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A P O L O G Y

F O R T H E

C L E R G Y

O F T H E

Church of *England*,

I N A

L E T T E R

T O T H E

Lord Bishop of BANGOR.

Wherein some unjust Insinuations against them, in his Lordship's Answer to the Representation of the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation are detected and confuted; and the necessity of Learning, in order to a right Understanding and Exposition of the Scriptures, demonstrated; contrary to what his Lordship asserts, particularly in the 20th Section of his first Chapter; and to many other dangerous Positions in the Course of that Book.

By a Clergyman of the Church of *England*.

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A N
A P O L O G Y
F O R T H E
C L E R G Y
O F T H E
Church of *England.*

My Lord,

AFTER your Promise of an Answer to the Representation of the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation, most sober Men expected, that your Lordship's Intentions were to put an End to that unhappy Controversy. What your Lordship had replied to Dr. *Snape* and others, was thought a Treatment proper enough to private Persons, who might not possibly have all the Right they imagin'd, of calling upon a Bishop for his Explanation; but when you came to the Convocation, it was generally suppos'd that a Doctrine taken up upon a particular Occasion, (and that Occasion now no more) wou'd be then given up to be treated at Discretion. Upon this Supposition, most People thought indeed that you had acted a great and becoming Part, and given the World a remarkable In-

stance how gallantly you could maintain your Ground, at the same time that you were meditating a Retreat. But all these were but the vain Surmises of Persons, it seems, unacquainted with your Lordship's Temper. You are so far from meditating a Retreat, so far

V. the Bi-
shop of
Bangor's
Answer to
the Repr-
sentation,
P. 9, 14,
of the Pre-
face.

“ from evading or drawing back, that you find
“ yourself under irresistible Arguments to press for-
“ ward, to open and unfold your Doctrines more
“ widely, and more unreservedly, than you did before,
“ and to do every thing that lies in your Power for
“ the Support of a Cause, whereon the Gospel, the
“ Reformation, and the Church of England, as well
“ as the common Rights of Mankind, do depend.

By every thing that lies in your Power, your Lordship does not mean, I hope, (what Men of moderate Capacities pretend to espy upon the very Surface of your Doctrine, and Men of Speculation extend much farther) dissolving all Order, and destroying all Authority, and setting up a State of Confusion amongst us. I for my Part, my Lord, judge no Man; the trying the Heart, and knowing its Intentions is the Work of God, and to him I commit it. But I cannot but be sorry that any such Umbrage for Censure should be given, and concern'd to find a Person of your Lordship's great Learning and Ingenuity decrying that in others, which every Day you make so much use of yourself; and a Bishop of the Church of Christ, whose Care it should be to comfort, and encourage, and commend inferiour Orders, only anxious lest they meet with too much Respect in the World; and therefore willing to let the People see how they are to weigh out to them no more Reverence and Esteem than is due, cautiously, and minutely, and as it were in Gold Scales, by Grains and Scruples. You, my Lord, who have so many Honours and Advantages annex'd

annex'd to your high Station, the Conversation of the Great; and the Applauses of the Less, plenty of all outward Blessings, and every thing conducing to your Ease and good Appearance in the World, are seated above the reach of Scorn, and may bid defiance to Contempt: But how shall we, who have not yet got beyond the State of the Primitive Christians, but to *this very hour do both hunger and thirst, and are naked,* ^{1 Cor. 4:} *and are buffeted, and have no certain Dwelling* ^{11.} *place,* how shall we, in these Circumstances, both bear the weight of our Misfortunes, and bear up our Heads too against the Tides of Reproach and Scurrility, that are rolling in upon us? Next to the Assistance of God, and the Honour of being his Ministers, all our Confidence lay in our Learning, all our Reputation in the supposition of our better-improv'd Capacities than others. This, my Lord, you have bereav'd us of at a very unfortunate Juncture; you have stript us naked, when we have most need of Armour, both on the right Hand and on the left, and have taken, as it were, all the *Siles wherewith we were to sharpen our Swords and* ^{2 Sam. 13:} *our Spears* ^{21.} *for defence out of the Camp of Israel,* at the same time that an Army of *Philistines* have set the Battle in Array against us. And can your Lordship wonder that there are Men amongst us of Spirit enough to resent it? Can your Lordship really think that the Right of complaining lies on your Side, and that not you, who made the Attack, but we, who endeavour to repell it, are culpable. The confuting of Errors, and exposing of Doctrines that are contrary to the Word of Truth, never was, nor never can be a strange Method of Preaching, so long as such a Latitude is given to Men's Fancies in Religion; but suppose it were, and the

Licence

- Licence therein taken much greater and disorderly than it is, yet your Lordship well remembers that there is no Remedy for it but Authority ; and Authority “ *that keeps Men’s Tongues in Silence and Submission, and affrightens them into the*
- P. 286. “ *Instances of external Subjection, is the Confusion,*
262. “ *you know, of Uncharitableness, of Hatred and Malice, and Revenge, and Tyranny, and Oppression,*
- “ *and insupportable to an Honest and Christian Mind ;*
- “ *and therefore it sounds very grossly, that your*
- “ *Lordship, who think you act a glorious Part, in*
- “ *opposing such Enormity, should call in the Re-*
- P. 12. “ *verend the Bishops to your aid, and be willing,*
- Pref. “ *for your own sake, to retain such an Authority, as*
- Vid. Serm. “ *shall oblige Men to forbear the Profession and Pub-*
- p. 27. “ *lication of what they believe, let them believe it of*
- “ *never so great Importance. But alas ! what good*
- “ *can my Lords the Bishops do you ? they dare*
- Ibid. not exercise an Authority “ *that devests Jesus*
- “ *Christ of his own Empire in his Kingdom. You*
- “ *have tied them up close from judging and cen-*
- “ *suring and* “ *trampling upon other Men’s Consciences,*
- “ *and now that you would let them loose to do it,*
- “ *they dare not come to your Rescue and Delive-*
- Ibid. rance, for fear of obstructing “ *Sincerity and com-*
- “ *mon Honesty, and mistaking Stupidity and Sleep for*
- Jer. 30. “ *Peace, so that there is none to plead your Cause,*
- 13, 14. “ *all your Lovers have forgotten you, they seek you*
- “ *not.*
- P. 6. “ *The Debate, however, by this means, my Lord,*
- Pref. “ *is taken from the Bar of humane Authority, and*
- “ *brought to that of Reason and Scripture ; the Appeal*
- “ *is made to the Judgment of all, and every one*
- “ *left at liberty to publish his Thoughts in what*
- Ibid. manner he pleases. “ *This is what no Christian or*
- “ *Protestant can justly and consistently find fault with.*”
- “ *And therefore I make no doubt but that your*
- “ *Lordship will excuse me, if now I take leave of*
- “ *you*

you a little, and turn to the People, to set before them, in a true Light, some of your Lordship's Doctrines, such especially, as fall within the Aspect of this Portion of Scripture, which I have purposely made choice of, to give a Track to my Thoughts in so diffus'd a Subject.

In which are some things hard to be understood, 2 Pet. 3. which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as 16. they do also the other Scriptures, to their own Destruction.

The *some things hard to be understood*, which St. Peter here declares are somewhere to be met with in St. Paul's Epistles, are suppos'd by most Interpreters to be certain Passages relating to the Doctrine of Faith, which some Christians, in those earliest Days of the Church, endeavour'd to pervert, the better to evade the necessity of a godly Life. St. Paul's Doctrine was; *That the first and chief Foundation whereon the Christian was to ground the hopes of his Salvation, was Faith; that this was the ancient Principle that justified the Patriarchs; for Abraham believed in God, and it was counted unto him for Righteousness; and therefore, we conclude, says he, that a Man is justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law, and that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by Faith in Jesus Christ.* This Doctrine the Vicious in those Days laid hold on, and to give it a better turn to their Inclinations, *Faith* they accounted a mere Belief in Christ, and the Works of the Law the Duties of Moral and Evangelical Righteousness; and thence they concluded, that a clear Belief in Christ and firm Reliance on his Merits and Mediation wou'd intitle them to future Happiness, without the trouble of a virtuous Life, and the sad fatigue of perfecting Holiness in the fear of the Lord: quite contrary to the Apostle's Sense, who in

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Rom. 1.
18. the very same Place where he declares, that *the Just shall live by Faith*; he affirms likewise, that *the Wrath of God is reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, that hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*. Nothing certainly (next to the Favour of God in the Face of Jesus Christ) is of more comfort to us than the Book of Life; the Holy Scriptures, wherein the Riches of God's Mercy, and Treasures of his Wisdom are compriz'd, are a Gift of an inestimable value;

2 Tim. 3.
16. 15. they are *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness*; and to make us all *finally wise unto Salvation*, if we will but read and reverence them; and yet nothing hath been more grossly abus'd, more impiously prophan'd, more basely perverted from their true design and meaning, than these sacred Writings have been in all Ages. In this humorous and pragmatistical Age of ours, so fruitful in wild Opinions, some have boldly thrown off the Authority of Holy Writ, as a cunningly devis'd Fable, that has no other Foundation, but the Invention of Politicians, and the easy Faith of Fools. Others, that deny not the Authority of it, have nevertheless debas'd it much; and in the way of wanton Criticism, deem'd it so confus'd in its Method, and in its Style so flat and unadorn'd, in many things so dark, so incoherent, so contradictory to itself, as to sink it below the rate of many humane Compositions. Some (that we are pretty well acquainted with) put their People off with little Extracts and Manuals, and forbid them the godly Exercise of reading the Scripture, for fear that the depth of the Mysteries contain'd therein should overset their Reason (as they call it) and distract the Church; and in prejudice taken from this Abuse, others (that we are nearer related to) have run

into

into the contrary Extreme, have broke down the Fences of Order and Decency, made of the *lowest of the People* Stewards of the Mysteries of Christ, and committed the Preaching and Exposition of the Scriptures (from the conceit of their Plainness and Perspicuity) indifferently to all. The Church of *England* has always wisely pursued the *Middle Way*. She thinks that the Holy Scriptures are neither so dark and unintelligible, Vide p. 101. as to be with-held from her Children for fear of Danger; nor yet so plain and easy, as to be submitted to the Interpretation of every wanton Fancy: She perceives that there are Shallows wherein the youngest Lambs may wade, and Depths wherein the greatest Camels may swim; and therefore she expects, that the *Ignorant* should be *apt to learn*, and the *Priests Lips to preserve Knowledge*. Tho' she lays no mighty stress upon humane Learning; yet she cannot but conceive, that a competent Share thereof is no bad Assistant to a right Exposition of the Scriptures. Tho' she makes no arrogant Claims to Infallibility; yet for Peace and Unities sake, she cannot but require the Submission of private Judgments to her mature Decisions; and tho' she utterly disclaims the over-bearing influence of *great Names*, and a blind adherence to meer Authority; yet she cannot but imagine, that the Opinion of Reverend Fathers, the Decrees of general Councils, and the long Continuance of her own Laws and Canons, ought, in every Dispute, to be had in some Force and Veneration amongst us. Of late there are risen up in our Church, and some of them Persons of great Renown and sacred Character (I wish we cou'd conceal it) who, under pretence of standing up for the common Rights of Mankind, and destroying, what they call, a Spiritual Usurpation; are destroying, in truth,

all Order and Uniformity amongst us, introducing a Babel of licentious Confusion, and endeavouring to bring you, by the false Notion of Seif-sufficiency, to a settled contempt of those that are set over you in the Lord.

“ Believe it no longer, say they (for these are the notable Words wherein they harangue you) believe
 “ it no longer, that there are any Rulers and Govern-
 “ nors in the Church, whose Persons you are to reve-
 “ rence, and Determinations to acquiesce in. Rulers
 “ and Governors we know of none, they are no more in
 “ Scripture than Leaders, and Guides, and Shepherds
 “ under Christ, who may direct you to proper Pastures,
 “ if you think fit, but must not expect to treat you like
 “ Sheep indeed. You are of the same Species with
 “ themselves, and have Eyes and Understandings as
 “ well as they; you are to be led therefore, and not
 “ driven; led to your own true Happiness, not driven
 “ to Market, or to Slaughter; no, nor to be shorn and
 “ fleec’d, whenever the Pleasure or Profit of these Shep-
 “ herds require it. They may pretend to a little more
 “ Learning than you perhaps, but what avails that?
 “ Things were brought to a fine pass indeed, if the great
 “ and important Points of Christianity cou’d not be
 “ judg’d of without (what they call) Learning, nor
 “ were to be determined by Men’s own Capacities,
 “ but by the Decisions of others, who, upon the whole,
 “ are less qualified Judges than any; forasmuch as
 “ their Learning and Philosophy is but the common Pa-
 “ rent of Errour, and Corrupter of true Religion.
 “ Why do these haughty Ministers of Christ then take
 “ so much upon them? Is not all the Congregation Holy
 “ and Learned as well as they? Nay, have not the
 “ Illiterate and most Ignorant as much Right and Ob-
 “ ligation to judge for themselves, as the greatest
 “ Clerks? Are they the only Temples of the Holy Ghost?
 “ and does the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding,
 “ the Spirit of Prophecy and Interpretation, reside solely

Vide Bp.
 of Bang.
 Answer, p.
 60.

97, 98,
 99.

292.

“ in their Breasts? *Whatever concerns the Salvation* 331.
 “ *of all Christians, is equally propos'd to the under-*
 “ *standing of all; and therefore we exhort you to*
 “ *stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ has made*
 “ *you free, to make use of your own Eyes; to be di-*
 “ *rected by your own Judgments; and not to sub-*
 “ *mit your Understandings, upon any Account, to others;*
 “ *for he that does this, so far he forsakes the brightest* 293.
 “ *Sunshine of Noon Day, and prefers the uncertain*
 “ *glimmering of the darkest Lanthorn before it. They'll*
 “ *tell you perhaps, of breaking thro' Order and Uni-*
 “ *formity, of neglecting Authority, and despising the*
 “ *Governors of the Church of Christ: But be not ye*
 “ *afraid of their vain Terrors, these are all Trifles,* 64.
 “ *Niceties, Dreams, Inventions of Men, and Words of*
 “ *a long continuance indeed, but in reality, of no Signi-*
 “ *ficance at all. The Order that Christ lays the great* 286.
 “ *Stress on, is an internal Order, the Government of*
 “ *Men's Minds by Faith working by Love. The Uni-* 287.
 “ *formity of Gestures, Sounds, Cringes, Bows, &c.*
 “ *which amuse the Senses, and dissipate the Under-*
 “ *standing, is what he matters not. Authority has in* 313.
 “ *all Ages of the World been the hindrance of Truth,*
 “ *and promoter of Error; and too great a regard to*
 “ *frail and fallible Teachers is the Reproach of our* 65.
 “ *Nature, and the Destruction of our Understandings.*
 “ *Come then cast in your Lot with us, and we will*
 “ *shew you the only way to Christian Rest and Christian*
 “ *Peace. We will guide you out of the perplext* 316.
 “ *Mazes of infinite humane Variety, and unbounded*
 “ *humane Fancy: We will undo the Snares of hu-*
 “ *mane Artifice, compos'd of Words without Meaning,*
 “ *and Power without Right, and Outside without Sin-*
 “ *cerity: We will, in short, set you free from the beg-*
 “ *garly Elements of Intellectual Obedience; teach you*
 “ *to think and to judge for yourselves; and in a small*
 “ *time, make you greater and wiser than these Spiritual*
 “ *Rulers that now lord it over you.*

After such an Harangue as this, they may leave you very well to the Iniquity of the Times to confirm these Impressions upon you, and to the sundry Methods, that prophane Persons are encourag'd to make use of, to depretiate our holy Function, and make the Clergy of this Land contemptible. We, for our parts, my Brethren, are instructed by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, *in every thing to approve ourselves as the Ministers of God, in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Necessities, in Distresses.* As the humour of Man-kind runs, we must be contented with Honour and Dishonour, with evil Report and good Report; but while we are allow'd of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, we cannot but be jealous over you with a godly Jealousy; we cannot but think, that those who go about to alienate your Affections from us, and to represent us as the *Filth and Offscouring of all things*, do not only revile and calumniate us, but highly prejudice you; because they destroy in you that good Opinion of us, which alone can forward your Edification, by giving a favourable Reception to what we say; and therefore, I think, I may be allow'd, in what I have farther to discourse upon this Text, to join these two Points together; and while I am endeavouring to magnify our Office, at the same time instruct you in your Duty, and establish you in your Affections thereunto. And this I shall do,

I. By shewing you that the Holy Scriptures, upon several Accounts, are not so plain and intelligible as is pretended, but in some Things hard to be understood.

II. That supposing they were so plain as is pretended, yet this would not lessen the Authority, nor take away the Necessity of Spiritual Guides.

what the Apologists both Ancient and Modern have said: But even after we have got over this, and are fully convinc'd of the Divine Origine of Scripture, we shall nevertheless meet with sundry Difficulties, in the Course of our reading it. For,

1. In composing an History, there are several Things, we know, which the Author purposely omits, because he supposes the People, to whom he writes, not unacquainted with them; and yet, in after Ages, these very Things become highly necessary to a right understanding of it; and he that lives at a distance, (if he intends to read it to advantage) must be furnish'd with the Knowledge of them before he begins. In this regard, many Passages in the Old Testament must needs be very dark and obscure to them, that are not in some measure acquainted with the Customs, Factions, and Opinions that were then predominant in the World, and which these Passages do allude to. Many Ceremonies in the Ritual Law are utterly unaccountable to those, who never yet heard of the Religion of the Ancient *Zabians*, a People among whom the *Israelites* at that time sojourn'd, and in contraposition to whose Magick and Idolatry many of these Rites were appointed. The Labours of some Modern Criticks, who have thoroughly consider'd the Writings of those learned Rabbies that lived about our Saviour's Time, have, by the help of that kind of Learning, clear'd up some Texts relating to particular Sects, Customs, and Opinions then among the *Jews*, which were dark and obscure before: And I cannot but believe that a reasonable Enquiry into the Practices and Principles of the Ancient *Gnosticks*, might greatly conduce to the better Understanding of many Passages in the later Epistles of the Apostles, which

which seem not so clear and intelligible to some. The frequent Digressions and Dislocations in Scripture, whereby the Thread of its History is often interrupted, are what must needs be of great perplexity to those, that are not acquainted with the Analitical Writings of Divines: And (if I may be allow'd to bring the Books of the Prophets under this Class,) their Predictions are lost without the History of subsequent Ages, and their lofty Thoughts and Expressions, their Metaphors, and Allusions, and Allegories, which exalt and improve the Soul at once, and give so much pleasure to the knowing Reader, are quite thrown away upon such, as have not a competent Skill in this Divine Rhetorick. Add to this, that the Scriptures are writ in Languages hard to be understood, and what every common Reader has little or no acquaintance with: That the *Hebrew* Tongue in particular proves difficult to the very Learn'd, because we have lost the Genuine Sense of many Phrases in it, and are often perplext with equivocal Significations, that arise from the Scantiness of it; and that the help which we promise ourselves from Translations, is scarce so great as might be expected; because if in many Places the true Sense of the Original is not mis'd, yet through the whole, there runs such a train of *English* Hebraisms, occasion'd by too scrupulous an Adherence to the Original, as cannot but contribute to its Obscurity.

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The use that I would make of this Observation, is this. That since a competent Knowledge of the learned Languages, those especially wherein the Scriptures are originally writ, and a competent Knowledge of the History of those Ages, which were coincident with the Times, and of those Countries, which were adjacent to the Places made mention of in
 Holy-

Holy-Writ, is no more than necessary to the understanding of this Part of Scripture; then certainly Learning (however it has been traduc'd of late) is no bad Hand-maid to Theology; and (how loud soever Men's Pretensions may be) to think to attain to a Knowledge of these Matters without Education and Industry, (since the Days of Inspiration are now at an end) is meer Madness and Enthusiasm.

P. 331.

“ 2. *But the Doctrinal Parts of the Scripture you'll*
 “ *say, are plain and easy, and no way chargeable with*
 “ *such Obscurity: They are what every one is oblig'd*
 “ *to know and confess, and therefore adapted to every*
 “ *ones Capacity.* Nay, but if you look into the Doctrines, my Brethren; you'll find that here the main Obscurity does arise, and that in many Points they are so far from being attemper'd to every ones Capacity, that they are in truth adapted to none's, and yet every one oblig'd to know and confess them. The Doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, is an Article we are all oblig'd to confess, and yet we cannot comprehend it: Dare we then reject it; or suspend our Belief of it? No, for when we see in Scripture that there are three, to whom we are devoted in Baptism, three, in whom we must Believe, to whom we must Pray, by whom we must Bless, and to whom we must give Worship and Glory, we are compell'd to acknowledge it, though we cannot conceive in what Manner it can be. The same is to be said of the Incarnation of the Son of God, of the Workings of his Blessed Spirit upon the Souls of Men, and of sundry other mysterious Points relating to the Nature and Decrees of the Almighty, which the Understanding both of Men and Angels cannot comprehend, and yet the Faith of the meanest Christian is engag'd to embrace.

embrace. The Truth is, one, and no small Use of these Doctrines is, the casting down Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and the bringing into Captivity every Thought to the obedience of Christ, as the Apostle words it; 'Tis to teach us Humility, and that, after we have tried the strength of our Understandings never so long, we must be constrain'd at last to center ourselves in those Summaries of Faith, that have had so long an Approbation in the Christian Church.

2 Cor. 10. 5.

There are other Doctrines besides these of a lower Rank and Order, such as relate to Faith and good Works, to the secret Operations of Grace, to our Regeneration, Sanctification, Justification, &c. which requires no small compass of Knowledge, and penetration of Judgment rightly to discuss. Nay, the lowest moral Precept that we can think of must be truly stated and explain'd, and in many respects our Cases may be so varied and circumstantiated, as to require the Deliberation of a Casuist, before we can make it a Rule for our Practice. So true it is, that the Doctrines which the Scripture propound even in Matters that concern our Salvation, are in some Cases not so plain and self evident, but that they will admit of a standing Order of Men, to explain and inculcate them unto the end of the World.

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This however must not be dissembled, that, in Matters which more immediately concern our Salvation, the Scripture is always most familiar and condescensive: It rises by degrees from Moral to Evangelical, and from progressive to perfective Virtues, till at last it carries us up to Heaven, and sets us before the Face of him that dwelleth in Light that is inaccessible. So that the most ignorant, if they will but look into this Book, want not Matter for their Instruction;

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nor the most elevated, Subjects to excite and recompence their Contemplations. In a Word, God, who from all Eternity understood our Genius's, and Capacities, and sundry Dispositions best, has, in his infinite Wisdom, so attemper'd the Revelation of his Will, as, in one Instance or other, to make it agree with us all: And therefore to conclude this Head in the Words of a very renown'd Author; *God knowing, says he, that some Persons must be wrought upon by Reason, others allured by Interest, some driven by Terror, and others again brought in by Imitation, has by a rare and merciful (if I may so call it) Suppleness of Wisdom, so varied the Heavenly Doctrine into Ratiocinations, Mysteries, Promises, Threats, and Examples, that there is not any sort of People but what may find Religion represented in a Form most likely to make Impression upon them.* And so I proceed to my

*Second Proposition, which was to shew, that, supposing the Scriptures were never so plain, yet this would not lessen the Authority, nor take away the Necessity of Spiritual Guides. The Reason is, because their Commission and Authority does not depend upon the Plainness or Obscurity of any thing: It was given and appointed them by Christ, to serve the Ends of his Church, and cannot be revok'd but by the same Hand; till therefore there be an Interposition of his to this Purpose, their Power and Authority must have the same force and efficacy which it receiv'd from him at first, in spite of all the Malice and Opposition of Mankind, unto the End of the World: Consequently therefore, if humane Benedictions, humane Absolutions, humane Denunciations, humane Excommunications, were ever of any weight and validity in the Christian Church, they are to be deem'd so still.**

** Especially, when the Commission is given by the
 Mouth of Christ, in the same Manner as
 He did. The Spirit of the Lord is in the
 Church, and He will save the Church, as He
 will save Himself.*

Vide
 Boyl's Re-
 flect. upon
 the Stile
 of H. S.
 p. 27.

The Scriptures indeed (abating the Cases I mention'd before) are in all Points necessary to Salvation plain and intelligible enough. The Rules of Life, that God has appointed us to follow, are not so much the Product of his Power and Jurisdiction over us, as the Result of his infinite Mercy and Goodness. These were the Attributes that led him to consult the Wants, and commiserate the Necessities of the meanest of Mankind; and therefore we may observe, that, as when he took upon him the Office of a Redeemer, he did not abhor the Virgin's Womb, but appeared in the Form of a Servant, and humbled himself to Death, even the Death of the Cross; so in like manner when he took upon him the Office of a Preacher, by a wonderful Condescension, he accommodated his Doctrines to the lowest Capacities, and in plain Words and familiar Comparisons made them agree with our very Notions and Affections; in-
 somuch that *if his Gospel be hid, the Apostle might well affirm, 'tis hid to them that are lost, in 2 Cor. 4th whom the God of this World has blinded the Minds 3rd of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them.* But then, because he knew that there was no Rule so plain but it might be mistaken, no Doctrine so pure but through Passion or Prejudice it might be corrupted; because he foresaw that in all Ages false Prophets and false Teachers would arise, Lovers of Singularity, and vain Boasters, who wou'd corrupt the Faith, and bring in Heresies, stiff in the wrong, and bold enough at all Times to set up the Dagen of their own lascivious Fancies, in opposition to the Ark of his Covenant; therefore to prevent the Mischiefs that might arise from hence, he chose unto him his Apollles, and they their Suc-

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*+ Such as blind themselves by Objections, John
10: 10. Justification by works pay. 2: 10.
John 1: 10. John 1: 10. John 1: 10.*

This however must not discourage us (if we are become Fools in glorying, those that disparage us, have compell'd us) this must not discourage us, I say, from requesting of you so to account of us as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God; from endeavouring to perswade you, that the dispensing of Sacraments, and the Ministry of Reconciliation committed to our Hands, are no mean and trifling Things; but that our holy Profession in the main is not only more honourable, but more useful to Mankind, and more beneficial to Society, than any other Calling in the World.

Hard is the Condition of the Clergy of this Land, or great is the Iniquity of it, if after so long an Establishment of Christianity, and so much of their learned Labours and consummate Skill in all Sciences, that can either improve or imbellish humane Nature; they should now at last come to be accounted a useless Generation, fit only to inflame the State, and corrupt Communities; and forc'd at this time of the Day to betake themselves to the same Arguments, that the ancient Apologists employed against Heathens, to defend themselves against this Attack. Those that have no dread of the overflowings of Ungodliness, and a secret wish for the Establishment of Irreligion, may give into these Sentiments, and with their Minion Philosopher complain of the great harm that proceeds from a Liberty that Men have, upon every Sunday and oftner, to harangue all the People of a Nation at once, while the State is ignorant what they will say: But all such as are free from this Prejudice, and under no Temptation to wish Christianity abolish'd, will always be of Opinion, that a learned and regular Clergy are not only of comfort and assistance to particular Persons, but of strength and

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and security to the Government where they live; and the Extinction of them, (whatever Mr. Hobbs may think of the Matter) in the Judgment of God himself one of the sorest Calamities that can befall a Nation. *Though the Lord give you the Bread of Adversity, and the Water of Affliction, yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into a Corner any more; but thine Eyes shall see thy Teachers, and thine Ears shall hear a Voice behind thee, saying, this is the Way, walk in it.* Plainly intimating that all other National Calamities are supportable, while we have but the Ministers of God to stand in the Gap, and make Reconciliation for us; but when once these are remov'd, all then becomes Misery and Distraction; the Nation has no other Prop left, but is sinking sensibly into the lowest depth of Wretchedness and Reprobation. Without them Vice would grow Rampant, and Ignorance and Barbarity soon overspread the Land. Without them the distressed Soul would have no Comforter, the wounded Conscience no healing Medicine, and he that is ignorant of his Road to Heaven, no Voice to tell him, *this is the Way, walk thou in it.* They pray for Kings, and in the Words of Origen, fight for them too; while they contend with God in earnest Supplication and Intercessions for their Prosperity and Success. They study to reclaim Men from Sin, *which is the Repeach of any People;* and to instruct them in Righteousness, *which is the Exaltation of a Nation.* They restore and improve Learning, and hold out to the People daily a Doctrine, that not only sanctifies, but civilizes the rough Passions of Men. They, in a Word, are so far from being the Persons that *turn the World upside down,* that they are the very Men that co-operate with the Civil Powers to keep the World in good

Isa. 30. 20.

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Prov. 14. 34

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Order: And therefore the Design of discouraging their Labours, or curtailing their Privileges, should be a very unprosperous way, one would think, of making court to any Government. Happy indeed had it been for Christendom, if the unbounded desire of Power in some arrogant Bishop of *Rome* had not brought an Odium, tho' unjustly, upon all Church Government; and their too much *lording it over the Flock*, given an Occasion, to such as were willing to seek an Occasion, of drawing odious Comparisons, and rejecting lawful Authority in those, that never desire to exercise it but under proper Limitations. They, however, are no ways to be excus'd, who think they can never be secur'd from Papal Supremacy, but by introducing a Presbyterian Parity, and leaving Imputations, just enough against the first Usurpers, to be applied indefinitely to those, that, they cannot but acknowledge, do not deserve them.

Had the Church of *England* of late claimed any Power that was not at all times inherent in her; had she thunder'd out her Menaces, withheld the word of God, or dealt unnaturally by her Children. Or had her Ministers, without her knowledge, *behaved themselves unseemly*, claim'd ^a Cor. 4. a *Dominion over your Faith, walk in craftiness, and* ^{2.} *handled the Word of God deceitfully*; there might have been then some pretence for all this Outcry, and an Opposition to such Encroachments might have well been deem'd the serving of a Cause, whereon the *Gospel*, the *Reformation*, and the *common Rights of Mankind* do depend.* But since every thing wrests upon its old Foundation, without any enlargement of Power, or any Claim and Pretences to it; why all these Murmurs, and Insinuations as tho' there were, but to sap the Foundation itself, and laudably

* *And do these words mean that we should have a dominion over your faith, walk in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully*

co-operate with those that are labouring hard to destroy the Church? Why all these fierce and railing Accusations against us, but to unsettle your Minds, and draw your Affections from us, and so make our Preachings and Blessings, and other holy Administrations, cheap and disregarded? But whatever other People may think of us (*do we again begin to commend ourselves? and am I become a Fool in much boasting?*) whatever, I say, others may think of us, we are unto
 2 Cor. 2. 15. *God a sweet Saviour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one, a Saviour of Death unto Death; and to the other, a Saviour of Life unto Life.*

If then, my Brethren, we have not claim'd any undue Sovereignty over your Consciences: If we have pretended to be no more than what our blessed Saviour hath made us, Pastors and Overseers of the Flock of Christ, Messengers to teach, and Watchmen to forewarn, and Stewards to provide for the Lord's Family: If our Conversation has been amongst you in much Patience, and Meekness, and Love unfeigned, recommending ourselves, in every thing, to every
 2 Cor. 4. 2. *Man's Conscience: If our Speech and our Preaching*
 2 Cor. 2. 4, 5. *has not been with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit of Power, that your Faith should not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God: In a word, if we have not preached ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your Servants for Jesus sake: Our Request, and our Exhortation is, that you would receive us, and be kindly affected to us; if not for our own sakes, yet, at least, for the sake of him, whose Ambassadors we are; that you would remember, that, however we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, yet a great and a sacred Depositum it is, to be intrusted with the Doctrine of Reconciliation;*
 2 Cor. 4. 5. *and*

and that how low ſcever our Circumſtances, how mean ſcever our outward Appearance be, we are the Perſons that are commiſſion'd to make Peace between God and Man. In conſequence of this, we muſt again intreat you, not to lend an Ear to the Suggestions of thoſe, that take all Opportunities of ſpeaking reproachfully of us.

Do you believe that we are the Servants of the moſt high God? I know you do believe, my Brethren; then let not the Malice of ſuch, as inſidiously watch our haltings, and induſtriouſly expoſe them to the World; nay, nor the cunning Inſinuations of thoſe, that, by their high Station, and ſeeming Diſinterreſtedneſs, and ſeeming Concern for your Rights, are enough to give Sanction to any Slander, find any favourable Reception with you. They may promiſe you what they will, but Chriſtian Peace and Chriſtian Reſt is to be had no other way, than by a fixt Regard to the Laws of Chriſt, and a due Reſpect to thoſe that are ſet over you in his Name. And ſo I am come to my

Third Propoſition, Wherein I am to ſhew, that tho' the Scriptures be plain in themſelves, yet private Men forſaking their Guides, and following their own Fancies, may deprave and diſtort them to their own Deſtruction; and for the Proof of this we need not look far, we need not ſearch into the Records of obſolete Hereſy; our own Age, and our own Nation, wherein ſome of theſe ancient Errors are reviv'd, and many of a madder ſtrain invented, will abundantly ſatiſfy our Enquiry. All the Folly and Oſtentation of the primitive Gnoſticks, ſeems to have center'd itſelf in our Modern Scepticks and Free-thinkers. The Principles of *Arius* are dreſs'd up a new by *Socinus* and his Followers. Pelagianiſm is entertain'd by the Lovers of rational Divinity, and

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the Trinitarian Cause not a little impair'd by the malevolent Writings of some that have dar'd to revile it. And yet all these pretend equally to Scripture, and would fain be thought to have the Voice of the Oracles of God determining on their side. Nay, the wildest Enthusiasts that we have amongst us, Sabbatarians, Quakers, Independents, Anabaptists, Muglitionians, and the rest of that godly Crew, which the perverted use of a Toleration has augmented; however they jumble in other Matters, in this they are agreed, to shroud themselves all under the Patronage of Holy Writ. But does the Word of God countenance such Proceedure? Does it either lead Men into Error, or when they are there, supply Men with Arguments to fortify and intrench themselves in it? No, surely no. The Scriptures are holy, just, and good; and the Apostle has taught us how to account for this Event; *First*, from the Ignorance of some; and *Secondly*, from the Instability of others.

First, I have just now made mention of some of the Frantick Sectaries amongst us, and a short Reflection upon their Rise and Original will soon convince us, what a teeming Womb of Error and wild Opinions, Ignorance is, when it abandons Modesty, and adventures upon the Interpretation of Scripture. If ever Ignorance was patroniz'd in any Age, or by any People, it was in those sad times of Confusion, which both we and our latest Posterity shall have reason to remember. Those that had laid the Scheme for all the ensuing Troubles, knew very well, that Learning would be a Stumbling-block in their way, and Men of Parts and sober Ingenuity, devoted to their Prince, and bound by their Allegiance, no small Barrier against Rebellion. And therefore to run down these, they form'd a
Body

Body of bold and daring Men (for Ignorance has always Frontery enough) the Refuse of Colleges, and the Gleanings of Inns of Court. These they instructed to decry Learning as an useless Trifle ; and in time it came to be held the Hindrance of Grace, and Obstructor of inward Light. The Universities were accounted Nurseries of *Sciences falsely so called*, and of that *Philosophy and vain Deceit*, which the Apostle gives the World so much Caution against. All sober and grave Divines were represented as idle Drones, and dumb Dogs, destitute of Gifts, and that ought to give place to Men of better Illumination. Presentations were usually given to such as run in with the Madness and Iniquity of the Times ; and a numerous Colony of Lecturers and Preaching Ministers were detach'd, to turn Religion into Rebellion, and Faith into Faction. What sad havock these Men made with the Scriptures ; I remember, a very famous and accurate Historian gives us a Specimen. In the main, he acquaints us with this, " that most of them were Men of very mean Chr. Hist.
 " Parts, if not of scandalous Ignorance, and of l. 415.
 " no other Reputation, than their settled Ma- Vol.
 " lice to the Church of *England*. When these once were mounted, they soon brought the Scriptures to their purpose, to declare for the Directory against the Liturgy ; and the Covenant against the Constitution. Out of these they inveigh'd against the Articles, the Canons, and the Ceremonies of our Church. Out of these they fram'd Petitions against Prelates, and Accusations against their Ministers, and Remonstrances against their Sovereign. Out of these they compiled wicked Prayers, and blasphemous Thanksgivings, to interest the justice of Almighty God

Jud. 5.
23. in their Successes. *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the Inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the Mighty,* was an usual Text to raise Men and Money for the Parliament, and revive the Spirit of the good old Cause: And *cursed be he that doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully, and keepeth back his Sword from Blood,* a Spur to all manner of Cruelty; and at length, a kind of Call from Heaven to to murder their King. Good God! that ever thy blessed Word, wherein thou hast so fully declar'd the Authority, and so firmly guarded the Persons of Kings from all Violence, should ever be made an Instrument to spirit up a People to imbrue their Hands in the Blood of the best of Princes, and the best of Men.

Hos. 4.
1, 2. After this sad Period, and in judgment for so black a Crime, an universal Frenzy overspread the Nation; *There was no Truth, no Mercy, no Knowledge of God in the Land, which was defil'd with Swearing, Lying, Killing, Stealing, and committing Adultery: My People was destroyed for lack of Knowledge,* says God; for *they that handled the Law knew not me.* For lack of Knowledge! and yet never was there an Age that pretended to more, or to come by it cheaper. The *Old Men they dreamt Dreams, and the Young Men they saw Visions, their Sons and their Daughters all prophesied, and their very Handmaids were guided by the Spirit.* In consequence of which, it came to pass that the most extravagant Notions, Deceptions of Fancy, and sometimes worse Delusions were vended for the Oracles of God; when preaching the Gospel was made a Refuge to broken Tradesmen, and the *Sword of the Spirit* submitted to the handling of any common Soldier.

It would be offensive to pious Ears, were I but to mention what wild Opinions and blasphemous
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*Young's
Ser. Vol.
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*Eph. 4,
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taken up into Heaven to receive Instructions for his future Errand: *And the Word was God*; that, he was God's Messenger; and *all things were made by him*; that his Preaching makes us all new Creatures. Strange and amazing! what Riddles are here? What wresting of Words, and abuse of plain Sense, and mangling of Scripture, purely to serve an Hypothesis; which, when all's done and said, will not come up to their main design; for this is no way to make *Christianity not mysterious*; so far from it, that this new method of Interpretation, instead of making it rational, makes it ridiculous; (and as an ingenious Writer expresses it) *takes Mystery out of the Doctrine of Scripture, where it is venerable and worthy the Majesty of God; and places it in the Phrase of Scripture, where it is opprobrious, and repugnant to his Sincerity.*

The plain Truth is, tho' Reason be of great assistance to us, in examining the Evidence of Christianity, the Sense and Authority of Scripture, and the several Consequences that result from thence; yet if we surrender ourselves intirely to its Conduct, we shall find it a dangerous Guide in Matters of Religion. The Moment we quit our hold of the Anchor of Faith, and bid adieu to the Sense of the Church, which alone is the Pillar and Foundation of Truth; we run the hazard of being driven down the Stream into an Ocean of Errors, there *to be toss'd to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the slight of Men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

That this is true in Fact, we have too sad a Conviction from innumerable Instances among us of Persons, that renouncing Church-fellowship, and forsaking the *Guides of their Youth*, have liv'd Christians at large for some time, and so run about from Sect to Sect, and from one wild Opi-

to be taken up into Heaven to receive Instructions for his future Errand: And the Word was God
Young's Ser. Vol. 2. p. 78.
Eph. 4, 14.

nion to another; till at length, wearied with roving, and grown sick of Religion in general, they have turn'd Scepticks in Notion, and Atheists in Practice; and so *made Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conscience* both at once. In a word, he that withdraws himself from the Bosom of the Church, and the Care of those that are to watch for his Soul, does so far deprive himself of the ordinary influence of God's Favour, God's Grace, God's Protection, and the many inestimable Blessings annext to that Communion. And being left in this Condition, what wonder if the Tempter takes the Advantage to lead him into the Wilderness of Confusion, and there present to his Fancy false Schemes of Religion, mean Thoughts of the Mysteries of Faith, and unworthy Apprehensions of God's Justice or Mercy, or the like; and impress these Ideas with such a liveliness upon his Imagination, as to make them be taken all for new Light, and new Discoveries? And because a new Discovery is not only very pleasing to the Inventor, but a very uneasy thing too, till he be handsomely delivered of it; therefore to give it credit in the World, the holy Scriptures must be miserably wrested, their Scope mistaken, their Sense abus'd, their Periods mangled, and their whole Design perverted, to countenance a vile Opinion, that perhaps owes its Original to a Suggestion of Satan; and its Growth to the Nutrition of a Capricious Brain. And having made thus bold with the Word of God, there is no doubt but that all Authority inferior to it must be made strike Sail. The most ancient Traditions must give place to his new Discoveries, the Consent of the Catholick Church be overborn by the Dictates of his private Spirit, and the Opinions of former Councils and Fathers, of present Bishops and

Divines,

Divines, trampled under foot, if they pretend to contest it with his greater Knowledge and Illumination. Good God! to what a length of Enthusiasm will an idle Conceit of our own Abilities bring us, when void of Humility, and the too long experienc'd sense of our frequent Infirmities.

“ But what must we do in this Case, you'll say?
“ Must we not trust to our own Understandings rather
“ than the Dictates of others who may equally misguide
“ us? They are frail and fallible Men as well as
“ we; God has no where taught them the right In-
“ terpretation of his Law more than us: Why then
“ should we prostitute our Consciences at their Feet?
“ What Capacities we have are our own, and given
“ us by God to guide us: He hath made no Difference
“ between Man and Man in this Respect, and there-
“ fore an honest illiterate Man is as capable of judg-
“ ing for himself in Matters of Religion, as all your
“ learned Men united, even supposing them met toge-
“ ther in a general Council, with all possible Marks
“ of Solemnity and Grandeur. *+ ay Doubtless!*

P. 97, 28,
329.

This Objection I was very well aware of; and therefore it is that under my

Fourth and last Proposition, I am now to shew you upon what Accounts it becomes the Duty of private Persons to submit their Judgments in Matters of Religion to the Determinations of their Spiritual Guides, so long as these Determinations are not contrary to the Word of God. I add, so long as these Determinations are not contrary to the Word of God, because whatever Determinations are so, we ought to reject, and despise the Authority of any, be his Character or Station never so great, that comes to dispossess us of this plain Truth, that we ought to believe God rather than Man. Upon this Principle it is acknowledged that the Reformation of the Church of

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England first began. But how was it carried on and compleated? Was every one, that had sprung a Scruple in his Brain, and could advance any thing against the Corruptions of *Rome*, admitted to the Consultation? Was there no respect had to the Capacities, and Orders, and Qualities of Mankind in this Affair? Was all effected by the fortuitous Concourse of rambling Objections, which jumbling together for some time, polish'd themselves by Degrees, and so subsided into this beautiful System of Religion; as some will tell you, that of the World was made by Atoms. Those that pretend to so much Zeal, and Concern, and Affection for it, would do well to tell us, how we may, for their Reputations sake, dispossess our own People (for those that are without, have already made their Advantage of it) how we may dispossess our own People of this gross Idea, which they in their late Writings have left us of the Reformation: For we know of doing it no other Way, than by telling them plainly that this whole Representation is injurious to Truth; that the first Essays towards a Reformation were begun and agitated in this Kingdom by Persons of Sobriety, Gravity, and great Learning; that the Rule they govern'd themselves by, was the Word of God, nicely examin'd, and truly explain'd by the help of Antiquity, and Analogy of Reason; that the *Illiterate* in those Days, had no *learned Advocate* to plead for them as the only proper Judges in Matters of Religion; that the Convocation was then accounted the only capable Persons to adjust this Affair, nor in the least less respected for being met together in a *general Council*, with their usual *Marks of Grandeur and Solemnity*; that the Wisdom of the Nation resolv'd itself *then* into their Decisions,

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and the Supreme Authority thereof, King, Lords, and Commons, confirm'd and ratify'd them; that every thing, in short, was concluded for the good of the whole; nothing untrue caught, nothing unlawful enjoyn'd, nothing necessary omitted. Upon this Foundation it was that we stood then, and here we call upon Men to enquire whether we have made any Alteration since. Has any of the Clergy of this Land invaded Christ's Kingdom, and behaved himself like the

2 Thes. 2. *Man of Sin, who opposeth and exalteth himself above*
 4. *all that is called God; that we are so often told that Christ himself is the only King in his own Kingdom? Has the Act of Toleration lost its force, and the Secular Arm of Penal Laws to bring about Uniformity, are they reviv'd again; that we hear so much of the Engines of this World, of Prisons, Fines, Banishments, lesser Penalties, and negative Discouragements? Do we pretend to Infal-*

2 Pet. 2.3. *libility, or claim any unjust Authority over you; that you are so often caution'd against submitting your Understandings and prostituting your Consciences at our Feet? Have we corrupted the Doctrines deliver'd to us, and through Cove-*

1 Sim. 12. *tousness, with feign'd Words made Merchandize of*
 3. *you; that you are expressly charg'd to be scrupulous of what we say, and trust your own Capacities rather than our Interpretations? Whose Ox have we taken, or whose Ass have we taken, or whom have we defrauded, whom have we oppress'd, or of whose Hands have we received any Bribe to blind our Eyes therewith, that we hear so much of Selling, and Slaughtering, and Shearing, and Fleecing the Flock of Christ? One would really think, by the force of these Insinuations, that all the violence of an Inquisition, and all the Ignorance and Spiritual Tyranny of Rome was a going to overflow the Land again; and that our Order was sunk*
 into

Ghost. Him he made his Vicegerent here on Earth, while he continues in the Bosom of his Heavenly Father: Him he appointed to *lead the Apostles and first Christians into all Truth, to teach them all Things, to bring to their Remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them, and so make them fit Stewards of the Mysteries, and able Dispensers of the Word of Life. This Knowledge the Spirit of Truth convey'd unto them by conversing immediately with their Spirits, by impressing it clearly upon their Understandings, and at the same time illuminating their Minds, and exalting their Understandings to comprehend it. What was thus wonderfully bestow'd upon them, their Successors are forc'd to acquire by hard Study, great Industry, and frequent and fervent Addresses to the Fountain of Divine Light. For besides a stable Serenity of Mind, neither ruff'd with Passions, nor distracted with the Cares of Life, there is likewise an exact Knowledge of the learned Languages, a competent Skill in most kind of Humane Literature, and a Judgment quick and penetrating, to distinguish between the literal and figurative Sense, to attend to the Scope and Coherence of Things, to compare one Place with another, and illustrate cloudy Texts by those that are more clear, undoubtedly requisite to a moderate understanding of the Scripture. Our blessed Saviour tells us,*

John 16. 13. *that every Scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a Man which is an Householder, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure things new and old. Modern Translations, and Modern Expositions may be of some Service to him; but if he would be instructed unto the Kingdom of God indeed, he must have recourse to the old Originals; he must drink deep of all Jewish and Rabbinical Learning, to know the Sense of the Old Testam-*

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ment, and deeper still of the Writings of Primitive Fathers and Commentators, of ancient Apologists and Historians, to be thoroughly acquainted with the New. For if, in the Apostles Days, when much of the Scripture was not written, and God was pleas'd to instruct Men by Miracles, St. Paul requires Timothy not to neglect *the Gift that was in him, but to give diligence to Reading and Meditation,* and other proper means of Improvement, and from a deep consideration of the weight of his Office, cries out with a kind of Astonishment, *who is sufficient for these things?* Much more is such Reading and Meditation necessary for us, who have none of our natural Defects supply'd by miraculous Institution, and yet the Burthen of our Ecclesiastical Employment not at all diminish'd.

1 Tim. 4.
13, 14.
2 Cor. 2.
16.

To instance but in one branch of this Employment, the Office I am now upon, the Preaching and right expounding of the Word of God. What clearness of Understanding, and soundness of Judgment, and quickness of Invention; what coolness of Thought, and calmness of Mind, and clearness of Expression; what variety of Eloquence, and series of Study, and depth of Learning, together with the things that are lacking daily, strength of Voice, and strength of Constitution, is not requir'd, to make one a *Workman* herein that needs not to be ashamed, and that knows how to behave himself in the House of God? He must reprove Vice, and recommend Virtue; he must confute Errors, and instill good Principles; he must administer Comfort, and denounce Judgments; he must, in short, accommodate himself to all Conditions and Capacities, and in his Discourses become all things to all Men, that he may by all means save some: And believe me, my Brethren, to become all things to all Men, by easy Truths to

1 Tim. 3.
15.
1 Cor. 9.
22.

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The use that I would make of this Argument is,-----that since the Business of knowing and expounding the Scriptures is found to require so much Learning and Application in the Clergy; the Laity, how quicksighted soever in other Affairs, ought not to think it any disparagement, that they are not accounted sufficient Judges in a Matter wherein they expend so little of their time; nor any affront to their Faculties, that they are press'd to take with them the assistance of Spiritual Persons, who are appointed to this very thing, viz. to co-operate with *the Spirit and Revelation in the Knowledge of God, that the Eyes of their Understanding being enlighten'd, they may know what is the hope of Christ's calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.* This is, I say, what they must not take amiss, since 'tis the only method that can conduce to the good Order and Unity of the Church, and their own private Peace and Security.

“ But why should we concern ourselves, say
 “ some, with the Order of the Church, which
 “ Christ himself lays so little stress upon it?
 “ Why should we be muzl'd and hudwink'd to
 “ aggrandize a set of Teachers? Why should
 “ we profess as other Men do; or keep our Sen-
 “ timents burning in our Breasts, for the sake of
 “ Uniformity, when our Consciences urge and
 “ goad us on to divulge them? This is incon-
 “ sistent with our spiritual Freedom, and the
 “ way to establish Stupidity as a Law.

Never such a Call was invented by a Christian Bishop to Atheists, and Deists, and Hereticks, and Sectaries of all kinds, to come and publish their impious Opinions freely, without Fear, and without Controul, for Conscience is every ones pretence,† it is always at hand,† a common stalking Horse to cover our Designs, and usher

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 “ *the good*” *the good* *you*
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 “ *the good*” *the good* *you*

into the World the most abominable Doctrines that ever yet saw the Light. I cannot but observe however, that they who advance these Positions, and are willing to leave Men in the Hand of their own Counsel (if they do it not to ease themselves of Trouble, which one would be apt to suspect) they cannot avoid the Imputation of giving great Licence to Conceit and Bigotry; and (what they least of all would have us to suspect) of constituting numberless Infallibilities at once; for he that establishes private Judgment for a guide in Religion, in effect, sets up so many Popes in the World, as there are Men of assuming Imaginations.

Young's
Sermon
2.2.p.38.

The Church of England, my Brethren, detests the Calumny of blinding the Eyes, or trampling upon the Consciences of her Children; she submits her Principles to the Examination of any, and is never better pleas'd, than when Learning and Knowledge, and Ingenuity are brought to the search; she avoids not the Light, because she knows her Doctrines are not Evil. But when once Men have approv'd and embrac'd her Communion, she conceives there is something then due to her Authority. The unlearn'd, and those whose Capacities are very mean and low, she considers as in the Condition of Children; and to prevent their being a Prey to Seducers, commits them to the guidance of others, who are charg'd with their Souls, and by whose Fault if they are led astray, God will not impute the Enormity to them; because, in the default of their own Capacities, they took the best Method that was directed them (and a Method of his own Institution) to come to the Knowledge of the Truth. Those of better Judgments and Capacities, she no where hinders from studying the Scriptures; she has no reason to dread their

Handwritten notes:
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 of her Children
 she submits her
 Principles to the
 Examination of any
 and is never better
 pleas'd than when
 Learning and
 Knowledge and
 Ingenuity are
 brought to the
 search
 she avoids not
 the Light because
 she knows her
 Doctrines are not
 Evil
 But when once
 Men have approv'd
 and embrac'd
 her Communion
 she conceives
 there is something
 then due to her
 Authority
 The unlearn'd
 and those whose
 Capacities are
 very mean and
 low she
 considers as in
 the Condition
 of Children
 and to prevent
 their being a
 Prey to
 Seducers
 commits them
 to the
 guidance
 of others
 who are
 charg'd
 with
 their
 Souls
 and by
 whose
 Fault
 if
 they
 are
 led
 astray
 God
 will
 not
 impute
 the
 Enormity
 to
 them
 because
 in
 the
 default
 of
 their
 own
 Capacities
 they
 took
 the
 best
 Method
 that
 was
 directed
 them
 (and
 a
 Method
 of
 his
 own
 Institution)
 to
 come
 to
 the
 Knowledge
 of
 the
 Truth
 Those
 of
 better
 Judgments
 and
 Capacities
 she
 no
 where
 hinders
 from
 studying
 the
 Scriptures
 she
 has
 no
 reason
 to
 dread
 their

consideration, wherein he taxes us with a gross Ignorance of the true Signification of several Words, the most obvious, and the most in use. But I cannot but observe that it seems a little strange, how the whole Christian World, for so long a time, came to be ignorant of some important Truths, which are now made the matter of his Revelation ; why the first Establishers of the Church, and Asserters of the Christian Cause, Men *separated by the Holy Ghost*, and distinguish'd by all the Gifts of God both gracious and miraculous, should believe and teach that Authority was inherent in the Church ; that Learning was requisite in her Ministers ; that Order, Rule and Uniformity were her Ornaments and Support ; and deliver it as a standing Law, that we should *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace* : And that all this should be reversed now, and we be taught backwards, that these are unwarrantable Claims, unnecessary things, *Trifles, Dreams, Inventions of Men* ; and that *Conscience and Sincerity* (be the Confusion never so great they occasion in the Church) *will answer all*.

It must needs be acknowledg'd, that there is more conviction in such a Cloud of Witnesses ; and that the general consent of the Church preponderates any private Opinion, be it never so great and popular ; and therefore (to bring the whole now to a Conclusion) I must intreat you to consider well the *Doctrine which you have receiv'd, and wherein you stand* ; and guard yourselves therewith, against any Innovations of Men, that

Rom. 16. *with good Words and fair Speeches endeavour to deceive*
 18. *the Hearts of the Simple.* They may pretend to emancipate your Judgments, and set your Consciences free from Captivity ; to seat you above the reach of vulgar Errors, make you wiser than your

Your Teachers, and retrieve the guidance of your Souls into your own Hands ; whereas in reality they are, all the while, but sowing in your Minds the Seeds of Pride and Vanity, and Ostentation ; setting up in your Consciences Cities of Refuge, for Pragmaticalness to flee to ; making you thereby their Instruments, to distract the Church of Christ ; and then pushing you off to Sea, to a rocky and tempestuous Sea, without a Pilot to conduct you ; without a Pilot, whose Business it is to teach you what Rocks you must avoid, what Course you must steer, what Star you must have in your Eye, what Compass you must observe, which Winds, and what Gales you must expect and pray for, if ever you wou'd arrive at the happy Port of a joyful Eternity. Come not ye therefore into their Secret, my dearly beloved in the Lord, unto their Assembly be not ye united. The Wounds of the Church do bleed, and look ghastly enough already ; have ye no Hand in making them worse. *But if there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Consort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies ; fulfil ye her Joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same Love, being of one Accord, and of one Mind.*

Phil. 2. 1, 2.

These last Words of the Apostle (for now I have left my Congregation and am returning to your Lordship) these last Words of the Apostle, I say, have something so pressing and emphatical in them, that I cannot but think he is laying much more stress upon Unity and Order among Christians, than your Lordship is willing to * conceive ; and is far, very far from allowing * P. 309. every one to chuse what Form of Doctrine, or Form of Worship his Conscience or his Caprice (for 'tis hard sometimes to distinguish them) shall think fit to suggest. And therefore I must intreat your Lordship to review once more what

you have written of late, and to consider with yourself, whether this Caution of the same Apostle ought not to be some stop and hindrance to your farther procedure in so dangerous an Affair. *Take heed, lest by any means this Liberty of yours become a Stumbling-block to them that are weak; for when ye sin so against the Brethren, and wound their Consciences, ye sin against Christ.*

1 Cor. 8.
9. 12.

Christ, indeed, and the first Planters of the Gospel, in destroying the Idolatry and evil Practices of the World, gave great Offence. Our first Reformers, in renouncing the Errors and Usurpations of the Church of *Rome*, gave great Offence. The Lord Bishop of *Bangor*, in opposing the present Corruptions of the Church of *England*, gives great Offence likewise; but he needs not be much concern'd at that, if he can but (like these his Examples) shew good and sufficient Reasons for so doing. Speak it out then, my Lord, and let the World know, if there really are such Corruptions in the Church of *England* as want a Reformation: if you are dissatisfied with her Communion, in the Name of God acknowledge, that your contrary Declarations were but a Copy of your Countenance, and that it was Interest that all along guided your Hand in making your Subscriptions. Wherein she hath forsaken her first Love, wherein she hath departed from the Truth, we call upon you to declare unto us; and promise you withal, that if your Discoveries prove true, and your Scheme of Amendments rational, Hand shall join with Hand to bring about so good a Work; but till such Discoveries are made, your Lordship ought to be extremely cautious how you draw Men into a contempt of things that are settled.

Every one, my Lord, has not your Talent of ascertaining the true signification of Words, and therefore

therefore when Men see your Lordship's *Nonsense, Dreams, Trifles, Niceties*, and other such like Terms of Diminution apply'd to Authority, Order and Succession in the Christian Church; may not they be tempted to take these Words in their *Original meaning?* and then finding you express so slight a Concern for religious Ordinances, *May not the Consciences of these that are weak be embolden'd to do the same?* And thro' your Knowledge shall your weak Brother perish, for whom Christ died? 'Tis certain that the Opinion which the World has conceiv'd of your Lordship's great Knowledge, makes your Example, in this regard, but too influential; and not only the Weak and Illiterate, but the boldest Despisers of our Holy Function have, upon this Occasion, re-assum'd their Courage, and are playing their Artillery upon us where-ever we go. That every one has a right to chuse what Religion he pleases, and in this Matter is to be guided by his Conscience only; that the Establish'd Church is no better than another, and the danger of Schism all voided now by the Act of Toleration; that the Communion of Saints is no Article of Faith, and the Civil Authority has no Power to enforce it; that all Articles and Canons, in short, and Subscriptions thereunto, are gross Impositions, and what ought not to fetter free-born Minds; that your Lordship's Order is defective, in Point of Succession, and a Presbyterian Consecration much of the same validity with yours; that a Bishop's Benedictions, a Bishops Absolutions, a Bishop's Denunciations are all Cant and Mummery, and "have nothing to do with the Fa-
 " your or Anger of God; and that we, who serve
 under you, are obnoxious Incumbrances to the State, and now, that the Scriptures are so easy that every Man may be a Minister to his own Family, may very conveniently be laid aside:

1 Cor. 8. 10. 11.

Vide Pre- ser. p. 64.

These

They are so they are

These are some of the Darts that are every where shot at us, and when we go about to repell them with any thing of our own, we are immediately confronted with your Lordship's Authority. You are the only Person of "*noble and extensive Principles*, our Notions run growling all in the common Track, and are despicable: You have no Interest to bribe you in your Sentiments, we are *Switzers* all, and fight for Pay; Pride and Preferments have corrupted our Judgments, and therefore what we say passes for nothing; your nice Distinctions, and well-guarded Words, and unanswerable Syllogisms are topt upon us at every turn, and these with a great deal of Noise and Laughter (a good Supplement to a bad Argument) bear all before them, and give the insolent *Free-thinker*, full of himself, and full of Thanks to you for your Assistance, a compleat Triumph over us *little Men in Black*. Nay, most of the Schismatics amongst us (and if Schism be a Sin, my Lord, *we ought not to bid them God-speed; for he that biddeth them God-speed is partaker of their evil Deeds*) most of the Schismatics, I say, begin, upon this Occasion, to look big again; are reviving their ancient Clamours against Liturgies and Ceremonies, and handing about their several Schedules of what they want to be reform'd, before they will condescend to a *Comprehension*. They glory in you; as one whose Heart is with them, however Emoluments may keep you with us; they extol you to the Skies; they write in your Defence; and for the Injuries you have sustain'd in serving their Cause, shou'd, no doubt (but that they are a little apt to prove ungrateful) bequeath you good Legacies, when they come to die. Pity it is, my Lord, that you should despise the Honour which you may justly call your own, an Honour

arising

2 Joh. 10.
11.

arising from the Dignity of your Office and high Station; an Honour, which every worthy Prelate, that adheres fixt to his Purpose of serving the Interest of the best of Churches, to the best of his Ability, is sure to have attending him; for the sorry Applauses of a glavering Party, that have *Oyl in their Mouths*, but in their *Hearts Poyson*. They hate a Mitre, my Lord, with an irreconcilable Hatred; and if once they come into the Possession of the Capitol, will be sure to throw down upon you, not only their Bracelets for the reward of your Surrender.

Pity it is, that so great a Genius as your Lordship's should be squander'd away in wrangling and disputing; in devising Sophisms, and artful Solutions, and cunningly posting your cautionary Words, whereby, when you have run into a Position that is not so tenable, you may wriggle yourself out again like a Cork Screw;

*Only to shew with how small Pain,
The Wounds of Faith are cur'd again;
Altho' by woeful Proof we find,
They always leave a Scar behind.*

Chopping of Logick at your Years, and fighting Prizes in Divinity in your Station (for 'tis an Apostolick Rule a Bishop should be no *Striker*) is not an Employment so commendable, in my Opinion; as would be the cultivating many other Subjects, wherein your uncommon Abilities wou'd gain an immortal Honour in the Republick of Learning; as would be your confuting such *unruly Talkers*, and *vain Revilers* of Religion, as now think they have found a Shelter in your Lordship's Writings; as would be (let me speak it seriously, my Lord) that great and daily labour of a Bishop, the *Care of all the Churches, whereof the Holy Ghost has made you Overseer, and which Christ has purchas'd with his own Blood*. Pity it is that you have neglected your own proper Sphere to shine in; but that cannot be help'd now. Our only present Concern is, that your Lordship's Moderation and Self-denial, which have been so long *known unto all Men*, shou'd suffer in this Dispute, and come at last to be call'd in question; that Men should have it in their Power to say,---your Lordship, who always lov'd to live in Peace, and

1 Tim. 3.
3. and Tit.
1. 7.
Tit. 1. 10.
2 Cor. 11.
28.
Acts. 12.
23.

Don't believe the hoodwinked

Let the Holy Spirit make plain a Person

Handwritten marginal notes on the right side of the page, including the name 'John' and other illegible text.

dreaded the Seas of Contention, cou'd have never been prevail'd upon, contrary to your Inclination, to lanch your *little Boat* at first, and with it outbrave the swelling Surges; but for the help of a certain Star in the Northern Hemisphere, very beneficial to skilful Mariners, and of benign Influence, when vertically under it. That they should have it to say--your Lordship, who us'd formerly to be *calm and undisturb'd* in your Arguings, just as if you had been at Prayers; has now lost that happy Temper, and is fallen into the same Practice which you so much condemn in others; the same bitterness of Speech, the same Calumny and Upbraidings, the same perverting of Words, and improving of Faults; and under the semblance of Pitying, and Praying for, and complaining of your Adversaries, worse and more refin'd Rancour and Revenge. And therefore, my Lord, if not for the sake of our common Religion, which has suffer'd too much in the course of this Controversy; if not for the sake of our common Mother the Church, which is wounded and crucified every Day by these Divisions; if not for the sake of your Brethren the Clergy, who have Infirmities enough, God knows, of their own, and need no additional weight to pull them down: yet, at least, in tenderness to your own Reputation, which you seem now to be raising but upon a sandy Foundation; in tenderness to your Christian Temper of Mind, which is losing all its Meekness now, and begins to be inflam'd and grow angry thro' the Fire of Contention; and what is more than all, in tenderness to your own Soul, which by your casting a *Stumbling-block* before others, and emboldening them to despise the Ordinances of God, may contract great and grievous Guilt; this affectation of Singularity, this love of

1 Tim. 6. Wrangling, this *doating about Questions and Strifes of Words, when of cometh Envy, Railings, and evil Surmises*; give it over, my Lord; and hear what the Spirit says unto the Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*, I know thy

Rev. 2. 2, Works, and thy Labour, and thy Patience, and how thou can'st not bear them which are evil; but I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love; remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first Works.

I am, my Lord, &c.