kind, *look ye to it.* Make it up among yourselves, or dispute as long as you please about it. *For I will be no judge of such matters.* It is none of my business to determine such disputes. These things no way affect the *public peace and quiet*, which it is my *duty* to take care of;

of; nor do they make any one guilty of any crime against the *law of the land*.

And this was a wise answer, and shewed, that he was well acquainted with the nature and extent of his office; and he was too good a man to list himself in any party, and to abuse the power which was lodged in his hands, by applying it to purposes foreign to the original design of it, and *executing wrath upon them who had done no evil*.

The words thus opened, naturally lead me to treat of *the nature and extent of the office of the civil magistrate*. And because this is a subject, which would take up more time, than is usually allowed upon such occasions as this; I shall confine myself, to that *distinction* which *Galio* here makes between matters of a *civil* and a *religious* nature; between the affairs of *civil government*, and those of *religion*. The *former*, he lays claim to, as falling under his cognizance, and belonging to his *jurisdiction*: but the *latter*, he disclaims, as wholly foreign to his *office*, and what he had nothing to do with.

This *difference* between *civil government* and religion, is what I shall endeavour to illustrate and confirm, and to settle the just bounds  
that

that lie between the one and the other. And this I shall do, by considering distinctly what the end and design of *civil government* is, and what is that of *religion*.

I. Then let us consider *the end and design of civil government*.

It is plain, that *civil government* was instituted for the preservation and advancement of men's *civil* interests, for the better security of their lives, and liberties, and external possessions.

Men soon became sensible of the necessity of *civil government*, for these ends, from the inconveniencies they suffered by a private life independent on each other. For in such a state, unless every man would keep strictly to the rules of justice and equity, which the pravity of human nature, and long experience forbid us ever to hope for; the weak would become a prey to the strong, every one would lie at the mercy of him that was mightier than himself, and the world would be full of fraud and injustice, cruelty and oppression.

No sooner did mankind begin to multiply, and to contract new relations and new duties but their interests interfered with one another, and gave rise to those wrongs and injuries

injuries which daily increased in the world, and quickly moved men to enter into *societies*, for the mutual security and defence of their persons and properties, both against violence from abroad, and rapine and fraud at home. For these ends and purposes, *societies* were at first erected, and grounded upon the mutual compact and agreement of those who entered into them, to stand by, and assist each other, both against foreign violence, and domestic wrongs. To repel the *first* of these, there must be external force and strength, which consist in arms, riches, and multitude of hands; the remedy of the *other*, lies in wise and wholesome laws, agreed upon by the society; and the care of *both* is, by common consent, committed to the *civil magistrate*, who is moreover armed with the force and strength of all his subjects, in order to put these laws in execution \*.

From this brief account of the nature and design of *civil government*, it plainly appears, that the proper business of the *magistrate* is to preserve the external peace of the *world*, and the temporal good of the *community* over which he presides; to protect every man in

\* *Letter concerning toleration. Mr. Locke's works, V. II. p. 249.*

his just right and property; to see that \* *no man go beyond, and defraud his brother in any matter, or do any wrong of any kind to his neighbour; and to this end, to inflict proper punishments, and † execute wrath upon them that do evil; to restrain and chastise those who are unruly, who transgress the laws, and violate the rights of others; who are guilty of any of those sins, which are injurious to the society, which disturb the peace and quiet of the government, and endanger mens lives and properties; such as fraud, injustice, and oppression, lying and perjury, theft, murder, adultery, and the like.*

All these fall under the censure and cognizance of the *civil magistrate*; and it is *his* office and business to restrain men from such outrages as these, by bringing the offenders to condign punishment.

But then it is to be considered, that these transgressions are subject to be punished by the *civil magistrate* in a *civil* sense or capacity only, and not in a *religious* one. They fall under his cognizance, as they are injurious to mens *civil* interests, and destructive of the good order and government of the world;

\* 1 Thes. iv. 6. † Rom. xiii. 4.

and not as they have an inherent turpitude in them, and are immoralities and transgressions of the divine law: for in that capacity, I conceive, they are out of the magistrate's power, and not cognizable before any courts of human judicature.

The not observing *this distinction* has introduced no small confusion in this subject. For since the same actions, which are violations of the *divine law*, are also prejudicial to *human society*, and so many breaches of the *public peace and quiet*; hence it has been thought as much the *magistrate's* duty to prevent the *one* as the *other*, and that *religion* was as much *his* care and concern as *civil government*.

Whereas, in truth, if the ill influence which these vices have upon the *peace and welfare of human society*, could be separated from their *immorality*, and their being *transgressions of the laws of God*, the *magistrate* could have nothing to do with them; his *business* being nothing else but to preserve the *public peace and quiet*, and to protect men in their *civil rights and properties*, and to take no other notice of the actions and behaviour of his subjects than is necessary to this end.

But because such a separation is impossible, and those vices which are so many *transgressions of God's laws*, have also a natural tendency to injure our neighbour in his *civil interests*, and to disturb the *good order and government of the world*; (it being hard to instance in any vice, which does not some way or other, immediately or remotely, do this;) therefore it unavoidably happens, that the *magistrate*, in the due execution of his office, does *indirectly* intermeddle with *religion*. I say *indirectly*, because *religion* is not his proper *business*, nor ought he *directly* to intend it in the execution of his office. For THAT I shall shew is the care and concern of a *higher power*, and is to be promoted by rewards and punishments peculiar to itself, and fetched from another world.

But though we cannot actually separate the *ill influence* any vice has upon the *society* we live in, from its being a *transgression of some divine law*; yet in our minds we may make this separation, and consider every vice as a mixed action, as a transgression of the *laws of man*, and of the *laws of God*. In the *first* capacity only, it is subject to *human-judicatures*; in the *second*, it is cognizable only before the *tribunal of heaven*. As it is a

*matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, i. e.* as it is an injury to any private person, or a breach of the public peace, it is certainly the *magistrate's* duty to restrain and punish it. As it is a transgression of the rules of morality and virtue, of any of the laws of natural or revealed religion, it is equally certain that it belongs only to the *supreme law-giver*, even God himself, to exact an account of it.

For this reason, because vice and wickedness are punishable by the *civil magistrate* only upon a *civil* account, sins are differently estimated and indifferently punished by *human*, and by *divine* laws. *Human* laws make an estimate of sins from the damage they do to private persons, or to the publick good, and inflict the greatest punishment upon those sins which are most injurious in this respect. For there being no standing law of God, which has annexed any *civil* punishment to any sin, (if, perhaps, we may except murder) this is the only rule the *magistrate* has to direct him

~~in~~ punishing offenders. And therefore, if there be any sins wherein the *society* is not concerned, which it neither feels, nor is affected with, the *magistrate* has nothing to do to punish them. And even those sins, which in their own nature, are prejudicial to

mens *civil interests*, if they could be so circumstantiated, as to do no prejudice to any, nor to have any ill influence upon the welfare of society; they could not, in those instances, be the proper subject of *civil punishments*. Nothing is so, but what does some way or other injure a private person, or the public weal. Consequently, secret intentions and designs of wickedness, if they never break out into act; treasonable thoughts, rebellious wishes, and seditious purposes, can never be liable to civil punishments. Nothing but *overt acts*, whereby the *society*, or any member of it, actually suffers, or is brought into danger of suffering, can lawfully be punished by the *civil magistrate*.

But with regard to the *laws of God*, the case is far otherwise. *He* takes an estimate of our sins by other measures, from those degrees of light and knowledge against which the offence was committed, and often punishes those sins most, which are least, or not at all, censured by the *civil powers*. Thus *anger* and *revenge*, with *him* is *murther*, and *lustful thoughts and desires*, *adultery*; and the determined will and intention of committing any sin, with *him*, amounts to the sin itself, though through fear, or shame, or want of opportunity, it was never actually committed. And those

those sins which the *civil magistrate* does not punish, because they do not prejudice men's *civil interests*, do yet render men highly guilty before God, and will be severely accounted for: such as covetousness, pride and vain boasting; sensuality and voluptuousness; murmuring and discontent; furliness and ill nature; disrespect to superiors, and ingratitude to benefactors; envy and malice; calumny and detraction; fraud and circumvention; I say, these, and numberless other instances, which human laws can take no hold of, can neither punish the sinner, nor prevent the sin, are expressly condemned by the laws of God, and have severe penalties annexed to them. And other *actions* there are, which though justly punishable by the *civil powers*, are in their own nature guiltless, and do not displease God, but by being transgressions of that general law, of paying all due obedience to *those whom he has set over us*.

To which we may farther add, that criminals may satisfy the law, and so stand clear before human judicatures, and yet remain as guilty before God as ever; and on the contrary, they may have made their peace with God, and procured his pardon, and yet be equally guilty in the eye of the law, and equally liable to civil punishment.

From all which, it is abundantly evident, that the end and design of *civil government*, is wholly taken up with the care of men's *civil rights*, and consequently, that the office of the *civil magistrate*, is confined to this *one thing*, and that religious matters, *as such*, lie out of the verge of his power. But if this wants any further light, it will receive it from what comes next under our consideration, and that is,

## II. *The end and design of religion.*

Though *religion* is a great friend to *civil government*, and the practice of the duties which *that* enjoins, tends very much to our present happiness, and makes this world a much more easy place than it would be without it; yet all this is but *remotely* the effect of *religion*, and makes no part of *its main and principal design*.

*Religion*, in a true and proper sense, and as the *word* itself imports, is an obligation upon us to *God*, and was designed to recommend us to *God*, and secure an interest in *his* favour, by performing acceptable service to *him*, and doing those things which are well pleasing in *his* sight.

And

And therefore, though men formed themselves into *societies* for *civil* reasons, such as have been already mentioned, they did not do it upon any *religious* account; because *religion*, as it relates to *God*, is transacted between *a man's self* and *God*, and is what nobody else is concerned in. So that it is neither necessary in itself, nor essential to *true religion*, that great numbers of men should meet together, and be incorporated into *societies*, for the better discovery, or the more due exercise of it\*.

Hence it is, that they who lived before the *institution* of *civil government* or the *foundation* of *commonwealths*, were as famous for their *piety* and *religion*, as any who have been since. They who lived in the first ages of the world, when the earth was but thinly inhabited, were not therefore destitute of *true religion*, but performed it in a manner that was acceptable to *God*: and so may any single person, or any small number of men, who happen to live in a desert place. They are not to be looked upon as having no *religion*, because they do not live in *towns* and *cities*, because they cannot make up a great assem-

\* See Puffendorf of the relation between church and state. Sect. 3, 5, 6.

bly, and are not formed into a *civil state*. For *religion*, as I before said, is transacted between *God*, and a *man's self*, and equally obliges us at all times, and in all places, in solitude as well as society, under whatever *government* we live, or whether we live under *any* at all. And that which makes *religious worship* most acceptable to *God*, is open to *his* view alone, as *he* is a *discerner* of the *heart*; and that is *sincerity* and *integrity*, the *worship* that is in *spirit*, and in *truth*. This *religion* took place before *societies* were erected, and is of an *older date* than any *civil establishments*, as well as of a *different origin*. It commenced the moment we were created: it is contemporary with human nature, and began with the race of man, though it came not from the will and invention of man; but is grounded upon the will and law of *God*, who sees men in the dark, has in his hands rewards, and punishments, and power enough to call to account the proudest offender. Whereas *commonwealths* were founded, and *government* instituted long after, by the will and invention of man, and for quite other reasons, and different ends.

In this *state of nature*, I mean before the institution of *civil government*, *religion*, as it related to *God* alone, had no other hold upon

men, but from the fear and reverence of *God*, and was a perfect stranger to all human power, and outward force; and every one embraced *that religion*, which either his own *reason* dictated, or *revelation* discovered to him, and had a right of ordering for himself the external circumstances of *religious worship*. In all these things, every one was left to his own liberty, and was accountable to none but *God*. In this state, no man whatever could require me to conform to *his* judgment in *religious* matters, nor could I require him to conform to *mine*. But if any man out of charity to my soul, and because he believed himself to be in the right, had a mind to bring me over to his opinion, he must convince me by proper arguments, that he was in the right, and I in the wrong; but must use no outward *force* or *compulsion* of any kind; and that for this plain and short reason, amongst others, because the care of every man's own soul which is the whole concern of *religion*, belongs to himself alone, and is to be left to himself; and to use any *force* or *violence* here, is not only unjust, but, as shall be shewn, wholly useless and insignificant.

This was the case of *religion* in a *state of nature*. Let us next see, whether any alteration was made in this case by the *institution of civil government*.

Now since those wrongs and injuries which men daily received from one another, and which first moved them to enter into *societies*, did not affect their *religion*, but their lives and liberties, and goods ; it follows, that when they waved their natural freedom, and combined together, they did not at all submit themselves in *religious matters* to the will of the *civil magistrate*, as they submitted their persons and properties to be disposed of by *him*, for the obtaining the end of *society*, the mutual defence and preservation of one another. Men might, and did still retain their natural freedom in *religious matters*, very consistently with all the ends of *civil government*, which oblige them to give up their natural right in other things. For there is this remarkable and essential difference between mens *civil* or *temporal*, and their *religious* or *spiritual* rights, that the *former* are *alienable*, and may, by their own consent, be restrained, or remitted in some cases, for the better security of them in others : but the *latter*, their *religious* or *spiritual* rights are their *unalienable* property, in which they cannot be restrained, and which they cannot give up in any case, or upon any account whatever. Men cannot abandon the care of their souls, as they may that of their bodies and estates, and  
blindly

blindly leave it to the magistrate to prescribe what faith or worship they shall embrace. For besides that the care of every man's soul belongs to himself, because *every one of us must give an account of himself to God*, Rom. xiv. 12. And the nature of religion is such, as makes it a strict personal duty incumbent upon every man; and whatever of this kind is done, must be done by ourselves: I say, besides this, we cannot, if we would, conform our faith to the dictates of another, and believe just as he believes, and because he believes so; nor can it ever possibly be lawful, upon any account, to comply with, or agree to any thing in religion, that is contrary to our judgment, and the inward persuasion of our minds; to profess for truth, what we believe to be a wrong faith, or false doctrine; and to worship God after any other manner than that which *we* conceive to be most agreeable to the divine will. In these matters, we can neither give, nor can another usurp any authority over our consciences; nor can we submit them to any other ruler, but God, and our own reason. And therefore the *magistrate* ought not to insist upon terms of *purely a religious* nature, with those who are under his *government*, or exercise his power and authority over them in this respect.

This will quickly appear, by taking a view of the chief and principal parts of *religion*.

To begin then with *morality* and *virtue*, which though unhappily distinguished from *religion*, are the chief and main things wherein it consists. These are founded in the eternal and immutable nature and reason of things, whereby some things are evidently fit, and others as evidently unfit to be done, whatever the consequence of them be here. This being plainly the nature of things, and there being this essential difference between them, we justly conclude it to be the *will of God*, who made us what we are, and puts this difference between some things and others, that we should observe this difference in our actions. And herein we are to be directed by our own reason, or conscience; which is nothing else but the opinion or judgment of our mind concerning the moral pravity or rectitude of our own actions, for the conduct of which we are accountable to *God* alone.

If then I be satisfied in my own mind of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of any action; and do, or forbear it upon that persuasion; the civil magistrate has no right to lay any restraint upon me in this case, because he  
judges

judges me to be in the wrong; for one man's conscience is no rule to another, and therefore \* *one man's liberty should not be judged of by another man's conscience*; but in all such cases as these, every one must *judge for himself*, and take care to be fully *persuaded* in his own mind, and not to † *condemn himself in that thing which he alloweth*.

But what if any one upon pretence of *conscience*, and to shew his liberty, should commit any *matter of wrong or wicked lewdness*, invade any one's *property*, or disturb the *public peace*? Why then, I say, no pretence of *religion* or *conscience* can skreen him from the *civil powers*. He ought to be restrained and punished. But then he does not suffer upon a *religious*, but upon a *civil* account; he suffers as a ‡ *murderer*, or as a *thief*, or as an *evil doer*, or as a *busy-body in other men's matters*.

If we place *religion* in the *belief* of any set of *doctrines* or in the practice of any particular forms or modes of *divine worship*: here too, every man must judge, and chuse for himself, must *believe* those *doctrines* which he thinks to be true, and *worship* God in such a manner, as he is persuaded is most acceptable to *him*. The *magistrate* has nothing to

\* 1 Cor. x. 29. † Rom. xiv. 22. ‡ 1 Pet. iv. 15.

do to interpose in this case, to apply *force of any kind*, to bring them over to any particular persuasion. This is plainly foreign to his office, and stepping beyond the bounds of his duty. The peace and quiet, and good order of the *society*, are the *only* points which he is to take care of; and since these are as consistent with mens holding *different* opinions in *religion*, as they are with their being of *different* sentiments in *other matters*; the *magistrate* is no more concerned to intermeddle in *religious disputes*, than he is in *those of philosophy, law, or physic*.

Indeed, if men hold any opinions in *religion*, which are destructive of the peace and quiet of the world, and undermine the *government*, and act in pursuance of these opinions, their actions then are of a civil, and not of a religious nature; and they render themselves obnoxious to the *civil powers*, and justly deserve to be punished. Or if men manage their *religious* disputes with such heat and eagerness, and carry their differences so high as to fall foul upon, and offer violence to one another, it is the *magistrate's* duty to interpose, to defend, and avenge him that suffers wrong, and to punish him that did it. And therefore *Gallio* was certainly to blame in taking no notice of that insult, which the  
Greeks

Greeks committed upon *Sosthenes*, the chief ruler of the synagogue, by beating him in open court, v. 17. This is what he ought to have prevented or punished, both as an affront to himself, and an injury to one of his subjects. But in this case, the *magistrate* does not make himself a *judge of controversies in religion*, nor use his power and authority to decide them; but he acts in his own proper character, as a *guardian* of the public peace of the *society*, and of the *civil interests* of his subjects; both which are invaded in the present case.

And therefore, where men demean themselves quietly and peaceably, and their *different faith and practice* have no such effect, and concern only *God* and their own *souls*, the *magistrate* is no *judge of such matters*; and whatever their errors be, must use no outward *force* or *violence* to compel them, but leave them to the just judgment of *God*, as to their own proper *master*, to whom they are to *stand or fall*.

For the *magistrate* to interpose, and make himself a *judge* and a *revenger* in affairs which are *purely* of a *religious* nature, is to transgress the bounds of his duty, and to invade the prerogative

prerogative of *God*; it is (to borrow the words of an incomparable \* author) *to judge and misuse the servants of another master, who are not at all accountable to him.* For nothing can be more clear or certain, than that as *religion* has *God only* for its *author*, so it is properly *his* care and concern only. The laws of religion are the laws of *God only*, and *he* himself has appointed rewards and punishments for the observers and transgressors of them. *He* has taken this whole matter upon himself, and reserved it to himself, and has nowhere authorized any man, or any number of men upon earth, to be his deputies, or vicegerents in this behalf. So that it is highly wicked and unjust in any man, to usurp any authority over others in cases of a *religious nature*, in matters of *faith* and *conscience*. For here *God* himself has laid down the rule of our actions, and not left it to others to prescribe to us. He himself has set before us our duty, and has told us, that he will judge of the performance: and for any man, after this, to pretend to any power over us here, is to forestall the judgment of *God*, and to take *God's* cause out of his own hands.

\* Mr. Locke's letter of toleration, p. 238. Vol. II. Ed.

But such attempts as these are not only wicked and unjust, but very foolish and fruitless, as will appear, if we consider, that the nature and the virtue too of all *religion*, consists in a free and willing choice, in the consent and approbation of our minds, in the sincerity and integrity of our hearts, in our being fully persuaded of the truth of what we believe, and of the goodness of what we practise. Whatever we do in *religion*, we *must do it heartily, as unto the Lord*, in obedience to *his* commands, and compliance with *his* will, and because we believe it will recommend us to *his* favour. Whatsoever is not done with this assurance of faith, is neither well in itself, nor can it be acceptable to *God*.

But of what use can human laws, enforced by civil penalties, be in all this? They may make me do things which are in my power, and depend upon my will: but to believe this, or that, to be true, is not in my power, nor depends upon my will, but upon the light, and evidence, and information which I have. And will civil discouragements and incapacities, fines and confiscations, stripes and imprisonment, enlighten the understanding, convince mens. minds of error, and inform them of the truth?

Can they have any such efficacy, as to make men change the inward judgment they have framed of things? Nothing can do this, but reason and argument. This is what our minds and understandings will naturally yield to; but they cannot be compelled to believe any thing by outward force. So that the promoting of true religion is plainly out of the *magistrate's* reach, as well as beside his *office*: and though temporal rewards and punishments are very proper *means* to produce an actual external compliance with *human laws*, which is sufficient to answer the end of their institution; yet these are very improper motives to be applied to the *laws of God and religion*, because they cannot produce that inward obedience in sincerity of *heart* and *conscience* which these laws require, nor that thorough persuasion of the *truth* of what we believe, and of the *goodness* of what we practise, without which no outward compliance with the *divine laws*, nor any thing which we do in *religion* is of any account.

And therefore, if the *magistrate* interposes here, and either chuses a *religion* for me, or enforces *that* which I have chosen, with temporal rewards and punishments; he destroys *my religion*, and spoils the virtue of what-

ever I do under that name. If he imposes upon me, and forces me to profess, (for he cannot make me believe) a religion, which I do not think to be true; he makes me a *hypocrite* and a *dissembler*, and exposes me to the reproaches of my own heart, and the just vengeance of *God*: which is highly absurd and unreasonable, considering that the end of all *religion* is to secure the favour of *God*, and the peace of our own consciences. If he forces me to profess and practise what is *true religion*, and what I myself believe to be so, he at the same time destroys the virtue of this *religion*, and deprives me of my reward in heaven. For whatever I do in *religion* out of force and constraint, upon worldly motives and considerations, out of fear of the *civil powers*, or the like, is no *religion* at all, nor is there any virtue in any actions which are performed upon such principles as these. For *religion* must be built upon our regard to *God*; and whatever regard we pay to men in the performance of religious duties, takes off so much at least from our regard to *God*, and so far diminishes the virtue of what we do. So far as temporal motives and temptations prevail with us, and are the springs and causes of our professing or practising religion; so far most certainly we are not influenced by the love of *God*, and fear of offending him, which

which is the only foundation of all true religion, which consists in *internal sincerity*, in the obedience of the *heart and conscience*, and in *worshipping God in spirit and in truth*. And for this reason, no doubt, God thought fit to annex no other penalties to the transgression of his laws, but the spiritual and invisible terrors of a future state; and no other rewards to the observance of them, but the joys and happiness of *the world to come*; because present and temporal rewards and punishments, the *countenance* or terrors of men, have no tendency to promote those things wherein true religion consists, can neither *convince* the *understanding*, nor rule the *heart*, nor lead men to the truth with *sincerity*; but are much more likely to have the direct contrary effect: and if they were applied to religion, might make men outwardly comply with it, merely for the present temporal benefit they received from it; but could never make them sincere in the belief or practice of it. And what our saviour said to the people who sought for him, *John vi. 26.* might fitly be applied to such converts and disciples as these, *verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

But further; as *religion* consists in such a belief and practice, as we, in our consciences are persuaded to be best, and most acceptable to *God*, as it lies in the sincerity and integrity of the heart, as it is *truth in the inward parts*; so it can be subject only to the judgment of the *great God*, whose prerogative it is, to be a *searcher of the heart*, and a *tryer of the reins*; who sees the secret springs of our actions, and knows our thoughts and intentions afar off. Upon which account, no man upon earth can be a *judge* in religious matters, nor take upon him the cognizance of this cause. He knows not the thoughts of our heart, cannot tell upon what principle we acted, or whether we were sincere in our *religion* or no; and therefore if he should undertake to dispense rewards and punishments; he, through passion, weakness, and frailty, might easily err, and instead of executing righteous judgment, might confound right and wrong, by punishing the innocent, and rewarding the guilty. The apostle's advice therefore is very seasonable in the present case: \* *Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the*

\* 1 Cor. iv. 5.

*counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

By this time, I hope, it appears that *Galileo* acted a wise and conscientious part in this affair, and that if he had proceeded to the hearing and determination of the cause which the *Jews* here brought before him; he had done what he could not justify by virtue of his office, and had given himself much trouble, without doing any good to himself or others, but possibly much hurt to both.

For most certain it is, that the duty of the *magistrate* is confined to the care of the *civil and temporal good* of his people, and does not extend to their *spiritual and eternal affairs*. And as long as men behave themselves quietly and peaceably in the *government* under which they live, as long as they do no wrong or injustice to their neighbour, nor prejudice any one in their *civil rights*, they may and ought to be left to themselves in the choice of their *religion*, and be allowed to worship *God* in that manner, and after that way, which they think best and most acceptable to *him*. This is their natural right, and there can be no greater instance of injustice and oppression, than any ways to abridge it, or deprive them of it.

So that *toleration*, or *absolute liberty* in matters of *religion* and *conscience*, however it has been vilified, and exclaimed against, is as much every man's just right, as any other thing which can be mentioned: and *persecution*, however meritorious blind zeal and bigotry have made it, is as flagrant an instance of cruelty and oppression, as any of those things which are often practised in consequence of it, *plunder* and *devastations*, *fines*, *imprisonment* and *murther*.

The *magistrate* ought to be so far from thus persecuting any of his subjects, upon account of their differing from him in *religion*, that it is a principal duty incumbent on him to take care that different sects and parties do not persecute, or treat one another ill upon this account. His business is to protect people of all opinions and persuasions, not inconsistent with the ends of government, from being insulted by those from whom they differ, or suffering any thing on the score of such difference. It is nothing to him, what false and erroneous opinions men hold, what ridiculous and absurd doctrines they profess, or, in a word, what they believe, or disbelieve in *religion*, so long as hereby they do no prejudice to their neighbour, nor make any alteration

ration in men's *civil rights*, nor disturb the public peace and quiet. For the end and design of *civil government*, was not to provide for the truth of men's opinions, but for the safety and security of their goods and persons.

But here it may be objected, is the *magistrate* to shew no zeal or concern for the honour of *God*, and the authority of *his laws*? Is he to be altogether indifferent what *religion* his subjects are of, or whether they be of any *religion* at all? Is he not to exert his power in favour of the *true religion*, and to see that the rules thereof be duly observed and practised?

To this I answer, that since *God*, who is most certainly the properest judge in this case, and best knows what are the fittest *means* to be made use of for these *ends*; has not thought fit to enforce his *laws* with any *other sanctions*, but the rewards and punishments of a future and invisible state, nor to promote his honour and true religion by any other motives but *these*: what authority has any *man* to make any alteration in what *God* has established, and to enforce his laws with any other *sanctions* than what *he himself* has appointed? *God* has given no *man* this authority; and

and men cannot give it one another. And therefore for any one to assume it, is not only encroaching upon *God's prerogative*, and invading *men's religious rights*, but it is calling in question the *divine wisdom*, as if God who made man, and gave him these laws, knew not what *sanctions* were most proper to secure man's obedience to them, and what motives and arguments were most likely to prevail with him, to be truly good and virtuous.

And as to *true religion*, and a *right belief*, every man is *orthodox* to himself, and thinks his own *religion* to be true; and therefore if this be any argument, why the *magistrate* should use force in promoting his own *religion*, it will plead as strongly for *false religions*, as for the *true one*: it will hold as well for *papery* in *popish countries*, for *Mahometanism* at *Constantinople*, as for *protestantism* in *Great Britain*. But is not the honour of God to be consulted? And are not vice, and immorality, and prophaneness to be restrained and punished? Most certainly they ought; but upon a *civil* account, and because they are prejudicial to mens *civil interests*. As for *God's honour*, he himself is the best guardian of it, and will most certainly take care of it in his own time and way; for he is a *jealous God*. But then I add, that for men to be

restrained from these vices by the power and authority of the *civil magistrate*, and out of fear of his *sword*, is no honour to *God*, whatever it may be to *Cæsar*: it is *obeying men rather than God*, and shews that we are more afraid of men than of God. It is indeed for the interest and honour of the *civil government*, that all vice, immorality, and prophane-ness should be suppressed, because they are prejudicial to it, and the contrary virtues tend to the good and welfare of society; and so far the *magistrate* ought to interpose. And because all manner of wickedness, even in those instances, where it does not directly injure any private person, nor disturb the public peace, has an ill influence upon *society*, tends to make men bad subjects, and worse neighbours, and indisposes them for the due discharge of the relative duties of life; it were much to be wished, that *human laws* could be so contrived, as to take in a *greater compass* here, if that could be done without any *public inconvenience*. For the *wise man's* observation is founded in the nature of the thing, as well as in the decree of almighty God, that *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*, Prov. xiv. 34. As the virtue of a nation increaseth or diminisheth, so does its strength at home, and credit abroad.

And further: as they who fear and honour God most, are likely to make good subjects, and do discharge their duty best, while they do it, *not only for wrath, but for conscience sake*, Rom. xiii. 5. So most certainly, upon this account also, it is incumbent upon the civil magistrate, and one great end of his office, to maintain and support the *fear and honour of God*, by *punishing those who do evil, and praising them that do well*, 1 Pet. ii. 14.

But then it is plain, that these considerations are of a *political*, and not merely of a *religious* nature: for the *honour of God*, considered abstractedly from the good of *civil society*, and as it concerns himself only, cannot be thus promoted; and is, what he has infinite ways of maintaining and taking care of, without being beholden to the *secular arm*.

To conclude: since *religion* and *civil government* are, in their original, end, business, and in every thing else belonging to them, thus perfectly distinct, and entirely different from each other; it would put an end to many controversies, and make very much for the peace and quiet both of church and state, if men would observe this distinction, and each party would keep within their respective bounds.

This would hinder them from clashing and interfering with one another, and would prevent those heats and animosities, those acts of violence and rapine, cruelty and oppression, that have abounded in the christian world upon account of religion.

Let the ministers of the gospel keep, or be kept, to their duty. Let them *preach the gospel of peace*, and not *sound the trumpet of war*. Let them mind their own business, which is the *salvation of men's souls*, by teaching and persuading them, both by their doctrine and example, both publicly and privately, to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world*: and let them not stretch themselves beyond their *line*, by meddling with the *affairs of state*, and making themselves more ministers of the *government*, than ministers of the *gospel of Christ*.

And let the *magistrate* too confine himself to his own proper business, and attend to the *worldly welfare* of the *commonwealth*, and instead of exercising his power in binding other men's consciences by human laws, let him take care to conform his own conscience to the *laws of God*, and direct all his counsels and endeavours to promote universally the *civil welfare*

welfare of all his subjects. \* And let him not think that he bears the sword in vain, unless he employs it in the cause of *God* and *religion*. It was not put into his hands for this use, nor can it be applied to this purpose with any good effect. It was given him for quite other ends, and he will find work enough for it in deciding *civil* controversies, without meddling with those of a *religious* nature; † *in executing judgment and justice between one man and another; in breaking the jaws of the wicked, and plucking the spoil out of his teeth; in checking and controuling the arrogant and ungovernable, in preventing or punishing all fraud and injustice, violence and oppression, and in suppressing faction and tumult, sedition and rebellion.* I say, these and such like particulars will afford the *magistrate* sufficient exercise for his *sword*, without turning the edge of it against *false doctrine, heresy, and schism*.

And if civil magistrates, and ministers of the gospel, would thus contain themselves within their own bounds, there would be the most exact harmony and agreement between them; and we might hope to see the prophet's prediction fulfilled, concerning the happy state of

\* *Letter concerning toleration, toward the end.*

† *Job xxix. 17.*

*the church or kingdom of Christ; \* when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. When the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. When the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. When they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain. † Then would mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace would kiss each other. Which God of his infinite mercy grant, &c.*

\* Isa. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9. † Psal. lxxxv. 10.

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W H E R E I N

Is clearly demonstrated, that such a Doctrine  
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ciful and All-wise Being; and therefore not  
from God, &c.

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By a Member of the Church of CHRIST.

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*The soul that sinneth it shall die; the son shall not bear the  
iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity  
of the son, Isa. xviii. 20.*

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First printed in the Year 1733.

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

*I*T is the custom of most persons, when they profess to prove the principles or practice of others erroneous, to use more words in exclaiming against them, than would express the whole of what they have advanced, which might be called reason or argument: but as I have always judged it better for such persons to learn how their own passions may be governed, than to attempt the correction of others mistakes, while they write with a temper quite reverse to the charity and meekness of a true follower of Christ; I have therefore, in the following enquiry, used no more, nor no other words, than what were necessary to give the reader a clear view of the arguments there used, and the matter enquired after; my design being to lead others into a true notion of their own opinions, and thereby, in a friendly manner, to convince them of their mistakes, and not to cast any uncharitable reflections upon them; and to this end, I desire every one to read the following lines with sincerity and calmness of spirit, to consider that God views their hearts, and discerns their secret thoughts; and that

he will punish them in a future state, who are careless of truth, or act not according to the persuasion of their own minds, but are biassed with fashionable opinions, and aim more at wealth and grandeur, than at truth and the real knowledge of the doctrine of Jesus Christ; and when they have thus read it, to let their own conscience be judge, whether my arguments are too weak, or whether they have not sufficient strength to prove what I advance, and to demonstrate my assertions. For tho' nothing can seem more clear to my understanding than the truth of the following conclusions, yet I would have no man believe them without examination, or be convinced of their truth, otherwise than by reason or scripture. Far be it from me, even to wish any one to turn unto mine opinion, from any other motives but only as scripture and reason move him.

The reader is desired to take notice, that this enquiry was written originally in a private letter to a member of the church of England, and is now published with some additions, for the perusal of persons in general.

A N

## E N Q U I R Y.

**A**S I am persuaded your design toward me was good, when you began verbally to attack me for differing from you in opinion concerning the baptizing of infants, I think myself under an obligation to have the same good will toward you; and as mine own opinion could never appear more unreasonable in your judgment, than yours does in mine, I think it is my duty to be free with you likewise, and to give you my thoughts concerning your opinion: whereby you may perceive, that infant baptism hath not so good a foundation as you imagined, before you knew the arguments that may be brought against it.

By what conversation we have already had upon this point, I am persuaded you find that I have many more and much stronger arguments to urge against the practice of pædo-baptism, than ever you expected; and I make no doubt but when you read the following arguments (if you are calm and rightly under-

stand them) you will perceive yourself mistaken, and confess that the practice of infant baptism is contrary to the very first principles of things, as well as not taught by Christ or his apostles, in any plain passage of scripture.

But as I delight not in many words, I shall now proceed; and to prevent any misunderstanding, shall begin with the following definitions.

#### DEFINITION I.

That being whom we call God, is of himself perfect, and could not be made better by any alteration.

#### DEFINIT. II.

Cruelty is either the afflicting of an innocent person, or the punishing of an offender with more pain than his crimes deserve, without designing either of them a reward for the same. But,

#### DEFINIT. III.

Mercy is the omitting to punish a guilty person according to the full desert of his crimes. And,

#### DEFINIT. IV.

Justice is the rendering to a person whatsoever is his proper due. But,

## DEFINITION. V.

Injustice is the withholding some good from a person, which he has a right to enjoy; or the causing of him to feel some pain, which was not due unto him.

But these definitions being sufficient (I think) in the present enquiry, and because I would express every thing in as short and clear a manner as possible, I will now lay down some plain propositions.

## PROPOSITION I.

God is supreme over all beings, and governs them according to his own will; agreeable to the words of *Isaiab*, personating God, *I have made the earth, and ——— stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded. — For I am God, and there is none else.* Isa. xlv. 12, 22.

## PROP. II.

God is merciful, and not cruel to those whom he thus governs: or, as *David* expresseth it, *the Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Psa. cxlv. 9.

## P R O P. III.

He is also a God of truth, and doth not deceive his creatures: Deut. xxxii. 4. *Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? For God is not a man that he should lye.* Numb. xxiii. 19.

## P R O P. IV.

He is likewise just and righteous, and no injustice is to be found in him: *For all his ways are judgment, a God without iniquity, just and right is he.* Deut. xxxii. 4.

## P R O P. V.

He is the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, and nothing is, or can be hid from him: *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! — For of him — are all things; to whom be glory for ever.* Amen. Rom. xi. 33, 36.

## P R O P. VI.

The things which are contained in those books called by us the scripture, proceeded originally from God, and contain so many undoubted truths; as saith the apostle, *God who — spake in time past by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son.* Heb. i. 1, 2.

The assertions contained in the preceding propositions, being such as are believed by almost every protestant christian, I think it is needless to use any arguments to prove them; and therefore I proceed.

## P R O P. VII.

Whatsoever appears clearly unto us, by plain reason, as truth, is certainly so. The truth of this proposition I am persuaded you will not call in question; because thereby you would also question the truth of the holy scriptures: for we have no other way to prove the truth of them but by reason; and therefore, if reason cannot be depended upon, we cannot depend upon the scripture.

And that we are capable of discovering truth by reason, is plain from Christ's own words; ——— *And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right.* Luke xii. 57.

From these two last propositions it necessarily follows,

First, That the true meaning of any part of the scripture, is not, nor can be, contrary to any proposition which may be proved by plain and clear reason. And,

Secondly,

Secondly, That all interpretations of scripture, which have been or may be made by men, and which are contrary to reason, are false.

## P R O P. VIII.

All consequences necessarily flowing, or which are truly drawn, from any true proposition, are true. And,

## P R O P. IX.

All such consequences as do necessarily follow upon the allowing any false proposition to be true, are false.

From hence it necessarily follows,

First, That if any consequence truly drawn be itself true, that proposition from whence it was drawn, is also true. And,

Secondly, That if any consequences necessarily flowing from any proposition be false, that proposition from whence it proceeded is also false.

It is needless (I think) to use any arguments in proof of the two last propositions, or of what I have inferred from them; it being clear to the meanest capacity, that knows what

what reason is, that if these assertions were false, there could be no such thing as reasoning. I therefore proceed.

P R O P. X.

An all-wise and merciful being cannot act, or order any matter in an unwise or cruel manner; for thereby such a being would itself become unwise or cruel: and therefore as it is morally impossible for God, who is of himself omniscient and merciful, to change his nature, and become unwise and cruel; it therefore follows, that it is morally impossible for God to act or order any matter in an unwise or cruel manner.

P R O P. XI.

The actions of parents cannot make their infants any more out of favour with God than before, or procure to them any torment in the world to come. For it is evident, that infants are no ways concerned in their parents actions; they can neither assist or prevent them: and as they are no ways concerned in the operation of such actions, they cannot in any respect become guilty by them; for to say, that they become guilty by them, is the same as to say, that some infants are guilty of very wicked actions, which they were never able to commit; than which nothing can be more absurd. But,  
if

if parents commit the vilest and worst of actions, yet as their infants are not therein concerned, they are innocent (for it is self-evident, that all persons are innocent of all actions in which they have no ways been concerned;) and to say that God doth cast infants out of his favour, or will torment them in the world to come, because of their parents actions, is the same as to say, that God doth cast persons, while they remain innocent, out of his favour, or that he will punish them in the world to come; which would make God act, either unjustly, cruelly, or without true wisdom. But will God cast infants out of his favour through their parents actions? God forbid; *yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.*

But having laid down these (which I judge are undeniable) propositions, I shall proceed to the following

#### E N Q U I R Y.

Whether it is possible for infants by baptism to be made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven?

And first I shall suppose it possible, and observe what consequences will arise from such a supposition.

C O N S E Q U E N C E I.

If infants are by baptism made inheritors (or have thereby a right given them to an inheritance) in the kingdom of heaven, then it follows, that before baptism they had no such right, neither were inheritors of that kingdom. This is plain and perspicuous at first view, and also that

C O N S E Q. II.

God has then given men power to make infants inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. And that

C O N S E Q. III.

Those many infants which die unbaptized, die without having a right to inherit in the kingdom of heaven; and that only because men are ignorant and careless, and do not baptize them.

C O N S E Q. IV.

It also follows, that all men have power to prevent all infants dying in infancy, from a proper right to heaven. And,

C O N S E Q. V.

That those persons who are so wicked as to kill unbaptized infants, do thereby not only pre-

prevent their living in this world, but do also hinder them from having a right to an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, and as it were, kill them in the world to come.

## C O N S E Q. VI.

And if the preceding supposition be true, it is true also, that though a man who is appointed to baptize infants, be never so wicked, and guilty of the most enormous crimes, yet, if he be able to administer baptism to them, he can give them a true and proper title to an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, though he himself has right to no such inheritance, but perhaps entirely out of the favour of God. But,

## C O N S E Q. VII.

Yet the death of Christ, and whatsoever he has done for mankind, is not sufficient to give so much as one infant a proper title to an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, without some help from men.

## C O N S E Q. VIII.

I may also add, that according to this supposition, God hath left infants in a very dubious and uncertain condition, to be prevented from, or have permittance to go into, the kingdom

dom of heaven, according to the fickle humour of frail and oft uncareful men.

Thus you see, what unreasonable assertions you are obliged to believe, so long as you entertain the doctrine of infant baptism, and are persuaded, that infants by it have right given them to inherit the kingdom of heaven. You must believe and confess, that God has left such infants, as are to die before they arrive at the knowledge of good and evil, in a very ambiguous state, and has given men great power over them, either to prevent them from inheriting in the kingdom of heaven, or of giving them a proper title to such an inheritance: that the death of Christ is an imperfect sacrifice, and cannot give so much as one such infant a right to an heavenly inheritance, without some help from men: that such infants as have right to inherit in heaven, obtained it, however, partly by the actions of men, whatsoever good the death of Christ might do them: that some men, who have no right to inherit heaven themselves, can yet give such infants a true and proper right thereto: that many infants, some through their parents ignorance, and some through their negligence, cannot inherit heaven, though they are the creatures of God, and are as innocent, and as valuable of themselves, as any of those infants are

are

are that will inherit therein : and that men have not only power to kill unbaptized infants here on earth, but thereby to prevent them also from having hereafter a proper right or title to inherit in the kingdom of heaven.

How frightful soever these things may appear, when viewed in a clear light by an unbiassed mind, it is plain and evident, that they are no more than necessary consequences, which do clearly flow from the preceding supposition ; and therefore if you believe the supposition, you cannot deny the consequences : for if you disown so much as one consequence, you deny the supposition, and all the other consequences : for by the foregoing eighth and ninth propositions, and from what is there observed from them, it appears, that the supposition and its consequences, are either all true or all false ; and therefore, if you give up one, you give up all : and that they are not all true, I think plainly appears by comparing them with the propositions before laid down.

For, if infants are by baptism intitled to an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, it will follow from our own experience, if we observe how many infants die unbaptized, as well as from what I have observed before, that infants are left in a very ambiguous state, and their  
title

title to heaven left, as it were, in a careless manner by the deity.

Now the giving to, or procuring for, the many thousands of infants, which die in infancy, an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, either is, or is not a matter of great concernment: to say it is not, is the same as to say, that the kingdom of heaven is of so little value to infants, that it matters but little whether they possess it or no; which I am persuaded you are far from thinking: and if it is a matter of any great concernment, the merciful and all-wise being has not, nor ever will entail the kingdom of heaven on such dying infants only as men have pleased to baptize. For that is the same in words, as to say, that God (who is perfect in wisdom) has left a matter of great concernment, no less than the giving or hindering of thousands of thousands of infants, to, or from an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, into the hands of men who are frail creatures; and many are ignorant of having this power, some uncareful, and the greatest part wicked, and out of the favour of God. And by the matter being left thus, many thousands of infants will never have a proper right to heaven, not because they are guilty of any evil, but by reason men are ignorant and careless, and do not

convey to them that right: which I think, upon a serious consideration, differs but little from affirming, that though God is perfect in wisdom, yet sometimes he acts, or orders things unwisely. And as it is impossible for an all-wise being to act or order any thing unwisely, without becoming thereby imperfect and unwise; it therefore follows, by a plain and clear demonstration, that God, who is perfect in wisdom, has not, nor ever will order things in such a manner, that infants dying in infancy, will have, or will not have, a right to inherit in the kingdom of heaven, according as they have, or have not, been baptized by men.

But if you object, that your opinion is not that infants are made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven by baptism, but that they will have only some privilege or greater degree of happiness in heaven, by virtue of their baptism: and if you assert this to be your opinion, I could draw much the same frightful consequences as the preceding, and bring it to the same absurdity as before.

For if baptized infants have right to more happiness in heaven than unbaptized infants have, then God has given into the hands of men, power to dispose of some part of the happiness of heaven, at least to infants; but it

is clear, and evident to every rational person, that giving men such power is leaving a matter of great importance in an ambiguous, and, as it were, careless manner; and as an all-wise being will never leave a matter of any great importance in a careless ambiguous manner, (for that would be acting or ordering a matter unwisely;) it therefore follows, that God, who is an all-wise being, will never increase the happiness of infants in heaven, because of baptism, or decrease their happiness therein, for want of it, or any ways vary their eternal happiness through the actions of men. I might say more of this opinion, and confute it in other views, but judge it needless.

However, I think it proper to insert one argument more, which sufficiently overthrows either of the preceeding opinions concerning infants being benefited in the kingdom of heaven, by baptism; which argument is as follows.

In the great day of judgment, when the all-wise and omnipotent God comes to pass sentence upon infants, who went out of this world in their infancy, before they could discern between moral good and evil; I say, when he comes to do this, either, he will distinguish  
between,

between, and put into different conditions, those which have, and those which have not been baptized, or he will not. If God makes no difference betwixt them, then baptizing of infants will in no way whatsoever increase their happiness in heaven, and therefore it is not proper to baptise them, except the same was plainly commanded by God: and if God will make a difference at the day of judgment between baptized infants and others, then it clearly follows, that God will pass different judgments upon creatures equally innocent, and that from other motives than their unequally suffering in this life, which is absurd to think, and daring to affirm. And what can deprive God of wisdom, more than asserting, that when he will judge the world, the neglect of men toward infants, who died in infancy, will be a prevailing motive with him to determine the eternal condition of such infants, and set bounds to his own attribute of mercy, and the meritorious sufferings of Jesus Christ? And yet this is what they do necessarily affirm, who assert, that infants dying without baptism, will on that account, be deprived (in the life to come) of even the least benefit whatsoever.

I do not in this enquiry pretend to limit the power of God, but all that I affirm, in short, is this, that God is a wise, just and merciful being

being; and as the doctrine which teacheth that the eternal happiness of infants dying in infancy hath any dependance upon their being baptized before death, is inconsistent with the foresaid attributes of God, that therefore God never did, nor ever will teach men such a doctrine: and in affirming of this, I affirm no more, than that God never acts, or orders any thing in a manner contrary to his own nature, or inconsistent with what is truly perfection. But before I conclude, I think it proper to take notice of that which some learned men have thought an argument sufficient of itself, to prove the lawfulness of infant-baptism, which argument they draw from the innocency of infants, and from the words of Christ which he spake concerning infants, related by *St. Mark*, in the 14th and 15th verses of his 10th chapter. They say, if infants are fit to be admitted into the kingdom of Christ in heaven, they are certainly qualified to be received as members of his church on earth. But I take this to be a very wrong way of arguing, and am persuaded you will think so too, when you have considered the following arguments. For,

First, such infants as are permitted to go into the kingdom of Christ in heaven, will enjoy the blessings which are therein enjoyed, which I think no christian will deny (for, if

when infants are in heaven, they do not enjoy the blessings thereof, what good will being there do them?) then according to the forefaid way of arguing, fuch infants as are capable of eating and drinking, ought to partake of the Lord's fupper; for I might fay, if infants are fit to partake of, and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of Chrift in heaven, they are certainly qualified to partake of, and enjoy whatfoever they are capable of enjoying in the church of Chrift on earth, and therefore of being partakers at the Lord's fupper.

From hence it appears, that this argument is of as much force to prove infants qualified for the Lord's fupper, as for baptifm; and therefore according to this way of arguing, if infants ought to be admitted to baptifm, they ought alfo to be admitted to the Lord's fupper. And,

Secondly, I would have you judge, whether, it is not more reasonable to fay, that becaufe infants are already fit to be admitted into the kingdom of Chrift in heaven, that there is, therefore, no manner of occafion to baptize them; than to fay, that becaufe infants are fit to be admitted into the kingdom of Chrift in heaven, that therefore they ought to be bap-

baptized in so solemn a manner, as the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, when it is not commanded, neither can it be of any advantage to them. But,

Thirdly, to argue for the baptizing of infants from their being fit to enter into the kingdom of Christ in heaven, is not an argument to prove that baptism ought to be administered to infants, but only an excuse for such a practice; for I think none will be so unreasonable as to pretend, that because infants are fit to be admitted into the kingdom of Christ in heaven, that therefore they ought, but only that they may be baptized. And here I might observe, that if those who baptize infants, excuse themselves by saying, that it is lawful to baptize and admit them into the church, because they are fit to be admitted into the kingdom of Christ in heaven, may not they who are against the baptizing of infants, say (and that with as much reason too) since infants are already fit to be admitted into the kingdom of Christ in heaven, baptism is unprofitable for them, and therefore we judge it proper to defer it until we know it may be profitable unto them? But further for every one to take upon him to prove that infants may be baptized, and at the same time not to prove that they ought, is to take upon him an useless task: for as baptism is per-

formed as an ordinance of Christ, and in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, it cannot be a matter of such indifferency, as that infants may or may not be baptized; but I think it is very obvious that they ought not, without it can be proved that Christ commanded, or that his apostles practised it. But,

Fourthly, If you observe the reasons given by the church of *England* in the book of common prayer, for the admitting infants to baptism, you will easily perceive, that those who plead for the baptizing of infants, because they are fit to be admitted into the kingdom of Christ in heaven, do strictly oppose the church of *England*, and argue in a manner inconsistent with her arguing, and in a way which (if it really proved that infants ought to be baptized) would entirely destroy the reasons given by the church of *England*, for her baptizing of them. I might add more concerning this argument (or rather excuse) but judge what I have already written sufficient, and therefore I shall now proceed to the

#### C O N C L U S I O N .

I now intreat you, as a friend, to weigh impartially the preceding arguments, and if you do, I am persuaded, you will confess, that infant-baptism is not so reasonable as you formerly

supposed, if you do not entirely change your opinion, and for the future oppose such a practice. You know I can have no advantage in writing on this matter to you, but only your good, but only a desire to convince you of error: for so long as I have liberty to worship God according to mine own conscience, it is much the same to me, whether others agree with, or differ from me in opinion or practice. But as I think myself greatly obliged to any person who endeavours to convey truth to my understanding, so I think it is my duty to be as serviceable as time and opportunity permit, in conveying truth to others. But to be short, I have clearly demonstrated in the preceding enquiry, that those who teach, that infants by virtue of their baptism, will enjoy any more happiness in the kingdom of heaven, than unbaptized infants; or that unbaptized infants, **merely because** they are unbaptized, will be deprived of the least degree of happiness in heaven: I say, I have proved to a demonstration, that this is a doctrine irreconcilable with perfect wisdom and goodness, and therefore contrary to the very attributes of God; and therefore God never did, nor ever will teach men such a doctrine. Which in mine opinion entirely overthrows the practice of infant baptism: for this proves that it will be of no benefit in the world to come, and we all know, that in this world it is no advantage to them; and

therefore it follows, that baptizing of infants doth them no manner of good whatsoever: and why then should men baptize them, especially since no man could ever yet prove that Christ commanded, or that his apostles practised it?

I would here ask those what they mean who call the baptizing of infants a charitable work, and speak against us as uncharitable, because we do not baptize them; and I would have such consider, which is of the most commendable opinion, they who believe baptism necessary to make innocent infants happy; they who believe unbaptised infants excluded from the merits of Jesus Christ, and thereby, as it were, confine the mercy of God toward infants to the actions of men: or we who believe, that as infants are all equally innocent, they are therefore all equally valuable in the sight of God; or we who believe that the merits of the death of Jesus Christ, are not extended towards infants by the actions of men, but by the mercy of God, whose mercy is as extensive toward all the offspring of *Adam* as is consistent with justice. I have also by several arguments overthrown the reason, or rather the excuse which some make for the baptizing of infants, drawn from their innocency, and from their being pronounced by Christ inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; and have observed that according to these

these mens own argument, baptism is of no benefit to infants, and therefore (as it is performed in the name of God and Jesus Christ) it ought not to be practised without a command from God the father, or his son Jesus Christ. Besides, what excuse can they make, who perform a thing in the name of God, and as if it were commanded by him, when he hath not commanded it? Will it not be said unto them, *who hath required this at your hand?* Moreover, it may deprive many of the benefit designed by God, to man, in the ordinance of baptism.

From, &c.

N O T E.

In the preceding lines, it is always taken for granted, that every thing concerning this world, will be so regulated in the life to come, as not to require any further regulation.

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O F

Consolation and Council

To the Good People of

E N G L A N D,

Especially of

London and Westminster,

Occasioned by the late

E A R T H Q U A K E S.

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By a L A Y M A N:

*i. e.* Mr. G O R D O N.

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## L E T T E R.

*Friends and Neighbours,*

**A**FTER two late convulsions of the earth, or the air, or of both, and after a third alarm from a late solemn address, perhaps spreading more terror than either, give me leave to offer you some comforting considerations.

One earthquake is not always followed by another, nor a second by a third, nor a third by one still more terrible; neither do their havoc in one country imply the same in any other country. Where one of them has swallowed a city, or pushed the sea over the continent, how many have been remembered only by being felt? Nobody is frightened at the sight much less at the sound of a shower; yet inundations caused by rains have ruined countries and communities, left more extensive desolation, and produced more frequent calamities, than earthquakes, at least here in *Britain*, and all over *Europe*.

Earthquakes too are produced from natural causes; fire and floods in the cavities of the earth, violent explosions or rarefactions there, such as no weight or bulk can resist, not a shell or globe of iron a thousand miles thick; and as the smallest spark will blow up a thousand powder mills, a small ferment in the earth, even in the center of the earth, will shake it to the surface.

We are not to seek for, or to suppose supernatural causes, where natural ones are obvious and certain: the latter will satisfy every reasonable mind, and supernatural causes are only sought and urged by visionaries, dealers in judgments, and by sharpers in theology, such as pretend to foretell wrath to come, and to avert it; nay, some of them have threatened to bring it.

These men of prophecy and foresight account for all awful and striking events, by intelligence from heaven, and are, or seem, confident, that the almighty will do whatever they think he ought to do, reserving to themselves a right to prevail with him to change, or suspend his measures; as if they could repeal his decrees, even such terrible decrees as they had foretold he would terribly

ribly execute, but for their interposition and charms.

They therefore hate, and pretend to despise, the tracing of any tremendous appearances from nature and reason; a course that would spoil their warnings and importance. No wonder that they treat the most learned and able inquirers into the powers of nature, *as little philosophers*; as men who would utterly spoil and disgrace the theory of judgments, and sink the solemn character of judgment-mongers.

These last have this advantage, that the judgments which they threaten, are not obliged to fall, nor even their most flattering prophecies to be accomplished; for if the people who are threatened, escape, their escape is derived from the warnings and prayers of their monitor, and from his credit and intercession above; and if their hopes from any of his kind predictions fail, the people have not repented enough, or sinned too much.

Many a noted prophet, chimerical and positive, and almost all pious impostors, have persevered in foretelling and mistaking all their lives, yet still passed for authentic prophets: — so safe it is to foretell what will never  
happen,

happen, provided the foreteller be clothed with proper solemnity and colours.

If there were no philosophers, great or little, then might grave augurs monopolize all interpretation, and derive every earthly, every moral event, from revelation (a rare acquisition!) nor would they then be obliged, nor indeed concerned, to offer facts or reasons, or circumstances, to prove the truth of their predictions, but would justify their omission, by charging infidelity upon all who blamed them for it, exposing them to the wrath of Men, by representing them to be under that of God.

Here is a warrant for power and controul without bounds or end. Whoever has the art or luck to gain the reputation of explaining judgments, or of applying judgments, may create judgments, and is thenceforth able to subdue and govern mankind without a sword, and to convince them without an argument. Whence comes the force of false miracles, but that they are asserted by men whom we believe, and are therefore received because they are asserted? What false miracle would stand a moment's examination? None would.

The same is true of false judgments, as all are but such as God himself declares to be true. And it is agreeable to his divine nature to declare them as often as he sends them. But who dare to examine, or even to doubt, after they are frightened or bewitched? Who would lose the merit of faith and devout submission, when faith is a divine gift, submission a divine duty; and when reason is no more than the common lot of human nature?

Judgments and miracles are the daily topics of the jesuits, and other popish emissaries, to cheat the *Indians* into popery; some of their great engines of conversion, are eclipses and comets, with whatever can frighten ignorance, and terrify dupes. Whoever can read, must have found what dreadful alarms have been raised in armies and communities by eclipses, and how improved by artful men, amongst weak and credulous men; nay, what dreadful doings have followed dreams, mistaken for visions and inspiration? Even astrologers have caused the death of princes, by pretending to foretel it. For then the prophecy warranted a conspiracy, and prompted the conspirators. He, therefore, who could hire a mercenary astrologer to predict the murder or deposition  
 8 of

of an emperor, had thence a call to commit it, and a chance to succeed him.

Besides, credulity, and even peevishness, are as quick in foreseeing judgments as anger, or ambition is in applying them. Such tempers wish for judgments, and are always extremely clear-sighted to perceive them.

A clown threatened a gentleman with a severe judgment for ordering a poaching dog to be shot, then set fire to his stable, and when it was burnt, declared that he had foreseen it. He was tried and condemned for the fact, but perceived another judgment overtaking the judge, who past sentence upon him: as the judge died of a fever before the sentence was executed, the incendiary comforted himself, "That he had again proved a true prophet, and that providence had visited his enemies."

To raise frightful apprehensions from imaginary dangers is at best officious zeal; to dress up natural and fortuitous events in dreadful colours, is worse. It is to be lamented that the meanest instruments, and the weakest impostors can scatter terrors, and alarm nations; old women and astrologers can do it, and do it daily. No man, not the wisest man,

man, can guess, no modest man will affirm, against whom, or for whom it is, that the powers of nature are at any time particularly displayed; why black clouds frown, and where lightning is to dart destruction; whose grounds a flood is sent to enrich, or whose sheep to drown. Such doctrine would discredit the deity, and infer notorious partiality in him, if one city or country were thus destroyed, and another, not better, escaped.

His almighty providence is undoubtedly ever armed with equal power to crush hardened offenders; but not blindly, nor is his thunder launched at random. He not only sees guilt, but more or less guilt, and doubtless spreads the wings of his mercy over innocence, and even the degrees of innocence. To advance the contrary doctrine, seems blasphemous, and is *maledictio supremi numinis*, a reproach upon divine justice. Let not those, who are not hardened against his mercy, be exposed to his avenging justice. Divine warnings against particular places and particular sins cannot be dumb and unintelligible; cannot be sent by God to men, yet not be understood by men, like a law made not to be understood, therefore impossible to be observed, yet fraught with penalties, and worthy not only of a tyrant, but of the worst,  
the

the most cruel tyrant. Would it not be blasphemy to father such a diabolical ordinance upon the merciful God?

To say, that in all nations there are sins enough to merit and invite judgments, would imply, that every day calls for judgments upon every sinner; and thus every pot of ale too much, and every idle word, invites an earthquake to swallow every man who drinks, and every idle woman who talks: a judgment, which would not only imply no equal providence, but no providence at all.

God may send his judgments; and we ought to believe them to be sent by him, when he declares them so sent. When he does not, it is daring impiety in a human creature (uninspired) so to declare them. Are such blind warnings to be believed, yet cannot be explained, or explained by proofs that rather darken than convince? Who will undertake to unfold the unsearchable purposes of God, or even all the designs and casual operations of nature?

Vulgar and superstitious minds discover judgments in the smallest accident, especially if it be bad; and in the most unmeaning appearances, if they be but striking. A

waterman's

waterman's wife in an angry tone, such as generally accompanies the denunciation of judgments, "blessed God for sending a judgment upon *Westminster-Bridge*, in sinking the pier; declared she had foreseen it, and owned that she had prayed for it." She did not stay to consider, that the remaining piers were full as guilty, and that, had the whole bridge sunk, the calamity would not have been so soon removed, and therefore more pleasing to her praying spirit. A mason who heard her, contradicting, and thereby enraging her, she cursed him copiously, "for having a conscience as hard as the *stones*, and the tools he worked them with." The man laughed; that laugh incensed her more; she swore, and threatened him "with the vengeance of heaven for laughing at judgments," and called him atheist.

*Jane Wenham*, tried for witchcraft at *Hertford* (I think in Queen *Anne's* Reign) was acquitted. This alarmed the prosecutors, chiefly clergymen, and so incensed them, that they threatened the country with some remarkable vengeance, particularly the judge and jury, for not believing the lying marvels and miraculous transformations sworn against the poor wretch. They published invectives against judge *Powell* particularly,  
and

and represented him as an atheist, as he was too able a man to be their tool and dotard.

Witches are accounted by the mob, and the leaders of mobs, the instruments of divine wrath, and judgments are derived from nonentities. Old women, poor, and peevish, are always unpopular. A law was made to murder them, and King *James* the author.

Self flattery is extreme: the lowest, the meanest, and such who have no one good quality to make them liked, often like themselves, though they please nobody else; perhaps the more for that very reason: they conclude their merit is too shining not to be envied; and their spite being equal to their other defects, they hate all who do not love, or not enough love them; and being sure that God loves them equally, and equally hates all whom they hate, they are continually and diabolically awarding divine judgments to all around them. Such a devilish spirit may have marked out old women for witches to vulgar and superstitious eyes.

Old women, scolds, and bigots of both sexes, have been always forward to see and inflict judgments. Their language is, like their spirit, peevish and positive. Their wish  
that

that God may reward you, is a prayer to God to curse you. Yet the lowest of these wretches, so blind and rancorous, are just as fit as the learned and dignified, to ascertain what no man can ascertain. Mother *Shipton* could foretel public calamities, and explain why they were sent, as well as both houses of convocation.

In general distress people are generally humble, and their fears furnish them with caution to fly to the safest courses. But *when* that distress is to befall them, or *how*, no soul can inform them, unless God first informs them, as he did *Jonas* and *Abraham*. The contrition and humiliation of the *Ninevites* saved *Nineveh*, and their escape enraged the prophet, because it contradicted his prediction: his pride touched him more than the escape of many thousands.

The state of *Sodom* was singular, as their pollution was shocking. Yet no man foresaw any judgment approaching till God declared it in person to *Abraham*, who even then persuaded God to spare it, if there were ten righteous persons found in it. But it was consigned to flames, being not blessed with  
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that scanty number; it was consumed by fire from heaven purposely sent.

But there is no arguing from the calamity and overthrow of one city, that the like, or any will befall another: though ill deserving, it may not perhaps be equally ill deserving. All nations are not alike; all people of the same nation are not alike; and, as I have before observed, the creator, preserver, and judge of men will not equally punish pious and impious men, punish a whole city, because some, perhaps *many*, in it deserve to be punished. Thank God, the universal guilt of *Sodom*, is not the universal guilt of *London*. What inference alarming to *London*, can be drawn from the fate of *Sodom*, or to *Englishmen* from that of the *Jews*, ever prone to apostacy and idolatry; a spirit not seen, here?

I have the comfort of being persuaded, that there are more than ten times ten righteous persons in *London*, even among the laity; besides several hundred clergymen: are not clergymen righteous persons, and is not *London* safe?

I remember, during the late rebellion, when a sermon was preached and published by an  
 eminent

eminent prelate\*, full of warning to this nation, from the judgments which once befell *Ju-dæa*; a learned divine †, in another sermon, removed our terrors, by shewing to us, that as there was no analogy between our case and theirs, we might reasonably hope to escape their punishment. He likewise shewed, how groundless, how iniquitous, yet how usual it was to draw such contrary unrefembling parallels.

Whatever vicious habits, however various sins may abound, numbers are innocent. There are ladies who do not intrigue, nor game; there are men who do not swear, nor riot. God's mercy is equal to his discernment. His wrath is not blind, like that of foolish passionate men. When he intends a general visitation, his goodness will give warnings that are distinct and intelligible, and not puzzle us with cracking in the air, or the nodding of houses. If a volley of thunder maim a church, and spare the parish (as I have known it happen) is it to be construed a divine rebuke to the parson, as a worse man than his parishioners? Or if, in the late concussions, any of the churches in *Lon-*

\* Dr. Sherlock, then bishop of *Salisbury*, late of *London*.

† Mr. *Warburton*.

*don* should be hurt, and the playhouses escape, would it imply any sanctity in a theatre superior to that of a cathedral?

*Rome*, the center of the catholic religion, is perhaps the most debauched, the most polluted city in *Europe*, and the religious men the most vicious men in *Rome*: I would humbly ask any casuist in judgments, who observes, "that a city without religion, can never be a safe place to dwell in," whether the *Romish* system of impostures be religion? I could ask another question, whether the bible be not a sufficient system? Is *Rome* a safe city to dwell in, where all iniquity, all impurity prevails, and where no bible is permitted? It is my own firm opinion, that true religion cannot prevail, nay can hardly subsist, in a city where all religions are not tolerated, and none punished. Laws against conscience make men criminals, when the men obnoxious to them do not observe them, and often make them hypocrites, when they do. In matters of mere conscience men should be subject to no fear, but to the fear of the Lord.

Moral actions are proofs of religion; morality is religion, and every man truly religious will be for tolerating every religion; and

and, whatever any man thinks religion, is religion to that man, whatever grimaces and fanaticism may attend it. *London* and *Amsterdam* abound in religion, because they tolerate all religions. Let us bless God, that *London* is a safe place to dwell in.

*Rome* too is subject to earthquakes. Have these earthquakes only, or chiefly afflicted the monks and priests, men who are principally immersed in the sin of *Sodom*, and other iniquities as shocking to religion, as that is to nature, immersed in continual frauds, superstition, and idolatry, preaching the same, practising the same, crushing and burning all gainsayers; yet such bold hypocrites, that, engrossing the trade of false prophecy and imposture, they are the most early to foresee judgments, and the most zealous to apply them; never to themselves, but to their enemies; chiefly to protestants, men of reason and inquiry, who are for rescuing truth from imposture, the word of God from the frauds of monks, defending conscience from constraint, and the children of the gospel from the fires of the inquisition.

The everlasting lies and judgments upon *Luther* and *Calvin*, and upon all the lights of the reformation, were rung loudly and

incessantly in the ears of *Christendom*, and are still rung, and believed by all blind catholics; and such as are not blind catholics are not good catholics. I should not wonder to hear that the same inventors of calumnies and judgments had sent one against *Cambridge*, for Dr. *Middleton's* unanswerable writings against popery.

I have often thought that the common preachers and discoverers of judgments were of all men the most obvious marks for judgments. Who could be more so than those *English* doctors, who had long persecuted protestant dissenters, and flattered lawless power; enemies to conscience and law, consequently to society and their country before the revolution, and to legal government after the revolution? Did not the famous *Oxford* decree, in the reign of King *Charles II.* seem to be a call for divine vengeance, as it was a doom pronounced by that university against the constitution, surrendering, or rather sentencing law to will? That no judgment befell a college there since, for the sin of *Sodom*, was less to be admired, as the same was personal and limited. The earthquake was not felt there.

“ The men, who see but little into natural causes, yet offer to account for the  
 “ opera-

“operation of nature, are surely *little philosophers?*” But able philosophers, indeed any sensible man, may find obvious natural causes for such operations, for thunder and lightening, and inundations, nay for earthquakes. Sir *Isaac Newton* particularly has done it, and has even taught us how to make an earthquake. He was no *little philosopher*, nor small divine; he did not pretend to derive crazy warnings from fortuitous signals, but professed to promote conviction, as he had received it, by reason and figures, and the express word of God. Fortune-tellers and jugglers take another method, and instead of speaking to the reason of people, speak to their credulity and fears.

The northern lights, though always known in *Europe*, had been so little observed in *England*, that about thirty years ago, appearing very singular, as they were very remarkable, indeed amazing, the colours so various and glowing, the agitations so violent, and the rays so pointed and rapid, that, without the aid or declaiming cant of dealers in prophetic wonders, the people were greatly alarmed, and some of them possessed with horror: some feared public calamities, others rejoiced, as they saw such judgments

declared against the persons, or party obnoxious to them; for so angry and credulous vulgar minds argue: they were sure of approaching changes, national vengeance and a general revolution, from fiery dragons, nay armies embattled and encountering in the sky. Some hoped, some dreaded the restoration of popery; and to many, especially in the north, heaven was seen manifesting its wrath for the execution of rebels. I do not remember that any boding sermons, or doleful addresses followed those lights.

Loose books, lewd women, and brothels abound in *Christendom* much more than in *Turkey*. Is *Christendom* less under the protection of providence than *Turkey*? The christian clergy indulge in wine infinitely more than those of *Turkey*; are the Mahometan mollahs less obnoxious to divine judgments than our Christian doctors?

Do loose books swarm? It is a bad, a common, I doubt inevitable effect, arising from a good cause, public liberty, and the liberty of the press. Take away public liberty, and you check the public progress of books: but with the suppression of the bad, the good will be suppressed. Who can settle the bounds and distinction between them?

them? The worst are sometimes liked and encouraged; sometimes the best are offensive and decried. Who can fix the standard? None but the Pope, or the great *Turk*, the only officers fit to abolish the constitution and loose books, the licentiousness of the press with that of the pulpit; though there be some objections to be made to the great *Turk*, by the advocates for rigid uniformity, since the Grand Seignor allows liberty of conscience.

*France* abounds with free-thinkers, no kingdom in *Europe* more, nor so much: *Holland*, above all countries, abounds with printing-presses, with free-thinking and obnoxious books, which are from thence dispersed all over the world. *France* and *Holland* are not only more free, but at least more than we are. Yet *Amsteraam* exceeds (or perhaps it will sound more arch and fatirical to say "beats") all the world, "beats even *London*, in the traffick of infidelity."

This word infidelity, which is little understood, is for the most applied angrily, indeed at random, to asperse and reproach all men who differ from bigots: it is become a scolding term in craft and bigotry, as other

gross words are in markets and mobs. No man, who is not an infidel in the sight of God, ought to be treated as one amongst christians, nor is so treated amongst candid, well-bred pagans; yet the best men are often marked and blackened as such by craftsmen, and pious railers, who having first given them an odious name, boldly deliver them to some doleful doom here, and then to devils and flames hereafter. There have been few great men, of distinguished talents and ability, but have fallen under the rage of bigots, and the obloquy of craftsmen; witness *Raleigh, Locke, Bayle, Tillotson*, indeed all who laughed at holy dunces, and left the beaten track of their important whims and grimaces. The charge of infidelity, were it not so common, would appear too ridiculous to be believed; ~~and it is still infidel~~ contemptible to be repeated. The vulgar notions of it are agreeable to the priestly notions; so are the vulgar apprehensions of judgments.

All the public calamities befalling the *Roman* empire for some ages, hurricanes and earthquakes, invasion, slaughter, pestilence, and war, were derived by the pagan priests and divines from the anger of their Gods against the christians, who disbelieved

believed the Gods, and contemned the sacrifices; a popular charge amongst the pagans, and blindly swallowed by the pagan mob. *Orosius* wrote a large volume to confute that prevailing calumny, thoroughly refuted that popular slander, and demonstrated, by a copious deduction of facts, that public calamities of all sorts had usually and equally afflicted the *Roman* state. The christians afterward returned the charge upon the pagans, and perceiving infinite guilt and horror in the superstition of the pagan worship, priests, and idolatry, boldly derived every public misfortune from that source, and pronounced every public misfortune an evident effect of divine judgment; and every phenomenon, however natural, passed for a warning of terrible events to follow.

This wild spirit was found in christians against christians; and every sect of them saw judgments threatening and overtaking a different sect; and it produced higher barbarities than ever was produced by the superstition of pagans. The pagan priests chiefly atoned their angry deities with the blood of bullocks: christians sacrificed christians in pious fury, invoked wrath divine, and applied it to satiate their own wrath; thus the frenzy of christian zeal proved more fierce

and pestilent, than the stupid superstition of heathens.

The misleaders of christians and of pagans (for the thoughtless many will always be misled by the crafty few) had one eternal advantage and temptation: they were always sure, by any strange tale or any awful sound, to make the people stare and tremble, and thence subject to any impressions, especially those of blind reverence, obedience, and liberality to the clergy; no wonder the clergy fattened and multiplied, and took a thousand shapes, hatched a thousand creeds, and had ten thousand disputes. Monks, at first, single and solitary, inspired by craziness, encreased by craft, fed by credulity and lying wonders, appeared in hosts, covered countries, darkened and subdued them, at last engrossed them; always raising devils and terrors, always exorcising them, yet never suffering them to be laid: since a final conquest of *Satan* would have finished the lucrative and important trade. An end of the enemy would have put an end to the army: he was therefore growing every day stronger, tho' they were every day routing him, yet every day magnifying his power, and the dreadful increase of his empire.

Equally

Equally politic was their conduct about judgments. It was they who foretold them, thence they were prophets! an exalted character: it was they only who could deprecate and avert them: this was a miracle, and it was they who worked it. What could be more god-like? Was it any marvel that men so divine, controuled all men? and that holding mankind by the strongest ties, their hopes and fears, they governed mankind, and gained the wealth of the world; another powerful means of swaying it? To secure their importance, or retrieve their sinking credit, they need only raise some public panic, or improve it when it was already raised; a blazing star, a hurricane, weather too hot or too moist, markets very low, or very high, were fertile subjects for declamation and denunciation, a manifest warning to reverence the friars, and a divine rebuke for not doing it enough. Heaven was in wrath whenever they were, and there was no way of pacifying heaven, but by pacifying them: then they opened their insuring office, and warranted public safety and exemption.

I have heard of one of these declaiming heralds, who having lost some apples, scolded his parish for six Sundays successively, and in

every sermon threatened them with some angry judgment from the Lord, unless they averted it by discovering the prophane robber of his orchard. And if the good man had not been preferred to a richer living, it was thought the same zeal might have animated many more sermons. His eloquence and terrors had already so prevailed, that many of the good wives were earnest with their husbands to leave that wicked parish, just ready to be swallowed up. He had before given a specimen of his prophetic or denouncing spirit against a young gentlewoman in a neighbouring village, once very comely in her person, but afterward terribly marked with the small pox. The good man declared it to be a judgment upon her for her pride. The doctor had courted her in her bloom, and was refused. A reverend doctor in *Nottinghamshire*, when the distemper amongst the cattle raged most there, and all over the county, yet saw the cows in his parish swept away by a particular judgment, for that the farmers would not pay him more tithes than were due to him, and had cast him at the assizes. He observed it particularly befalling a farmer who had lost six cows more than any of the rest; for that he had been the ring-leader in the opposition. He forgot to  
remember

remember that the farmer had more cows than any other parishioner.

The *Scotch* covenanters, an hundred years ago, were for ever perceiving judgments falling upon the *malignants*, that is, all who differed from their peevish divinity, and narrow politics. *The covenant* was the cry, and wherever the covenant did not prevail, the saints saw nothing but irreligion and universal prophaneness. *The danger of the church* was a cry like it, and followed by all virulence, slander, and a call for divine judgments. Both those cries are now despised, but new ones will every now and then be arising.

Do loose books swarm? So do, or may, books against them. Let books answer books. Is there any other way of answering? The press is open; so is the law which punishes unlawful books. Pains and penalties only would be remedies worse than the disease, and destroy all books at last. The clergy have all encouragement, all advantages; great and exclusive advantages, laws, revenues, and learning; they engross the pulpit, and furnish an army of answerers. It would disgrace them to get all books restrained, and none to be read but their own. Besides, another

law would still be wanting against all places of resort, coffee-houses, the *Exchange*, the *Park*, and at last, another against speech and conversation. Enthusiasts armed and let loose, and the most raging persecution, even the fires of the inquisition, which is only a higher degree of persecution, could not effect such a thorough reformation. But popish priests, and those who are like them, find nothing too high or impracticable, to gratify their spirit, whenever their forwardness is piqued; not power without bounds, nor flames and punishment without mercy.

Does it not reflect some scandal upon the clergy to complain of infidelity, with such infinite succours and champions for orthodoxy? If writings be false, truth will confound them; if absurd, reason will expose them. I hate all immoral writings, as I do all false and immoral sermons. Surely, there have been many such; and I have heard of times, when the immorality of the pulpit has been glaring: it has done more harm; it must have done more, than any infidel productions amongst the mistaught vulgar can do. Were *Sacheverel's* mad mob, or the mad man at the head of the mob, ever suspected of infidelity? No; they were poisoned by mad sermons against peace and dissenters, and lived in the constant practice of drunkenness. It

was not infidelity that filled the high-church rabble with gin, and the streets with swearing. Drinking and swearing are not the vices of dissenters; some of them have been discovered and abused for being dissenters, because they refused to drink and swear. Is not this a remark worthy the attention of the bishops and clergy?

Perhaps the greatest good that *Laud* and his brethren ever did to religion, was, that by their headlong rage against conscience, they multiplied puritans, and by preaching against law, roused patriots to defend law; and thus saved the state, whilst they laboured to destroy it. If these prelates had been infidels, and preached infidelity, they could have made no converts (for the people had an opposite turn) and consequently could have done little hurt; but, as furious zealots and time-servers, they brought upon the nation the heaviest national curses, oppression, misery, and exile, and made war upon civil and religious liberty.

Few men oppose the truths of religion, or opinions really pious; but all men, who esteem truth and sense, will strive to hinder the false masks and disguises of religion, senseless systems of rituals, and incredible mysteries,

ries, from being imposed for religion. And for such virtuous and laudable endeavours, the best men are branded with infidelity by hypocrites; the eternal principles of truth and liberty, are called atheism, and the maintaining such principles, blasphemy. Instances of this would be endless. The thing is notorious, and ever has been; as it is, that for the highest publick blessing, misrepresented and blackened by bigots and craftsmen, the public hath been threatened with divine vengeance, especially for the revolution, and the act of toleration, religion and conscience secured, and the state restored.

There can be no certainty that there is any religion in a country, where none but one is suffered: for all men, and the worst men, may comply with it; but where all religions are tolerated, one of them is likely to be the true one, at least the true one has access there. Conscience and sincerity are the true criterions and trial of religion. Whoever annoys the priests any where, is sure to be an infidel. Enthusiasm and imposture are more pernicious to religion than infidelity, at least the infidelity commonly imputed. He who allows others to think and pray as they list, will hurt no man for his thinking and praying, however different from  
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the mode; he who would hurt any man for so differing, is a bad member of society, and would distress it if he could.

All that differ from a bigot, even in whims, and grimaces, are obnoxious to his frowns and detraction; nay, often consigned to *Tophet*. He sets up a standard of belief and forms, and whoever do not blindly submit to it, are marked with bad names; that of *infidels* and *deists* is a current calumny.

We live in an age of light, and consequently of inquiry; an age of liberty, consequently of knowledge. No marvel the age is vilified by narrow and designing men, railed at for incredulity, and menaced with judgments.

The *French* clergy, and the deluded bigots their friends and followers, saw divine vengeance just impending over *France*, for the damning sin of the reformation, and growth of the *Hugonots*, and ascribed to those causes every public calamity, even the calamities of their own bringing. Every event salutary to the kingdom, passed with these madmen for a curse, and every curse of the pope, inferred the curse of God; and they paid their court to the almighty by sacrificing

crificing men. For all bigots would be persecutors, and all persecutors are champions for human sacrifice.

The *Hugonots* too, thought the crying national sins called for a divine visitation; but it was only for the sins of the *French* clergy, their worldly pursuits, the turpitude of their lives, and their implacable spirit.

The cities of *London* and *Westminster*, doubtless abound in vice, lewdness, licentiousness and luxury; so do other, indeed all, great cities. Wherever there is wealth, it will always be abused, and men will riot when they can, even when they are little able. Continual ill examples, and their own wanton inclinations, will be continually prompting them; and in a free country no restraints will be found sufficient; nor can the most arbitrary government extinguish corrupt nature, without extinguishing society.

Here in *England* we want not restraining laws, fines, and stocks, for drunkards and swearers; pillories, jails, and gibbets, for theft and fraud; as also for unnatural pollution, an enormity shocking to nature, expensive and ruinous, and generally abhorred.

Even

Even without laws, all vices bring certain retribution, even in this world: distress and poverty follow idleness and extravagance, as infirmities and pain do debauchery. Disgrace attends knavery; every enormity has its checks, and, what ought to be the strongest of all, we have the ties and terrors of religion; we have a numerous clergy, nobly endowed to preach religion, which flourishes most, and perhaps is only safe, where every one enjoys his own.

The teachers too of religion are so many, so endowed, and so protected, that perhaps it becomes them the least of all men, to be inveighing against the morals of the age, as it may probably imply some failure in themselves. Where they are sober, diligent, humble, and disinterested, wedded to souls, and not to the world, liberal, charitable, patient, and meek, they must soon see glorious fruits of so many virtues, and so much labour. A minister who hardly ever sees his flock, is not likely to mend them by railing at them once a week. The influence of his conduct will be stronger than that of his preaching.

The country fellow had greatly the advantage of his parson, who having just preached a *Jacobite* sermon, and seeing the fellow in the church porch, charged him harshly with some breach of promise. "Sir, says the clown, I have kept my word, as well as you have kept your oath: did not you swear to King *George*?" A dreadful reproach; the more so, as the parson was constant and loud against the growth of irreligion and impiety, yet had committed the greatest that a man can commit! I hope such crying examples are very rare. The time has been when there were many such, since the revolution. What could be more provoking heaven to visit the land with judgments, if heaven poured down its judgments promiscuously?

Were such men fit to combat popery, to recover strayed protestants, or to inveigh against any vice, or sin, when they had committed the highest, the sin of perjury, and lived in the course of that sin?

Can loose books be so crying a crime? We have had many such; many from the hands of clergymen. This was boldly asserted by a reverend doctor in convocation,  
even

even in the good reign of Queen *Anne*. His words were strong and remarkable: "With  
 " what conscience can we complain of the  
 " licentiousness of the lay-writers, when if all  
 " the books against religion and the scrip-  
 " tures, against the laws of the land, and  
 " the constitution of the church, were pack-  
 " ed together, I would undertake to pick  
 " out the worst, by pointing at those writ-  
 " ten by clergymen, even of the most pro-  
 " fligate drollery, as well as most serious  
 " heresy?"

How glad must we all be to find from a great authority, that though guilt and profligacy, and bad books prevail amongst us, they are all confined to the laity, and the clergy are clear of all, utterly blameless, and assiduous in their duty?

The books chiefly complained of were mostly imported from abroad, or clandestinely printed at home. So were the pictures, especially from *Italy*, where lewdness and priestcraft have so long reigned: the clergy there are not so pure and pious as ours are. Here these detestable performances were sold by stealth, and some of the venders taken up and punished. Such books and pictures never fell in my way, though it seems they might,

might, with some pains, have been found. I cannot think any virtuous man would take such pains. I know some magistrates who were inclined to seize and prosecute them, but could not come at them. It is plain some very reverend persons have fully perused them, doubtless to learn how detestable they were.

Brothels are not confined to this country: They are found in all states, and even tolerated in some of the best, to prevent evils still greater. Haunts of idleness, and places of pleasure are found in all great cities, and encouraged in all rich cities, yet do not always invite earthquakes. The two late shocks were not more felt at *Ranalagh* and *White's*, than in the *Abbey*. Extravagant gaming deserves to be exposed, but will not, I hope, bring an earthquake upon such who do not game extravagantly. The same may be said of other diversions. Even the multiplicity of churches and religious houses, have been frequent subjects of complaint and declamation. In truth, seditious sermons to inflame, and false doctrines to mislead the people, and bad examples from holy characters, wherever they happen, are matter of just sorrow and indignation. A declaiming angry pen can never want a theme, even in favour of the

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the popish lent in a protestant country! Nor can the bishops and clergy always escape the upbraidings of a warm haranguer. How many eloquent invectives were made after the revolution by the nonjuring doctors against all the churchmen who took the oaths and kept them? (for all the Jacobites were not nonjurors). The same raging declaimers were daily threatening judgments upon the nation, for the national submission to the government; and the earthquake after the revolution was reckoned a judgment for it. To the conforming clergy, who still remained disaffected, the same angry orators gave great quarter.

The increase of popery is a great and growing evil, to the misfortune of protestants, and to the disgrace of papists, who buy converts at so much a head. But this evil doth not lie at the door of the laity only. Much of the remedy depends upon the clergy, their diligence and doctrine. They must drop all the selfish tenets, all the wild claims of popery, whatever is derived from popery, or resembles popery. The contrary conduct hath had a natural effect, kept popery in countenance, and poisoned protestants. Whoever would curb conscience, and denies toleration to conscientious opinions, is a papist; who-  
ever

ever maintains presbyterians, or any sect of protestants, to be worse than papists, is an advocate for popery. The principles and discipline of the nonjurors, are directly and essentially popish; their jargon of apostolic succession, their keys of heaven and hell, their auricular confession, and absolution, their independent priestly power, coercive over conscience, their conferring the Holy Ghost, their antic postures and ceremonies, and train of pious buffoonry.

He who defends or favours those nonjuring positions and claims, which are literally popish, is unfit to expose popery, or recover perverted protestants. These latter being chiefly the lowest of the people, wretchedly lodged, it requires great patience and zeal, and some drudgery, to visit them in cellars and garrets, stables and stalls, to converse with them, and instruct them. I hope there are some, as there ought to be many, who cheerfully submit to the toil.

Some money in charity may likewise be wanting, and there are churchmen who can well spare it. A late venerable prelate, a true and tried protestant, told a friend of his upon this subject, that it cost him four hundred pounds a year to lessen the pope's subjects  
in

in *England*: he told a story at the same time of one of his brethren, very zealous, but very fordid, who preaching once upon the duty of bishops and pastors to preach and convert, one of his hearers said humourously, " I believe my lord would save souls, if it cost  
" him nothing."

To conclude. I doubt, my good friends and neighbours, whatever iniquities and errors are found, and whatever want of reformation, you must be chiefly your own reformers. You may easily see your faults, and your own interest and ease are continual motives to remove them. The example of some reclaimed from vice and folly, will have a strong effect upon others, make many ashamed, many afraid to pursue shameful and ruinous courses, in the face of neighbours just reclaimed from them. Every one will find the sweet benefit of a good life, which being seen by all, must encourage all who see it. Act righteously and fear God, and then you need not fear earthquakes. Shew your fear of God, by fearing to offend him in hurting one another. Be honest and virtuous, and you are sure to please him. Your gracious creator cannot send down such vengeance as makes no distinction between guilt and innocence. Certainly you  
are

are not all guilty, at least equally guilty; but as crimes are contagious, and as debauchery and riot may have hurtful consequences, even upon such as abhor them, and upon the whole community, it is incumbent upon every man to curb and discourage them.

It is therefore your duty and interest to make the office of the magistrate useless, or less wanted; your vigilance for the public is vigilance for yourselves: and then great officers may be useless without being pernicious; and so may great churchmen be decent and industrious; there are many such amongst you: would to God you were all so! The good are security to the bad, and will find their account in correcting and reclaiming them.

Swearing and imprecations are shocking habits, a disgrace to society, and make men worse than savages: they are proofs of impiety and gross morals (so is drunkenness:) surely they require a speedy cure, and every man is called and interested to work a cure. Let every one mend as many as he can; and in order to it, mend himself first. Without such a disposition, and such zeal, sermons,

mons, invectives, and even laws, will be ineffectual.

You of course frequent such preachers as you find most edifying. Shew that you are edified by them in the sobriety and integrity of your lives. A good life is the sure proof of a good man; without it, pious professions, repeated devotions, and all the parade of ordinances, furnish no solid proofs; for the worst men, and great hypocrites, may act the same part, and wearing a religious mask, may pass for religious men.

It is far from being an affront to religion to try it by morality, which is the law of nature; and the law of nature is a perfect law, as many able writers and divines have amply shewn, particularly your present bishop in a sermon preached many years ago, before the society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts: he there avers, and thinks he has proved, that *christianity is as old as the creation*, and, when it appeared, was no more than a republication of the law of nature.

Agreeably therefore to his lordship's doctrine, whatever is not warranted by reason, ought not to be received as religion. A noble

principle! which had it been attended to, would have done infinite good to the world, by preventing infinite evil in it. Mahometanism, and all other impostures, enthusiasts, crazy systems, and false zeal for them; that zeal, which is always keenest when blindest, monks, persecution, and spiritual tyranny; all lying prophecy, false alarms, and pious panics from the common works of nature

Upon an earthquake in queen *Elizabeth's* time, the bishops applying to her, to appoint a general fast, had a negative answer, and her reason for it: she told them, "her people were frightened enough already."

During an earthquake in *Catanea* (a city in *Sicily*, destroyed by it) the inhabitants, crowding first into the street, then into the fields, were persuaded by the priests and friars to return, and repair to the churches, particularly to the great one dedicated to *St. Agathe*, and to pay their devotion to the reliques of the saint, for deliverance. The poor people did so, and all perished, above eleven thousand, most of them under the ruins of the church. Had they followed their first guides, their eyes and their senses, they might have saved their lives. The monks were then certainly fatal guides, and always are when their guidance is

not warranted by common sense and reason,  
more especially when it contradicts both.

Let us all live good lives, and then we need  
not fear death nor earthquakes.

I am,

*My good friends and neighbours,*

*With affectionate zeal,*

*Your sincere humble servant,*

A LAYMAN.

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And no wisdom in superstition.**

A SEASONABLE  
A P O L O G Y

F O R

<sup>a</sup> Father F R A N C I S

C H A P L A I N t o

Prince <sup>b</sup> P R E T T Y M A N

T H E

C A T H O L I C,

But now lying in Durance under the  
Suspicion of secret INIQUITY.

In which are occasionally inserted some weighty arguments for calling a general Council of the Nonjuring Doctors, for the further propagation of Ceremonies, Unity, Dissention, and Anathemas; and for the better Improvement of Exorcism and *March-Beer*.

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*Noſtem peccatis, & fraudibus objice Nubem.*

Horat. Ep.

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First printed in the Year 1723.

<sup>a</sup> Francis Atterbury, late bishop of Rochester.

<sup>b</sup> The Pretender.

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## A SEASONABLE

## A P O L O G Y.

**I**T is not every one that is dubbed a knight, but every man ought to have the spirit of knighthood in him, and valourously do all the good he can. In this sense I myself am a considerable hero; my pen is my spear, my inkhorn is my arms, and for my crest, I bear a burning tobacco pipe, with this dreadful motto, ——— which in a time of conspiracies is not safe to be uttered. I live in a lonely room, frightful and high, and when there is any fun, I have my full share of it; I wish I could not boast the like civility from the rain. Here I spend my time in the defence of the distressed, and in obstinate fasting. All the unhappy are under my protection, and myself among the rest; invisible to all the world, but a certain hobgoblin, who will be mentioned in the beginning of the next paragraph. I have already half finished my apologetic dissertation upon *Sally Salisbury*, with a manifesto in favour of the *Sophy of Persia*; as also an elegy upon the defeat and losses, and mournful flight of

the northern hector the ensuing campaign; and moreover, Lord N——'s last dying speech and confession; likewise an amphibious speech for a noble lord and commoner; a speech of two sentences and a half; besides a certain general's lamentation for his disgrace next *Michaelmas*: to which is added, an appendix upon politics, embroidery, and good eating. There is too this minute upon my table a quire of paper close writ, entitled, *A vindication of a great dead minister, from the unjust calumnies of some ill informed Jacobites, as if he had been their enemy.* N. B. This vindication is clear and full; as is likewise my letter to Sir *John Blunt*, proving that himself and his brethren of the *South-Sea*, though reduced by the parliament to great poverty, will suddenly be full as rich as they were before. But I am particularly fond of my advice to the pretender, recommending to him *John Barber* and *Mrs. Manley* for his first ministers, *Mr. Alex. Pope* for publishing and correcting the memoirs of his reign, and a certain university for a dry nurse for his son. I shall only add here two more performances of mine, *viz.* a consolatory epistle to those who have profitable places and small salaries, with a reproof to such as have free quarters upon certain offices; and a word of comfort to the public creditors four years hence.

All these are elaborate pieces, and gasping to see the light. But Mr. *Curl*, who let me have half a crown upon my note this morning, besides six pennyworth of paper, insisted upon my dispatching this jobb first, and invited me to dinner. There was no answering this argument, and therefore in hopes of a dozen meals, and half a dozen editions, with a joyful heart, and a watering mouth, I set about my work. Mr. *Curl*, who is an eminent critic in authors, not to mention his equal skill in procuring them C—— and a cure for C—— told me, that a haughty author new in town that overlooks his brethren, began his fame with an apology of this kind, an apology which happily degraded him from the summit of the house to a first floor; a downward preferment, which I must aspire to, and would willingly exchange my long acquaintance with the cold tiles, for the comfortable smell of a warm kitchen.

Pray, says Mr. *Curl* by way of encouragement to me, *did you not know two secretaries once upon a time who became considerable ministers from the pure merit, the one of writing ballads, and the other of singing them? Sir, you have as keen a genius as either of them, and for your external conduct, it is in*

*your own power to sneak as humbly as Joe, and to make mouths as successfully as Jammy, whenever you shall think fit to put forth those laudable and thriving talents.*

I knew all this before; but as it is a piece of flattery, it weighed more with me than my own knowledge. For as bishop *Beveridge* says, with his usual force, *O what a bad thing is flattery! O what a bad thing flattery is!* But I doubt he borrowed this from *St. Chrysofom's* persuasive to humility in the laity, or from the late pious *Mr. Nelson's* devout manual against eating breakfasts on *Fridays*.

I now proceed to offer to my countrymen some considerations in behalf of *father Francis*. And first let it be tenderly considered, that a conspiracy without a bishop in it, would have been a thing incredible. A plot without a *zany* is a contradiction, and no man who judges by history and experience but would laugh at it. We have heard of miracles done once in seventeen hundred years, and the appearance of a phoenix once in six hundred; and both are believed, because they sometimes happen; but the other would be a miracle beyond all belief. That what has never  
happened

happened since the creation, will never happen to the end of it, is according to all a probable opinion, and according to some a certainty. We often find that satan's work does not thrive half so successfully as when it is carried on in the name of the lord; nor is that name ever successfully used and abused, but by his sworn and forsworn — Some grave divines and deep casuists maintain, that the father of lies endeavours to ape the father of light in many things, and works by second causes; and lo, cry they, *the devil has his deputies and ministers too!* by which they mean his — To prove this hierarchy of satan's, they assert, that all God's ministers, in every church which differs with theirs, are the devil's ministers; and these ministers say the same of them; and some too (particularly the quakers) are wicked enough to believe both, especially when they see so many scripture-proofs pretended to on each side for the said doctrine. Others keep themselves neuter till they see the two heritages fairly parted, and therefore go from day to day to their grave, alas! without any extreme unction at all.

But beside all these advantages, which the above reverend casuists compliment satan with,

(whether as a friend or an enemy, I leave himself to judge) and by which they seem to make him more than an equal match for *Ec.* ——— They likewise hold, and bring proofs for it; that he has numerous female deputies in every corner of the universe: for what are witches but the devil's embassadresses, the zealous pastresses, who feed his familiars and his daily negotiatrices to win people to him, and bring in his harvest? For this end, he has an old withered journey-woman or two in every district. The learned *Jane Wenham* was one of them: she was tried some years ago at *Hertford*, for holding a schismatical conventicle of cats and gossips, who were great heretics, and went a caterwauling from the church. The neighbouring soothsayers were the prosecutors; for as the proverb says, two of a ——— can never agree. Let us remark two marvellous things on this head: first, how very cheap satan maintains this branch of his administration: their only equipage is a broomstick, and their only revenue is now and then a cold treat in the church-yard. Marvellous sacrilege, that satan and his haggard curatesses, should prophane a place dedicated to better purposes! we see they thrive accordingly, and are never the fatter; whereas the rightful owners are in rare case, and as plump as you

you please. Secondly, let us remark the marvellous diligence and success of these lean and unhired doctresses, even according to the testimony of their own casuists, who are daily lamenting, as well as combating the devil's great and growing power; which looks like a confession, that though they themselves have good artillery, and the best cause, yet satan has very formidable forces; perhaps, because they are not over-fed: a remark which furnishes an instructive moral. This puts me in mind of a saying of the famous *Daniel Burges*; *Sirs, says he, what trow you may be the cause of Belzebub's prevailing interest in the world? Why I will tell you: the greatest part of the world maintains an army against him, of whom he standeth not in awe. Think ye that he is to be bullied with a Lord rebuke thee, from such fellows as they? No, no——it becometh none but a christian to take the old victor by the beard, and kick him down stairs.*

Behold we here likewise two probable reasons why satan's wizards do not, like our non-juring sort, intermeddle in plots and conspiracies: First, because the other sort save them the trouble, and appropriate that work particularly to themselves, with unrivalled industry and zeal. Secondly, because these, his sycophants, are eminently modest as to their secular

cular claims, and even silent about them; they do not pretend to the riches and dominion of the globe, nor even to revenues and dignities: nor do they publicly curse and swear at those who refuse to surrender them their wealth and their wives, and to hold their stirrup.

From all this reasoning, I think it is plain that the plot, how fully soever proved, would never have been satisfactorily proved, had not my client been at the head of it: some gentry of that faculty in popish countries, have been such regular and constant combiners against the peace of states, that all considerable and extensive treasons have been almost engrossed by them; and lay-traitors only admitted collaterally, and as accessaries: nay, matters of blood and assassination, the glory of the whole scheme, both in the projection and execution, has been generally theirs; and all this in a succession so uninterrupted, that plotting seems to be of clerical institution, and secured to them by a right of possession: nor is such a claim more wicked and absurd than some others of theirs.

In truth, those of them who, either abroad or at home, are acted by this spirit, (how many they are, let others determine) have in effect set up an office for licensing rebellions;

for what else means their haranguing and inflaming their votaries to be rebels; and then not only absolving them from the crimes of perjury and rebellion, but making those horrible villanies, marks of sanctity and orthodoxy? Is not this a declaration, that virtue and vice derive their existence from the fiat and good pleasure of these gentlemen? Are not all the enemies to the establishment, and all the scorers of oaths, their staunchest friends? And do they not mark as their enemies, all who adhere to it? And is not reverence for an oath, a mark of disaffection to them; and an honest conscience a proof of schism? It is certain, that the christian religion lays indispensable ties upon the minds of believers: now what sort of religion must they have; what sort of believers must they be, who mock and break all the bonds of christianity? They have a religion *pro re nata*, an occasional religion, which varies with the weather and their passions; a religion which prompts and warrants all ungodliness, and damns all piety and common sense!

Their reasoning is like their religion; the reasoning of an almanack, never two days the same, or steadily wrong. Once it was downright damnation to rebel, nay to resist upon any pretence whatsoever; now it is damnable

not to rebel without any pretence at all. Formerly kings were vice-gods, and to be obeyed and revered with submission, and resignation due only to God, and had they honoured their maker but as devoutly as they did some princes, who resembled a very different being, they would have been no scandal to christianity: but now a days they exceed porters in the brutishness of their language and behaviour toward a prince, whose greatest crime is, that he thinks that his lay subjects have as good a right as themselves to be used like freemen; and that the unsearchable heart of man is only subject to the cognizance of the infallible tribunal of God, and not to any angry faction of pedants, who would make the authority of God truckle to their paltry ambition, and sacrifice reason to delusion, and religion and peace to grimace and fury.

If the liberties of the nation were in danger, as I hope they are not, (from him I am sure they are not) yet still it would be impudence in them to hold up a finger in their defence; they who have eternally been a dead weight upon liberty, and at all times, made formal and professed, and canonical libels against it, concerted registered libels! as to King *James*, their behaviour to him is no exception;

ception; for meddling with *Aaron's* bells, they rung him out of the kingdom; so much more prevailing with them was rage, than the fear of their own anathema and damnation, so frequently denounced against resistance.

But this, perhaps, is foreign from the task which I have undertaken, to write an apology for father *Francis*, and therefore I beg, secondly, that it may be considered in his behalf, that there are dissenters in *England*, a sort of people he could never bear; and since the king and the two houses, would not in duty destroy them, he conceived a zeal in his soul for destroying those who would not destroy them: *D—— me*, says the captain of a man of war, *if the admiralty will not hang my rogue of a lieutenant, by G——, I will sink the ship*. Dissenters were not hanged; and my client found himself provoked, that men of such plain and clumsy behaviour, who made no fine bows to the *east*, and approached it in no birthright garments and furtout shirts, were suffered to eat and drink, and live as well as he who was a great beau in devotion, and the very pink of courtesy toward a place which our homilies very uncivilly call *superstitious*. It was indeed a diverting shew to see with how many pretty airs, crosses, cringes, forms, and coopees, he acted

acted at the house-warming of a certain new building at *Greenwich*, and made it thereby holy. Whereas the dissenters were enemies to the mode, and met in pieces of ground, which, for want of holy water, remained still in a state of paganism.

Thirdly, my client had taken the oaths, and this is no uncommon reason for breaking them. There is a reverend society of men in a neighbouring church, whose authority has never wanted weight with many who pretend to be of ours: they hold the doctrine of probability, that is, that any man may with a safe conscience do what any grave doctor holds to be lawful. Now an eminent high churchman has declared himself very fully in this point; for, says he,

*Oaths are but words, and words but wind,  
Too feeble instruments to bind. ———*

And again

*He that imposes an oath, makes it,  
Not he who for convenience takes it.  
And how then can a man be said  
To break an oath he never made?*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, my client had got the keys of both worlds at his girdle: and it was strange, if having them both in his power, he could not make bold with a small part of one of them. It would be as if a monarch who had all *Europe*, could not dispose of *Brentford*. My greatest wonder is, that my client cannot with this master-key of his, open the sublunary lock that holds him fast in durance, especially when they say, even witches and necromancers can do it.

Fifthly, my client has an indelible character; a character which, his holiness says, will render the priest free, secure, and invulnerable, though the man may be imprisoned and degraded. We must distinguish betwixt plain *Francis*, and doctor *Francis*. The former *Francis* is really a human creature, and subject to all the infirmities of humanity; but the said doctor *Francis* is not of earthly mould, but of a contexture and quality altogether mysterious and incomprehensible to mortal understanding. We must therefore carry the same distinction along with us, when we judge of his guilt and punishment. As a *Person*, no doubt, he may be criminal, but as he is a representative of ——— and all that, it is atheism to charge him

him with guilt, let him be as black and as guilty as he will. His head may be taken off, but the indelible stain (which stain is invisible) can never be wiped off. But because this doctrine, however orthodox and prevailing, may seem difficult to minds not thus illuminated, I will explain it beyond a possibility of cavilling. Let us suppose, if you please, an indelible clock; that is to say, a clock which cannot be unlocked. You may indeed take away its weights, stop its wheels and its motion, and prevent its going, and make it entirely useless, yet still it is a true clock, though it performs none of the offices of a clock. Here now is a familiar illustration, which puts this matter in a true light, and out of dispute: Thus my client, if he is degraded, may be a very good B——p of the universal church, though he cannot be one in any one part of it. Just as a soldier may be a soldier, though he never go to war, nor does any duty. What can be plainer than this?

Fortified with this indelible character, his aforefaid holiness holds, that any person may forswear, plot, and rebel, and assassinate, and commit whatever sins he will, and yet be *quo ad hoc* perfectly sinless; or if a spot now and then stick, he could scour it off in a moment by a certain sovereign wash of absolution.

He

He may be a traitor without lessening the privileges, and reputation of a saint. Could mortal man have more tempting qualifications for perjury and treason?

*Possess'd of absolute dominions  
 O'er people's purses and opinions ;  
 And trusted with the double keys  
 Of heaven, and their warehouses ;  
 And cast in fitter model for  
 The present use of church and war !*

In the opinion of casuists abroad, a popish bishop may be a very good and unexceptionable bishop, let the man be ever so filthy ; so that though he may be unqualified by his crimes for every office of civil society, yet he can never be disabled by the worst of crimes from serving at the altar. *Complebantur templa pessimis servitiorum.*

Behold in the following lines, what is said of the popish clergy.

— *Hoc omnes tanquam ad vivaria currunt,  
 Quis res nulla domi, —*

*Quos — aut plagosi dextra magistri  
 Territat, aut legum timor, aut quos dedita somno  
 Exercet nullis lethæa ignavia curis :*

*Deinde quibus gelidus cum præcordia sanguis  
Obstitit ingenio; quos sacro a fonte camænæ,  
Quos Pallas Phœbusque fugat; quos siæere torvo  
Aspicit infauſto volucer tegeaticus ortu.*

*Hi cum intruggeræ spatium trivere juventæ  
Musarum in studiis frustra; jam mollibus umbris  
Sic fracti, nec bello pati, nec ducere remos,  
Nec terram incurvo norunt suspendere aratro:  
Hic sibi desidicæ portum atque ignobilis otii  
Esse rati, huc properant.——Franciscanus.*

*A worthless fry of cubs, in quest of food,  
From orders seek a lazy livelihood;  
The spawn of beggars, wanting bread and name,  
The refuse of the school, the hangman's claim,  
Sluggards in social life the la'ty's shame,  
The oafs of nature and the muses scorn,  
Daom'd dunces by their stars; in dulness born;  
Profane companions for the sacred nine,  
And only accomplish'd for their trade divine:  
All these (in books mispent their youthful years,)  
Nor hinds, nor scholars now, but idlers,  
And drones for life, unmeet for war or trade,  
To ply the oar, or the stern foe t'invade;  
A slothful refuge from the altar find,  
And fatten on the sins of humankind.*

So that according to this character of the church of Rome, the king of kings is easily pleased in the choice of his ministers; and

and accepts of such as most kings would reject : they serve him accordingly. Their most important business often lies still for a bottle and a game at backgammon. Nor dares any man amongst them, take the part of the master against these his privy counsellors, for fear of being reckoned an atheist. For whoever reproves the priests, has denied the faith, though he has the bible on his side ; a book which is full of threatnings against laymen ; but is never angry forsooth, at the clergy for the time being, or to come. And in this respect, the antient prophets are according to them discourteous old grumblers : they make the priests of old the fadest dogs, and liars, and cheats, and whoremasters in their generation, and yet never prophesy as if the world were often to expect much better. St. Paul too tells us of ravenous wolves of this sort in his time, and heavily complains of the reverend impostors, who were to come after him, and would be right or wrong his successors. I hope he did not mean my client *Francis*, and a few nonjur-ing doctors ; for I am sure he could not intend to blemish the reverend *Jacobites* of our time ; for whom the fathers of old had a particular affection, as you may see in the works of the reverend doctor ——— and the reverend Mr. ——— According to them, the said antient fathers fully explain and vindicate the

the

the new discipline and ceremonies of the non-jurors, and are sadly out of humour with the dissenters. Nothing especially can be finer than their invective against *John Calvin*, and their defence of king *Charles I.* But I am still more charmed with their vindication of white sleeves, and of good perferments: and with their exhortation for restoring the church lands, and for bowing to the east: nor is their asserting divine right in the priests to the peerage, less remarkable. The encomium of the fathers upon Dr. *Hickes's* litany, and others like it, is really fine; and so is their recommendation of the repeal of the statute of *Mortmain*, and their plea of excommunication for a groat. What can any dissenter say to their dissertation against extempore prayers, and praising God without book, and to their many rules for stewing plumbs, and keeping *Christmas*? What zealous son of this same church can forbear to mention, with exultation, the severe reproof given by the fathers to Dr. *Hoadly*, as the same is set forth at large by a reverend dean. The satires made by *f——t*, and *f——t* and *f——t* and *f——t* and *f——t* in folio, upon round-heads and the modern whigs are likewise admirable, with their curious distinctions about rebellion, and swearing and forswearing, recommended to a venerable nonsitting

Assembly\*, whom I need not mention, the same being out of *England*. The apology of the fathers for the morals of the sacred brotherhood of the catholic free-masons, is well worth reading; as are moreover the marks laid down by them for distinguishing their genuine successors, whom they have dubbed all great lords and princes, endowing them at the same time with high-crowned hats, and trusting them more especially with the keys of the cellar. (N. B.) *There is nothing said about their resembling their founder.*

Sixthly, A certain great prince † would not put himself into father *Francis's* hands, who perhaps had a mind to enrich the kalendar with another martyr, by the same counsels and measures that father *William* ‡, about four-score years ago, had followed before him; and since he could not make him a martyr one way, he was resolved to do it another. No prince who would leave the laity any thing, but the leavings of the clergy, was a nursing father of the church, to father *Francis's* mind. The late reverend Mr. *Lesley*, in his book of the divine right of tythes, in answer to this question, says, *Of what species of our*

\* The Convocation.

† His Majesty.

‡ Archbishop *Laud*.

*substance we are to give tithes? Even of all that thou hast,* quoth he, without excepting one's wife. But besides all this tithes of bread, and bed, and beer, and custard, and all that a man has; Mr. *Lesley* made a modest demand of all the good lands in the kingdom, for the temporal good of the clergy, and the spiritual good of the laity; so that his way of feeding us lay-sheep, was to take all our food and pasture from us, and put them into his own belly. I hope he did not mean that we were to have all our good things hereafter; but for him and his brethren, their only hope was in this life, and that having their only portion upon earth, they were to be the only happy men in it. So that here was a divine right in Mr. *Lesley's* clergy to starve us, and woe to the prince or subject who hindered them. I hope my client was not entirely in this holy scheme.

Seventhly, The Convocation has not lately sat, and lay-parliaments have made laws, and given money without them. This pierced the soul of my client, who thought all authority upon earth, nay, above the earth and below it, ought to be vested in a parliament of priests, or derived from them: and that when he swore to the present government, he swore to a ——— and that therefore his swearing

ing

ing was ——— and his forswearing *ex foro conscientiae*, &c.

We have a new church risen up amongst us, which separates from the established church, and sets up against her, and which holds all oaths to the present government to be unlawful. These nonjuring doctors do not think it convenient to meet together to rectify abuses, though it is said that there are manifold uses of their meeting, and that much remains yet to be done by them. They have already indeed furnished us with a system of their faith, called *Dr. Hickes's* thirty-nine articles; but they have omitted a great many other things equally necessary to be done, and which require their meeting again in an holy synod. I shall mention some principal things.

First, there are many heretical opinions gone abroad amongst us, which require the cure and curses of the said meeting, or holy council. It is even maintained, and (*heu pudor, proh dolor!*) maintained by some of *Aaron's* own bairns, that laymen may make laws for the church, and bind the unbindable hosts of *Levi*; and that God may have a church where the priests have none: nay some are not ashamed to hold that *Quakers* may be saved, though they trust but in one saviour, and not at all in his deputies. I tremble at

the thought! But I doubt, if these profane principles go on, some may be bold enough to strike at another precious branch of their prerogative, and call in question their privilege of damning. Besides it is incredible how free-thinkers swarm; audacious free-thinkers, who do not fear the devil; and therefore are going to him; and therefore ought to be sent to him; and therefore the said council ought to sit.

But there is something beyond all this, which seems to call for their meeting. We yet want several offices to be composed for important purposes. Bells are put up in their separate churches as profanely, that is, with as little ceremony, as if they were put up in a hall to call folks to dinner. A form of benediction upon this occasion is *valde desiderata*, and the want of it much lamented. Let me reason with you, O ye reverend nonjuring fathers, upon this great occasion: why are you so neglectful of the state of your bells, which summon us to your spiritual assemblies and make such holy melody in our ears? Why hang they up thus unhallowed; they which are not the least part of your ghostly tools, and clerical gear? You consecrate coarse walls before you will enter therein, and bless dead earth before you will set foot thereon; are

are not bells of as good metal as stone and lime? And is a speechless floor, however sacred, more sacred than these sweet fingers of the steeple? In vain you make broad your hats, and short your perriwigs, and long your petticoats, if you sanctify not also your Bells! your other bells may go astray; but these never do.

Nor have we yet any office for the consecration of coffins and haunted houses. Hence the evil one often makes the dead to walk, and keeps possession of tenements which he never paid for. You, reverend sirs, you only can barricade our houses and our graves against this vile intruder, by words and holy water. For words without chrism, I doubt, make but an imperfect exorcism; else why does this old serpent still make bold to hold his nocturnal cabals in the very heart of your temples? This, sirs, merits your serious consideration, and a speedy cure. Therefore the said council ought to sit.

My next argument for it is this: *Lilly's* grammar wants to be corrected, and is a province reserved for you; unless perhaps in a thing of that moment you might differ too much, and proceed to heats and anathemas about it, as a learned and venerable assembly

of clergymen once \* did upon the same occasion.

Again, the said council ought to sit for the interest of uniformity, and for the instruction of taylor's. There is a shameful and schismatical variety in the gowns worn by non-juring priests, and indeed in other parts of their dress. Some wear prunella, some cloth, some silk, and some plain crape, like so many sectaries, or men of various faith. Nay, they are dissenters from each other in the shape of their gowns. Some have a great slit in their sleeve (which is a test of true orthodoxy) thro' which they shew a smart wrist, and a good quantity of their linen. Others bury their fists in their sleeve, a token of clumsy apostates. Some wear dark wigs, and some light, and have no manner of orthodox standard as to the size and stiffness of their bands and beavers. This is lamentable! and of ill example: For ought I know it may in your opinion be damnable! sure I am it is schismatical; and we all know the crying crime of schism; and the decency of unity and order. Fie, fie; *turpe est doctori*. Let us not with our own hands give such a deadly blow to uniformity, and thereby strengthen the arguments of fanatics against us. Let our unity

\* The convocation in king Charles IIId. reign.

in hoods and caps be known unto all men. We know the dreadful war of an hundred years between two powerful and orthodox bodies of divines\*, about the shape of their coul, a war in which it is said many souls perished, damnation being their chief and constant artillery. Prevent the horrible consequence! You often quote, and upon lesser occasions, St. Paul's advice for doing *all things in decency and in order*; which Saint Somebody would explain, *let your coifs and cassocks be all of a cut*; and if we must be uniform in bowing, let us be uniform in our covering of the backs that bow. Therefore the nonjuring council ought to meet.

Lastly, that venerable assembly ought to meet, that the *October* in their several counties may have time to grow stale.

I say nothing of the obvious necessity of a new translation of a certain book, the present translation being too plain, and much the same with that of *Geneva*: a thing not to be suffered. The prevalence too of carnal reason seems to call loudly for a check from such a holy council. People talk of human reason, and human judgment. Why, what are they? The only first guides, forsooth, that God has given us;

\* *Dominicans and Franciscans.*

which is true, and yet nothing to the purpose. It is plain that our reason was not given us to be used, but to be submitted to them, and to be employed by them upon evident matters, which it cannot understand. But, cry some, that is impossible. And what if it be? Is it the less orthodox for that? *O tempora! O Blackmore!* Lend, O valorous and voluminous knight, O lend thy potent and poetical hand, and mow down with thy keen faulchion, with thy rapturous and sounding sabre, this uncircumcised reason, this daring and darling *Gath* of the *Philistines*, and of free-thinkers! Why sleepest thou over dry history? Why loiterest thou in cold narration, which yet thou dost animate and adorn with all the verdure of the bays, with all the sublimity of the *Delphian God!* When, lo! here is a subject worth thy poetical prowess; a subject fit only for a poet; a fight for thy imagination; and a bloodless field!

*Evæ! recenti mens trepidat metu,  
Plenoque Bacchi pectore turbidum  
Latatur: Evæ! parce liber;  
Parce, gravi metuende Thyrso* ———

P O S T S C R I P T.

**I** BEG leave to trouble the reader with another argument in behalf of my client, though the same was not in my brief.

Father

Father *Francis* as he was already an holy man, had a mind to be more holy ; and therefore grew a traitor to grow a saint : the most certain scale to mount the *Roman* calendar.

*Hac arte ——— ferox Becketus  
Innixus arces attigit igneas ———*

The first step in that church, to rise to canonization, is to begin at the gallows, or by deserving them. The sure way there to become a lord lieutenant to almighty God, and a worker of miracles, is to be a determined enemy to mankind, a cheat and executioner for the church, a furious broker of ceremonies, a zealous maintainer of *occult qualities*, a great curser, and a great persecutor of common sense. He is to be a great advocate for devotion, and a warm promoter of damnation ; a mighty man for chastity ; but disallows the best means that preserve it, the honest means of matrimony. He is a prodigious declaimer against wealth, and a prodigious engrosser thereof : he avers that the church was built upon a rock, and that the gates of hell cannot prevail against her ; and yet swears that she is in danger of tumbling at the sight of every small heretic ; and if a poor taylor creeps into a barn to pray, he throws her into a mortal ague and convulsions. He preaches charity ;  
but

but damns all moderation and forbearance. He is a professed orator for peace, and a trumpet for war. He preaches humility, and treads upon the necks of kings and kingdoms, He is the strongest loyalist in the world, and the most unbounded rebel. A mighty reasoner, and a mighty champion against reason; always scattering blessings and curses, and masses, and misery. He spiritually feeds you, and temporally starves you. He illuminates your understanding, and fills it with ignorance; and professes no weapon but the spiritual arm, which however wears a sword and buckler, and knocks down governments and nations. He tells you that human society cannot subsist without such as he; and to prove the same, is eternally throwing human society into poverty, chains, and desolation. To do good to the world he dispeoples it. He talks much of trust in God, and to shew how much he has of it himself, will rely upon God for nothing, but crams his nest with the wealth of the world, to prove and disprove his distrust in providence.

He is perpetually haranguing you into a good life; and to set you a good example, ridicules morality, and rails at it as the foolishest thing in the world. He damns you if you do not believe the bible; and damns you if  
you

you read or understand it. He is ever appealing to your senses, and making them judges; but if you believe your senses, woe be to you; you have denied the faith, and are no christian. He is for ever proving mysteries to you, and for ever proving that they cannot be proved. *Ceremonies*, says he, *are very significant; and yet they are things indifferent*: yet you are damned if you omit them: though damnation, in my opinion, is no indifferent thing. Then he tells you that the bible is a wonderful instructive book, but wonderful unintelligible; and for your instruction, keeps it from you. *All your possessions*, quoth he, *are by divine right*; and as a demonstration thereof, holds out a secular parchment of human institution. He boasts of the daily miracles worked in his church to convince believers; for they never travel forth to convince heretics and unbelievers; and he brags of his great power over the devil; yet he is eternally frightening you with the devil's great and invincible power. O, says he, *how miserable were the antient pagans, who wanted us*: and at the same time makes the world, where he prevails, ten times more miserable than ever paganism made it. *Repent*, quoth he, *and seek the Lord, else you cannot be saved*: and yet you need not repent and seek the Lord; for he the saint, and his brethren, can save you without either

either. *Fly from satan*, adds he: *but you need not, for I the priest will flirt some holy water in his face, and send him to the devil.*

*Behold*, says he, *we saints are as lambs amongst wolves:* and to fulfil the saying, devours you. He has a wonderful antipathy to the heathens, and rails bountifully at them; but if you put in your word against the heathen religion, and the imposture of their priests, *have a care*, says he, *that you wound not us through their sides.* By which he confesses, that there is not a sword's length between them (which is not my opinion) and so he takes these his near kinsmen under his protection. *Riches*, says he, *are pernicious things, and poison to the soul, and so is pride. O beware of riches and pride!* And in kindness to your soul, or to shew you that he values not his own, he takes all the riches and pride of the world to himself.

For a full justification of this my levitical treatise, let me add a passage out of the *Stromata* of that early and eminent father St. Clemens Alexandrinus, and indeed one of the clearest in him, Ποίῳ λαμπρόν φαῖναι καὶ δαρμόν περιπυλῶϊτόν, καὶ παρσῶν κακαίπραϊ-  
τρων, τὰς ἐνθρονίσαιαί υπερ Γαλλασίκα. *Stromat.*  
*lib. p. 308.*

I cannot forbear inserting here another quotation from the said most learned father; a quotation full of mystery and beauty; it contains an account of some indiscreet amours between the angels and the antediluvian ladies, who, according to him, were enchanting coquets, and drew out of these their gallants, secrets not fit to be named. But hear the holy father: Ὁ ἀγγελος ἐκεῖνος οἱ τὴν ἄνω κλῆρον εἰληχότες, καλολιθίσαντες εἰς νας, ἐξεῖπον τὰ ἀπόρρητα ταῖς γυναίξιν. &c. *Id. Strom. l. 5. p. 227.*

And now I will make bold to say and prophecy of myself and this my work:

*Exegi monumentum ære perennius  
Regalique situ pyramidum altius.*

- - -  - - -

*Non omnis moriar, istaque pars mei  
Vitabit libitinam* - - -

- - -  
- - -

- - - *Sume superbiam  
Quæsitam me, itis, et mihi delphica  
Lauro cinge volens, Melpomene, comam.*

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