

THOMAS GORDON AND  
JOHN TRENCHARD,  
*The Independent Whig (1720-1721)*  
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24, 1720)

THE  
INDEPENDENT WHIG:  
OR, A  
DEFENCE  
OF  
Primitive Christianity,

And of Our  
*Ecclesiastical Establishment,*  
AGAINST  
The Exorbitant CLAIMS and  
ENCROACHMENTS of Fanatical  
and Difaffected CLERGYMEN.

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THE SEVENTH EDITION,  
With ADDITIONS and AMENDMENTS.

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V O L. I.

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L O N D O N :

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Thomas Gordon and John Trenchard, The Independent Whig: or, a Defence of Primitive Christianity, and of Our Ecclesiastical Establishment, against The Exorbitant Claims and Encroachments of Fanatical and Disaffected Clergymen. The Seventh Edition, with Additions and Amendments (London: J. Peele, 1743). Vol. 1. no. 1 (January 20, 1720) to no. 32 (August 24, 1720); vol. 2. no. 33 (August 31, 1720) to no. 54 (January 18, 1721), and the following additional items: "The Craftsman. A Sermon", "A Letter to a Gentleman at Edinburgh", a poem to the memory of John Trenchard.

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### *Editor's Introduction*

To make this edition useful to scholars and to make it more readable, I have done the following:

1. inserted and highlighted the page numbers of the original edition
2. not split a word if it has been hyphenated across a new line or page (this will assist in making word searches)
3. added unique paragraph IDs (which are used in the "citation tool" which is part of the "enhanced HTML" version of this text)
4. retained the spaces which separate sections of the text
5. created a "blocktext" for large quotations
6. moved the Table of Contents to the beginning of the text
7. placed the footnotes at the end of the book
8. reformatted margin notes to float within the paragraph
9. inserted Greek and Hebrew words as images

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[I-iii]

## TO THE LOWER HOUSE OF *CONVOCATION*.↩

YOU, Gentlemen, who are the Representatives of the Clergy of *England*, are proper Patrons of a Work, which treats of Religion, and the Clergy. It is written to promote Liberty, Virtue, and Piety; the Interests of which, I hope, you will always espouse, and esteem as your own; and will consequently approve my Design, and give [I-iv] me your Thanks, whatever may have been the Success of my Endeavours.

THE many wild and unscriptural Claims started, and impetuously maintained, by very many of those whom you represent, (and I wish I could say denied, though but faintly, by any considerable Number of others) gave Occasion to the following Sheets; and, having in them shewn to my Brethren, the Laity, the Absurdity and Impiety of those Claims, by Arguments fetched from Reason, the Gospel, and the Laws of our Country; I shall, in this Address to yourselves, endeavour to convince you, that it is your Interest to drop them; and if I can succeed in this, I presume, that all other Arguments may be useless.

THESE Gentlemen, in the Heat of their Demands and Contention for Power, have gone so far towards *Rome*, and borrowed so many of her Principles, that I see no other Medium left for them, but either to proceed on in their Journey thither, [I-v] (which, as they have managed Matters, is now a very short one) or to turn back to the Principles of the *Reformation*, (a very long Journey, I confess!) and accept of the Bishop of [\*] *Bangor*'s Scheme, as much as they hate it and him. That Scheme, though it may not be altogether so palatable, yet is a safe Scheme: And though it does not intitle them to all the Power and Wealth in *England*, yet it secures to them what they have.

CONSIDER, Gentlemen, that you cannot take as much of Popery as you please, and leave the rest. *Machiavel* has long since told us, that no Government can subsist long but upon its original Foundation, and by recurring often to the Principles upon which it was first founded. It will indeed stand upon no other; and when that is sapped and undermined, the Superstructure must fall to the Ground, the old Inhabitants must find out new Materials, erect new Buildings upon other Foundations, [I-vi] and are, for the most part, undone by the Experiment.

THE first Principles of our Protestant Church are the Principles of the *Reformation*; namely, the spiritual Supremacy of the Crown; the Right of the Laity to judge for themselves; the forming of all Ecclesiastical Polity by the Legislature; and, consequently, the creating of Clergymen by the Civil Authority; a Power forgot by too many of the Clergy, and remembred, against their Wills, by the Laity. Whoever would maintain the *Reformation*, must maintain these Principles; or embrace *Popery*, if he desert them. Whether the solemn Oaths of the Clergy in general have been sufficient Pledges and Motives for their believing and defending them, I appeal to their Behaviour, and their Writings.

BEING the sworn Servants of the Law, many of them have avowedly contradicted and bid Defiance to the Law. Being entrusted with serving and instructing [I-vii] the People, they have deceived and set up for commanding the People. Being chosen by the Crown to ministerial Offices, they have claimed a Power above the Crown; from which they acknowledge, upon Oath, to have received all Power. They have done what in them lay, to make the Mercy of God of none Effect, by damning whom they pleased; and to disarm his Justice, by pardoning whom they would. They have made *Heaven itself to wait for the Sentence from the Priest's Mouth*, and *God himself to follow the Judgment of the Priest*. They have pretended to *oblige God Almighty to open and shut Heaven's Gates*. They have asserted,

that *the Priesthood is a Princely Power, greater and more venerable than that of the Emperor: That the spiritual Government (that is, a Government by Priests) is farther above the Civil Power, than Heaven is above the Earth: That a Bishop is to be honoured as God:*  
That

“the Revenue of Priests ought to be greater [I-viii] than the Revenue of Kings: That greater Punishment is due to an Offence against a Priest, than to an Offence against a King: That Kings and Queens are to bow down before the Priest, with their Face towards the Earth, and to lick up the Dust of his Feet: That it is the Royal Office of Kings and Queens, to carry the Priest in their Bosom, or on their Shoulders: That Great Men ought not to say, *My Chaplain*, in any other Sense than we say, MY KING, or MY GOD.”

As to the King’s Nomination of Bishops, and the Power that he has over the Convocation, they have maintained, that

“The Church should as reasonably have the Nomination and deposing of Kings; and that it is as reasonable, that the Parliament should neither meet or act without the Bishop’s Licence and Authority: That the Chief Magistrate is bound to submit to the Bishop, who may excommunicate him: That it is [I-ix] a Contradiction, and an Impossibility, for any State to have Authority over the Church, that is, over the Priests: That the Priests Power extends to the settling of Fasting, and Feasting, and Cloaths: That those Clergy, who comply with the Government, and yet retain their old Principles, are the best Part, and most numerous of the Clergy”;

that is, that those of the Clergy, who are perjured, are the best and most numerous. They have decreed, that *to maintain the Sovereignty of England is in the Three Estates of England, namely, in King, Lords, and Commons, is a damnable Principle*. They have asserted, that the *Lords and Commons have no more Share in the making of Laws, than a Beggar has in one’s Alms: That all Subjects are Slaves, as to Life and Property:*

“And that Resistance is not lawful for the Maintenance of the Liberties of ourselves or others; nor for the Defence of Religion; nor for the Preservation of [I-x] Church and State; nor for the Salvation of a Soul; no, nor for the Redemption of the whole World.”

THERE is a choice Catalogue of these extravagant Doctrines, collected in a Pamphlet published some Years since, and intituled, *A new Catechism, with Dr. Hickes’s Thirty-nine Articles*; and all of them taken out of the Writings of Men in the highest Reputation among you. Yes, Gentlemen, all these impious, mad, and selfish Doctrines have been maintained by those of your Order, and never yet contradicted by any public Act of your Body. On the contrary, with your usual Charity and Good-nature, you have fallen upon those who exposed them, tho’ they were evidently the very Corner-stones of *Popery*, and a flat Contradiction to the whole Spirit and Progress of the *Reformation*.

THERE is no Medium between *Popery* and the *Reformation*; that is, between the claiming of any Power in Religion, and [I-xi] the renouncing of all Power in Religion (as you will find fully made out in the following Sheets). The latter is the Characteristic of a Protestant Minister, and the former the black Mark of a Popish Priest. You have it in your Choice, Gentlemen, which you will chuse to resemble.

If you do not think fit to accept the *Bishop of Bangor’s Protestant Scheme*, which is the same with that of the *Reformation*, and has been ever since the Law of the Land, there is but one Choice left you, namely, that of working about a *Popish Revolution, per fas & nefas*; or bringing undisguised *Popery* and the *Inquisition* into the Church; direct *Slavery* upon your

Country; and upon your own Order, the Necessity of throwing yourselves blindly upon the Mercy of the Court of *Rome*, for her Protection, and Licence to preserve your Dignities and Revenues.

[I-xii]

YOU have no Possibility of keeping clear of the *Pope* and the *Regale* both. The King will not part with his Prerogative; the Parliament will not give up its Authority; nor will the People intirely part with their Senses. And for the Bishop of *Rome*, you would do well to remember what tender Usage your Predecessors received at his Hands. He indeed always discountenanced and oppressed them. The lazy Monks, and debauched Friers, were his Darlings, and peculiar Care. They were thoroughly detached from the Interests of the Laity, thorough Dependents upon the Holy Father: They were therefore distinguished as his Spiritual Janizaries, and the Guards of the Papacy; and to them he gave away the Revenues and Maintenance of the Secular Clergy, not so much trusted by him.

IF you remember this, you will easily judge how much more it is your Interest to submit to the easy and gentle Authority [I-xiii] of the Prince, to live under the Protection of the Laws of your Country, by which your Income, and all your Immunities, are ascertained and secured, than to live exposed to the Distrusts of a foreign cruel Court, to the Rapine of foreign and needy Priests, who will be perpetually quartered upon you, perpetually drawing Money from you: Nay, probably it will grow a Maxim in the *Roman Politics*, that *you must be kept poor*.

BUT besides, however good the Intentions may be of such Men amongst yourselves, or of those whom you represent, to become the Subjects, or, as you may vainly imagine, the Confederates of *Rome*; they will, in all Likelihood, find it utterly impossible to execute their Designs; and must, in all Appearance, venture their present Possessions upon the Success of such Designs. And if they should happen to succeed, they may have the Glory indeed of the Wickedness; but the Rewards will be, for the most part, [I-xiv] reaped by new Comers, who had no Share in the Toil. Foreign Ecclesiastics will be the first in Favour, and the highest in Place: They will carry off your Honours, and your Preferments: The Sincerity of your Conversion will be questioned, or pretended to be questioned: There will quickly grow a Distinction between *Old Papists* and *New Converts*; as in *Spain* and *Portugal*, where a wide Difference is made between old Christians and new; which Difference holds for many Generations; and, in short, all Countenance will be shewn, all Favours will be granted, to those who never bowed their Heads to *Baal*. Your Behaviour to the late K. *James* will also be remembered, tho' you have forgot his to you; and you will be called *Ingrates*, *New Hypocrites*, or *Old Rebels*.

I AM in hopes, Reverend Sirs, that from all these Considerations, the Gentlemen of these Notions will find Reason to look back to their Original at the *Reformation*, and to preach up the Principles [I-xv] upon which it stands, since they are like to stand or fall by these Principles. Let them veer about once more; they know how to do it; and I will be the first to declare, that they have been once in the Right, once reconciled their Views to the Liberties of *England*.

I MIGHT likewise fetch an Argument from their Aukwardness in Politics, to convince them that they ought to be Protestants. They have made it manifest, by many Trials, and long Experience, that they are but heavy Intriguers, and sadly want both the Temper and Talents of Politicians. The Protestant Religion, being a plain one, supported by obvious Truth and common Sense, and requiring no Managements or Finesse to make it go down with the People, would fit them well enough, if they could be content with it. But it is quite otherwise with the Religion of *Rome*; which, being a surprising Medley of various and contradictory



Parts, requires the utmost Address, [I-xvi] Delicacy, and Skill, to keep them from falling to pieces. And, in this respect, the Church of *Rome* owes its Figure and Preservation to the Court of *Rome*, where all the nicest Secrets of Power are understood, all the most curious Arts in Politics are practised; where every Absurdity is finely disguised, every Cruelty artfully concealed; where, in fine, they have the Knack of making People pleased with being abused, and of forgetting, that they are Slaves, or of never knowing it.

HITHERTO, Gentlemen, it has been otherwise with you. Our Pretenders of this Cast have but grossly aped Popery. Their Aims have been too open, their Management too coarse. A blunt Demand at once for all the Wealth, and Reverence, and Power of *England*, was so ridiculous, that, had we not before known their unhappy State of Ignorance, we should have thought, that they had been in Jest when they made it. Nor has [I-xvii] that incurable Appetite of theirs, which they cannot hide, of combating Conscience with downright Force, and brutish Violence, done them less Harm. In short, good Counsel they have seldom taken; their foolish Counsels they never could conceal; and, God be thanked, their wicked Counsels they never yet have been able, thoroughly, to execute. They are, in truth, but doggrel Politicians. *English Priestcraft* is as coarse as the *Romish Priestcraft* is fine. *Theirs is the Depths of Satan, and OURS his Shallows*; as is excellently said by the late Mr. *Samuel Johnson*.

THE *Romish* Clergy chose the Days of Darkness to sow their Frauds in. They vended their holy Trifles, when Ignorance had increased the Number of Buyers. They planted their Power in the fertile Soil of Superstition; and, by keeping the People poor, wretched, ignorant, wicked, and fearful, as they every-where do, they still maintain their Dominion.

[I-xviii]

BUT our High Gentlemen, who both know and lament, that this Nation has seen more Days of Light and Liberty (which indeed are seldom separated) since the *Revolution*, than ever it saw before, have yet preposterously chosen that very Time of Light and Liberty to advance all the wildest Claims of Popery, and all the vilest Tenets of Slavery. What could they mean? Did they not know, that the more Men find the Use of their Understanding, the more they are loth to part with it? And that those Men who are willing to part with their Understandings, must have very shallow ones?

THE *English* Laity have been used pretty much, of late, to think for themselves; and we find, as doubtless, Gentlemen, you do, that the more Men know of Church Power, the less they like it. They see that Priestly Pomp always stands on Lay Misery; that where the Priests are Princes, the People are the lowest Slaves; and that Church Power always [I-xix] rises with the Fall of Liberty, and the Decay of Knowledge.

THE Popish Priests too, as they propagated their lying Tenets in the dark, so they did it slyly, and by well-weighed Gradations. Every Intention of theirs had its proper Season. The *Fire of Purgatory* was kindled at one time; *Indulgences* were hatched at another; *Transubstantiation* stole in at a convenient Hour; and all their Doctrines of Gain and Power were broached at politic Distances, and as Opportunities invited.

BUT our High Priests, as they have observed neither Measure nor Mercy in their Demands upon us; so neither have they made them at due and discreet Intervals. By overloading the Cart, they have overturned it. They have frightened us with the broad and black Cloud of their Pretensions, and made Men unanimously oppose that Heap of Claims and Absurdities, which, had they been wise, we might have been brought to swallow [I-xx] singly. They wanted Patience, as well as Policy.

WE were not yet ripe for Popery. We had Judgment enough to see, that all those Claims, all those new Doctrines, evidently and solely tended to the Clergy's Advantage, and our Undoing. And we thought it was as consistent with natural Equity, and common Sense, that we should be Judges in our own Case, as that you should be in yours. Indeed, if any amongst you had maintained Doctrines evidently grievous to yourselves, and manifestly tending to the Knowledge and external Happiness of the People, we should at least have thought you in earnest. If, for Example, you had contended, that the Priests should fast three Days in the Week, the Laity only when they pleased; that the Priests should be entirely at the Mercy of the People for a Maintenance; should be restrained from taking above Thirty or Forty Pounds a Year Salary; be forbid all Pomp and Affluence, because [I-xxi] they vitiate the Mind, and breed Pride and Laziness; two Faults heinous in a Minister of God: I say, if you had contended for such Liberty in the Laity, and for such rigorous Restraints upon yourselves, it would have carried in it the Face of Sincerity and Self-denial. But, for Priests, who are known to have been, at first, the Alms-men of the People, (and who mostly are still educated by the Charity, and maintained by the Benevolence, of the Laity) to talk of Palaces, Revenues, nay, Thrones and Principalities, to be for assuming Empire over their Masters, and growing great by the Poverty of the People, is such a Stretch of Arrogance and Folly, as cannot be aggravated; as it would not be credible, did we not see it. The Pretensions of the Great *Turk* are not half so detestable.

WHO would not rather be a Slave to a *Monarch*, than to a *Monk*? The Oppression of Temporal Tyrants never has been, never can be, so great as the Oppression of [I-xxii] Priests. Temporal Tyrants only make their Slaves as miserable as *Laymen* can do. They take almost their All; but the little that is left, they leave them to use as they please. The Priest, where he has Power enough, exercises his Tyranny over the Bellies and Palates of his more miserable Vassals, and suffers them to eat (if he leave them any thing to eat) but what he pleases, and when he pleases.

IN Truth, the Subjects of Priests abroad are in a viler State than the Priests Black Cattle: They are worse fed, and not more knowing.

CAN you deny, Gentlemen, that the more Power the Priest possesses, just so much the more Men suffer in their Souls and Bodies? Nor can it be otherwise: Power produces Pride and Debauchery in the Clergy, and Vassalage begets Baseness and Poverty in the People. Whatever is gained to the Clergy, is gained from the Laity; so that for them to be rich, we must be Beggars; that [I-xxiii] they may be Lords, we must be Slaves. This I take to be self-evident.

WILL you, or can you say, Gentlemen, that those Claims are conducing to the Welfare of Mankind; which, wherever they prevail, do effectually divest Mankind of every thing that sweetens human Life, and renders it desirable, or indeed supportable? Is that Power for our Benefit, which disarms us of our Faculties, crows our Minds with slavish Fears, and gives us up a Prey to those Men, whose Strength lies in our Weakness, whose Prosperity is owing to our Undoing? This is what it has always done, and what it does at this Day in *Spain*, *Italy*, and other Priest-ridden Countries: And this is what it would as effectually do in *England*, if *Englishmen* would suffer it.

THESE Claims of yours, Gentlemen, have done you great Prejudice. They have made Men afraid of your Spirit, which seems to them to be merciless and insatiable. So that, if you are begrudged [I-xxiv] what you have, you must thank yourselves; it is owing to your claiming what you ought not to have. If a Clergyman enjoy the Tythes of Part of my Estate, by virtue of the Law; and, not content with that, would have Tythes of the Whole, in spite of the Law; it is natural enough for me to think, that the Man is a Knave, who would have no Man's Property secured by the Law but his own.

NOTHING is more common with you than to call the Impropriations of the Abbey-Lands by the dreadful Name of *Sacrilege*. You say, some of you have said it in Print, and many more in the Pulpit, that such Impropriation was robbing the Church. What Church, Gentlemen? Was it not the Church of *Rome*? And are you of that Church? It is certain, that the *Reformed Protestant Church of England* never possessed any of these Lands; and how you, who are *Protestants*, and not Successors to the *Monks*, can hold from the *Popish Monks*, by Divine [I-xxv] Right, Lands and Immunities, which these gluttonous and cheating Vermin acquired by diabolical Rogueries; is such a Riddle as can only come from Ecclesiastics, but can never be solved by Laymen. Did you ever hear, Gentlemen, that the primitive Preachers of *Christ* set up for being Heirs to the Riches and Revenues of the *Heathen Temples*, when they were deserted or demolished? And, in my Opinion, these Pagan Revenues were more honestly got, as well as more innocently used, than the Lands and Income of the *Popish Monasteries*.

OUR Gentlemen of this Cast have long provoked one Part of the World, long deceived the other, by their Cant of *Divine Right*; which, tho' a very Jest in itself, and long since exploded, is a Title which they fix to all their Possessions, let them come by them how they will. This is shameful Boldness. It is certain, that the Gospel has not given you one Foot of Land, or one Shilling of Money; nor did ever [I-xxvi] God Almighty appear personally to do it by Word of Mouth. Your Church is a Creature of the Constitution, you are Creatures of the Law: And you must evidently belye Divine Right, if you pretend to derive from thence, what all the World sees you owe to secular Bounty; I will not say to devout Frauds.

If you could be but persuaded to reconcile your Principles and Pretensions to the Security and Happiness of Mankind, all Mankind would be reconciled to you and your Pretensions. I do not remember to have ever heard the Clergy contemned, where they did not first deserve Contempt. When any of them depart from the Meekness of Ministers, nobody will pay them the Regard due to Ministers. Such who intermeddle in every thing, will be respected in nothing. They who oppose every public Good, every Action favourable to Liberty, and beneficent to the World, will be deemed Foes to Liberty, and to the World. Such who promote [I-xxvii] Strife and Persecution, will be reckoned Enemies to Peace and Charity; and those who are at the Head of all public Mischiefs, will themselves be thought a public Mischief. If they promote the known Principles, and endeavour to support the known and main Pillars, of Popery, can they expect to be treated as Protestants? If they promote Rebellion, and practise Perjury, can they either be accounted good Subjects or Christians? And if they are Patrons of Tyranny, and the Promoters of Immorality, what Quarter can they expect to find in a *free Country*, or amongst *Men of Virtue*?

If you ask me, *Why all this from a Layman to his ghostly Guides*? The Answer is ready — — — The Work was necessary; and, Gentlemen, those of your Order made it necessary. The Interest of Truth and Liberty was concerned, and indeed at stake, by the constant Attacks of those of your Robe upon them; which Attacks were so far from being disavowed [I-xxviii] by you, that the wicked Authors of them were not only treated as the chief Champions of the Church's Cause; but all who opposed them have been fallen upon with the sternest Outrage, with the utmost Bitterness of Spirit; together with lying Calumnies, uncharitable Suggestions, and base and brutish Language; their usual Weapons, offensive and defensive.

It is worth while to mention the great Want of Sincerity in the Conduct of such Men on this Occasion. Whenever they think it seasonable, in Conversation, to uphold the mad Principles of *Hickes*, and of the other Protestant Papists and Nonjurors, (though, if ever there was such a thing as Blasphemy in the World, it is to be met with in their Writings, in the most daring Colours) they never fail to shew themselves their Advocates. But when they think, that a Defence of these Reveries will do a Prejudice to the Cause, with those of your People, who have a Notion of Religion and the *Reformation*, [I-xxix] or among Men, who, they

know, can expose these Reveries: Then, Gentlemen, they either shamelessly deny, that these Writers maintain what they do maintain; or say, that the Clergy are not answerable for the Whimfies of particular Doctors.

THESE dishonest Shifts, these base Practices, compounded of Knavery and Lyes, are common amongst too many of your Order. Yes, Gentlemen, to the Disgrace of common Candour, and the Reproach of Religion, they are very common amongst the High Clergy. I myself have frequently found them; and I believe, that every one, who has had any Conversation with them, has as frequently found them.

NOW, that these Principles (several of which I have already laid together in this *Dedication*) are asserted in the Books of your Non-swearing and For-swearing Brethren, I appeal to the Books themselves: That they are impious, false, antichristian, and destructive of human Society, [I-xxx] of all social Virtues, and all civil Happiness, I appeal to common Sense, and to the known State of those miserable Countries where they prevail: And, that they have been either adopted or approved by all the High Clergy, I appeal to their many Quotations from them, and to their constantly opposing every Proceeding against them.

GENTLEMEN, it is of much Consequence to you, to clear yourselves from the Imputation of maintaining or adhering to such ungodly, such mischievous Tenets, which, without consulting the revealed Will of God, appear detestable to the common Light of Reason: Tenets, which abrogate the Justice and Mercy of God, and call his very Being in question; and Tenets, which would for ever banish all Peace and Security from amongst Men, and from the Face of the Earth. Consider, that you cannot take one Step in asserting or countenancing them, without direct Perjury. You have, upon Oath, [I-xxx] renounced *all Power of any kind or sort whatsoever*, but what you receive from the *King* and the *Law*. Will you, after this solemn Appeal to God, by an Oath, sacred amongst *Barbarians* and *Infidels*, appeal to all the World, that you are perjured, by maintaining, as too many do in their Writings and Sermons, that they have a Power, which they neither derive from the *King* nor the *Law*?

SURE it must be a melancholy Reflection to these Gentlemen, in point of Credit and Reputation, (for I say nothing of Conscience) that, whilst they thus distinguish themselves from *Low Churchmen*, whose great Crime consists in not mocking God, and leaping over Conscience and Oaths; they do, at the same time, distinguish themselves from *Christianity* itself, which, above all other Religions, disclaims Power, and, more than all other Religions, abhors *Insincerity* and *false Swearing*.

[I-xxxii]

CAN you, Gentlemen, reconcile their Behaviour, since the *Revolution*, to the Understanding of the People, or to any Man's Conscience but their own? If the Doctrine of *Hereditary Right* be true, as many of them eternally and fiercely contend, how could they swear to Princes made by *Act of Parliament*? And if the Doctrine of *Passive Obedience* be true, how came they to swear to a Government founded upon open and evident *Resistance*, and to be instrumental themselves in that *Resistance*? Their particular Behaviour to his present Majesty cannot yet be forgot. Be so good to let us know, what Security he found from their Oaths; or what Assistance the High Clergy gave Him against the late Rebellion, in pursuance of these Oaths? Can Men, who shew, by glaring Actions, that they value not their own Souls, do any Good to the Souls of other Men?

If you would clear yourselves from the Imputation of supporting or favouring [I-xxxiii] such monstrous Principles, you must do it openly and avowedly, in full and express Words, free from that Equivocation which some of your Order are much suspected of, upon the most solemn and sacred Occasions. You have been ready enough to censure many good Books, and many worthy Propositions: Be ingenuous for this once, Gentlemen; expose the

Blasphemies of those of your own Body, and brand the Authors of them with those Names of Infamy which they deserve, and which you never want, whenever you think fit to *call Names*. And if you fairly renounce ill Company, you will not be censured, as you have been, for not censuring their Impieties. The *Convocation* at *Oxford*, in the Days of Tyranny, were sufficiently forward and explicit in damning, by their detestable *Decree*, since worthily burnt by the proper Hand of the common Hangman, by Order of the Legislature; I say, that black Assembly were forward and clear enough in damning [I-xxxiv] all these Principles of Liberty, which ever have been, and ever will be, the Principles of *wise Men*, and *free Men*. Consult your own Reputation, and the Welfare of Mankind, by treading in Steps directly contrary to those of that wicked Assembly.

I CANNOT pass over in Silence, that shameful Want of Charity found amongst too many of you, and every Day complained of to no Purpose. Allowing Charity to be a Christian Grace, (and the Apostle calls it the highest) I would be glad to know in what Instance you practise that Grace yourselves, or promote it in others. As to such who deny the regular Means of Salvation to all Communions, except their own and that of *Rome*, they bring this Charge home to their own Door; since their Courtesy to those of the same Spirit with themselves, and their good Opinion of them, is not Charity, but Self-love and *Faction*. Highwaymen, no doubt, call one another honest Fellows, as frequently and habitually as other Men do; [I-xxxv] whereas their Honesty is no other than a wicked Fidelity to a Nest and Confederacy of Rogues, and they are only honest to their Fellow-Thieves. But true Honesty is the same to all Men, and to all Men alike.

THE like may be said of Charity; it is tried and exercised upon those who are of a Persuasion different from ours. But to flatter and be complaisant to those of the same Imaginations, or the same Craft with ourselves, merely because they are of the same Craft, is such a new-fangled Charity, as would beat the old *Christian Charity* of *St. Paul* quite out of the World. And yet that this is the true Cause, and the true State, of modern Orthodox Charity, appears abundantly from hence, that the most wicked good Churchman has more Compliment paid him, and more Favour shewn him, than the most righteous, most godly Dissenter. Nay, by the servile Court paid by many, very many, to those of their Patrons, who lived Libertines, [I-xxxvi] and died Atheists; and by their barbarous Usage of peaceable, religious Dissenters, (blameable only for being Dissenters) it would seem as if Virtue were no longer the Object of their Affection, nor Vice of their Aversion.

FOR God's sake, Gentlemen, abandon this damning Spirit, which is a Contradiction to Religion, and a Reproach to Humanity; assume Charity for all Men, or drop all Pretensions to Christianity; learn to be temperate and well-bred, or cease claiming to be Gentlemen: Leave reviling, as you would be thought Preachers and Exhorters; and, as you would be thought Successors to the Apostles, concern not yourselves with worldly Power, of which the Apostles had none.

YOU would not sure be thought a Set of Ecclesiastics, detached both from *Christians* and *Heathens*; and yet, by contending not only for worldly Power, but for independent worldly Power, superior to all the Powers of the World, you shew, [I-xxxvii] as many of you as do so, that you are a Discredit to Christians, and yet are worse than Heathens. It was the good Counsel of Bishop *Hall* to *Laud*, who was confounding all Things Human and Divine, that he would be *either Fish or Flesh; either throw away his Wings, or pull out his Claws*. For God's sake, Gentlemen, tell us what Religion you are of — — — I mean such of you as assert the Positions above quoted. To what Class of Religion, think you, these Men belong? To none, certainly, that ever was in the World. They cannot even make consistent Papists, tho' That seems to be their highest Ambition. Their Popery, I own, is true Popery, and yet it is Popery without a *Pope*. I cannot speak so favourably of the Christianity which they pretend to; though That too is Christianity without Christ, who was all Meekness, Humility, and Love;

Omnipotent, but disclaimed all Power; Infallible, and yet would judge no Man — Are you, Gentlemen, [I-xxxviii] his Successors? Do your Champions resemble this Picture? They are poor, frail, erring, mortal Men; and yet they would act as if they were omnipotent, and dictate as if they were infallible. Good God! Gentlemen, what Madness, to deal thus with us, before they had burnt our Bibles, or put out our Eyes!

Do we not see Clergymen actuated by as savage and unreasonable Passions as any Set of Men living? And would you pretend to govern absolutely those who have at least as much Virtue, Sense, and Sobriety as yourselves; who, as it is plain from your Lives, cannot govern yourselves better than others? Have we not seen their Heads as deep in wicked Counsel, and their Hands as deep in Crimes, as the Heads and Hands of any Society of Men upon Earth? And can you expect, that we will trust the most important Care in the World, the Care of our Souls, to Men who take no Care of their own; or rather do not seem to think, that they [I-xxxix] have any? What Opinion, think you, can we have of their Power with Heaven, when we behold them incessantly contending for, and pursuing Power upon Earth, which is inconsistent with the Ways of Heaven? It is time, high time, Gentlemen, to give over, and to remember, that we neither want Eyes nor Memory.

THERE has been a long and almost general Charge against the Clergy of all Ages and Countries, for neglecting to preach and enforce, as much and as clearly as they ought, the great Doctrine of Morality, the best Mark of Religion, and the best Stay of Human Society: It is indeed Religion itself; and that Religion which does not produce Morality, deserves another Name. Morality is the only Religion which Human Society, considered as such, has any Occasion to see practised. If a Man be really Moral, neither the Civil Magistrate, nor his Fellow-Citizens, ought to have any Concern what he believes, or how he believes. [I-xl] Our Actions are in our Power, but our Thoughts are not, no more than our Dreams. Belief necessarily follows Evidence, and where the Evidence does not appear sufficient, a Man cannot believe if he would. There was Virtue in the World before there was *Orthodoxy* in it; which hard, equivocal, priestly Word, has done more Mischief to Mankind, than all the Tyrants that ever plagued the Earth. This is worthy the Consideration of the Laity. Yes, Gentlemen, *Orthodoxy* has made many Tyrants, and exceeded All. What can be said to this *Fact*?

I ALLOW that Priests often contend for good Works; but, without a Paradox, the good Works which they contend for, are, for the most part, not only not Morality; but, on the contrary, are often very wicked and sinful. The Endowing of Churches and Monasteries, is, for Example, with them, a great good Work; and yet it has generally proved a mischievous Liberality, which evidently hurt Religion [I-xli] and Human Society, and frequently destroyed both. I call upon you, Gentlemen, to shew where and when the Christian Religion ever thrived or gained by Riches. I, on my Side, can shew that they have been always Poison to it. Riches first made Priests rampant, and such Priests soon defaced and ruined Religion; but more or less effectually, as their Revenues and Power were greater or smaller. Christianity flourished most, when it had neither worldly Priests, nor worldly Endowments. Will you deny this? In short, their preaching good Works has been generally preaching Themselves, who were the chief Gainers by them. And as to those good Words which did not promise any Advantage to the Clergy, they either always opposed them, or never encouraged them. We cannot forget your Behaviour at the Beginning of our present Charity-Schools, how you every-where opposed them, till you had got the Management of them into your own Hands; and [I-xlii] now you as violently promote them out of other Mens Pockets. Whether your Government of those Schools promotes the Welfare of the Commonwealth, (if you can bear that Word) appears abundantly from the bitter and disaffected Spirit found in them.

By *Morality*, therefore, is meant a Thing quite different from such *good Works*. *Morality* is *Natural Religion*, which prompts us to do Good to all Men, and to all Men alike, without regard to their Speculations, any more than to their Cloaths, or to the Colour of their Hair; which is as much in their Power as their Faith is. *Morality* is social Virtue, on rather the Mother of all social Virtues: It wishes and promotes unlimited and universal Happiness to the whole World: It regards not a *Christian* more than a *Jew* or an *Indian*, any further than as he is a better Citizen; and not so much, if he be not.

BARBEYRAC, in his excellent Preface to his Translation of *Puffendorf de Jure [I-xliii] Naturæ & Genium*, has shewn us, by a fine Detail of Passages, how the *Pagan*, the *Jewish*, and too many *Christian* Priests, have all ever agreed in concealing, disguising, mangling, calumniating, and opposing the eternal Principles of *Morality*, or *Natural Religion*. The Religion of these holy Hirelings consisted either in a long Rout of Ceremonies, as tedious as ridiculous; or in certain abstruse Points, which could never be known, and were not worth knowing; always in great Pomp and Pride; and in Dominion, where-ever they could get it. It was either a Religion of the Body, or a Religion of the Imagination, or a Religion of Shew, Profit and Terror. In fine, the blessed Clubs of Ecclesiastics of all Religions, in whatever else they differed, yet always accorded in this, that the Religion which they contrived, agreed neither with Heaven nor Earth, neither with Reason nor Good-humour, but only fitted themselves, and their own Views.

[I-xliv]

MR. BARBEYRAC, in his Preface, has given us a diverting Specimen of the Absurdities and Ravings of those Reverend old Gentlemen, whom we call the *Fathers*. And in all the Instances that he brings, it is hard, if not impossible, to say, whether the Uncharitableness, Roguery, or Stupidity of these old Saints, appears uppermost.

THIS Preface is every way so excellent, that I have prevailed upon a Friend of mine, a Gentleman of *Gray's-Inn*, to translate it into *English*, for the Instruction of the Laity. A Reverend Divine or two have translated the Book itself; but no Divine has yet thought fit to give us the Preface. My Countrymen may therefore soon expect it from him, with an Introduction.

GENTLEMEN, I have but two Questions to ask of you, and I have done: Pray, to what is it owing, that the usual Spirit and Zeal of this Nation against Popery are now quite extinct; insomuch that in the Neighbourhood of great [I-xlv] Popish Families, your Flocks grow daily thinner, and the Mass-houses stronger; as I am able to shew in some Instances? And, Secondly, What is become of the Bundle of Papers sent by Mr. *Lesley* to a former Convocation, containing a Project for an Union between the Protestant Church of *England* and the Popish Church of *France*? And I desire you will acquaint the World with the Reasons, why no Notice or Censure was passed upon them.

I SHALL say nothing here of the usual way taken to answer Antagonists, not by Reason, or Scripture, but by downright Force, Hardships and Oppression. The Sermon, called, *The Craftsmen*, has done this to my Hand, and I have now added it to this Edition; I therefore haste to conclude, and

G.

*I am, GENTLEMEN,*

*Your most Humble, and  
Most Obedient Servant,*

THE INDEPENDENT WHIG.





TO THE PUBLISHER OF THE INDEPENDENT WHIG. ↩

SIR,

I HAVE been informed, that you are now preparing a Fifth Edition of the *Independent Whig*. I reflect with much Pleasure on the great and lasting Esteem which these Papers have deservedly gained. Far from being written with the Spirit of Party, far from being ever designed to promote the low and mean Pursuits of private Passion, they have long out-lived the Date of Party-writings: And as the candid Spirit which produced them, was *above* such ungenerous Contentions, so will they live *beyond* them. They will live to a Day when the very Names of Parties shall hardly be remembred, when the Feuds and Contests of those Times [I-xlvi] in which they were produced, shall no longer engage the Attention of Men; when Ambition is laid low; when Divisions are laid aside, and even Defamation is silent. Whilst the Love of Truth and Liberty shall prevail in the World, this Collection shall be preserved as sacred to the Interests of both; as their noble Foundation is eternal Truth and good Sense, as their only End is the Preservation of that common Good which every Man is born to enjoy in Right of his Creation, and which he ought always to enjoy against the exorbitant Claims of superstitious Priests, the vile Arts which they practise to deceive, and the Power which they usurp to oppress.

THIS then is the Cause of Liberty and Reason, a Cause which itself requires, and whose Friends can wish it no better Advantage than to be seen and tried in open Day. This is most worthy of Conquest and Triumph. It fights to save, and it conquers to deliver. Slavery flies its Approach, and Liberty attends its Victories. This likewise is that Cause which is sure of Success, where the wicked and corrupt Agents of dark Iniquity cannot blind the People with mysterious Delusion, nor put out their Eyes by the Authority of Laws. Against these impudent Pretensions, and unwarrantable Practices, fatally common to all Ages and Nations, where-ever Ambition [I-xlix] inspires the Love of Power, or where-ever Avarice incites the Lust of Rapine, have the *Authors of this Collection* appeared with so great Reputation and Success, that I know not which is the clearest Evidence of their Merit, the Number and Distinction of their Friends, or the Outrage of their Enemies.

INDEED the Rage of Nonsense is too feeble to support itself. Even the Cause that gives it Fury, cannot give it Life; it raves, and dies. The most flaming Stupidity that ever appeared in Defiance of common Sense, how much soever it might serve to fire ignorant Multitudes for a present Hour, lost all its Force, and Credit, and Effect, in the next; lost even the Applause of those whose Interests had Service from it. The most elaborate and well-written Piece of Nonsense is but the Being of a Day: If happily timed, it hath its Admirers; when the Season is past, it wants even Readers. The very Memory of it can have no Existence, unless a Work of Sense and Meaning give it Life by taking notice of it, and Posterity read it bound up with those Writings, which it was meant to depress and discredit. What a Secret would it be with Men, that *Filmer* ever wrote, or that *Sacheverel* ever preached, if the Honourable ALGERNON SIDNEY and Mr. LOCKE had not answered one, and if the *House of Commons* had [I-I] not impeached the other? How rarely do we ever meet with the former, but in the immortal Works of his great Adversaries? And how seldom do we find the other, but in the Account of his Trial?

THE Zeal which I have for the Papers contained in those Volumes now under your Care, makes me fond even of some of the most miserable Nonsense that ever was published against them; and though I have reason to believe, that such raving Folly will meet with few Admirers, methinks it ought not to be destitute of Readers. To suppress it, would be an

Honour which it very ill deserves. It would thereby share the Fate of the most deserving Writings. This would be treating the most impotent Nonsense as if it was Sense and Integrity. Such Considerations induce me to think, that we ought not to treat with Neglect the doughty Performance of the *Bishop* of SODOR and MANN, or the *Bull* which he published against the *Independent Whig*. The Bishop is a Gentleman of some Figure; the Nonsense of the *Bull* is equally conspicuous: In short, it is Dulness *episcopally* eminent. And though a Person, even of his Character, should not have Credit enough to keep such a Performance alive; yet the *Independent Whig* may preserve it, and ought to preserve it. The Authors of that useful Book owe this [I-li] Regard to the Prelate, and, in Return for so much Zeal shewn by him in suppressing their Writings, ought with all possible Care to perpetuate his. It will do him exemplary Justice; it will give Mankind the clearest Proofs of his Wisdom, and of his Integrity, when they shall read and compare what this Prelate desired to burn, and what he recorded to preserve. The Motive which engaged his Zeal against our Authors, the earnest Desire, that their Papers should not be read, could never have a place in their Thoughts, whenever they reflected on him. It was, I dare say, their hearty Desire, that he should always have Readers. So little Reason had this Reverend Person to charge them with Infidelity, since this their Disposition, with relation to himself, shewed that truly *Christian* Principle strongly implanted in them, of doing as they would be done by, how little soever of that Doctrine appeared in the Actions of their Opposers.

WHEN the *Independent Whig* came into the Diocese of *Mann*, the Bishop immediately issued an Act against it, which was conceived in the following Terms, and is properly intituled his *BULL* against the *Independent Whig*.

[I-ii]

*Lib. Causarum per Ann. Dom. 1721.*

MY BRETHREN,

WHEREAS a most pestilent Book, intuled, The Independent Whig, has been lately brought into this Diocese, and, as we are certainly informed, industriously handed about with a manifest Intent to beguile ignorant and unstable Souls, and to render the Doctrine, Discipline, and the Government of the Church contemptible; and this without any Regard to his Majesty's Directions, sent to me by his Grace our Metropolitan, and communicated unto you, expresly condemning such vile Books, and the spreading of them: I think it my Duty to acquaint you therewith, and with some of the baneful Contents thereof, that you may be upon your Guard, and that we may endeavour to secure the Flock over which the Holy Ghost has made us Overseers, from the Mischief intended by this and such-like blasphemous Books, which God, either for our Punishment or Trial, has suffered to be sent amongst us.

THAT the great Design of the Book abovementioned is to undermine the Christian Religion, appears by the Author's representing all Religion as a mere Contrivance of Ecclesiastics for their own Interests;

[I-iii]

BY his Rage and Malice against the antient Creeds, even that called The Apostles not excepted, and by his treating all such as at any time have contended for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, as the Tools of Princes, and as the Pest of Mankind;

BY ridiculing the venerable Fathers and Councils of the Primitive Church after the most scandalous Manner, and thereby depriving, as much as it is in the Power of Hell to do it, the Church of Christ of their Testimony to the Truth, and of the then received Sense of the sacred Scriptures;

*BY making a very Jest of the Ordinances of the Gospel, and prostituting the Sacraments ordained by Christ himself to Contempt, magnifying those Heretics who do avowedly reject them;*

*BY making the Peace of the Church the Bane of Society; and Unity amongst Christians, so much required by Jesus Christ, the very Cause and Badge of Slavery;*

*BY scoffing at Holy Orders, and making a blasphemous Comparison betwixt the Powers conveyed by the Apostles to their Successors, and those given by an Attorney-general. And that we may be assured, that all this is from the Spirit of Antichrist, which St. John saith should come into the World, the Author of this [I-**liv**] Book makes the Want of Faith an indifferent Matter, and expressly saith, that no Man will be rewarded or punished for having or not having right or wrong Conceptions of the Incarnation, that is, concerning Jesus Christ being come in the Flesh, which the Apostle gives as the very Mark of Antichrist. In short, the whole Book is one continued Design, in which the Devil and the Authors have shewed the utmost Skill to lay waste the Church of Christ, to overthrow all revealed Religion, to reduce Men to a State of Nature, and to bring all Things into a Confusion, both Sacred and Civil.*

*LEST therefore we should provoke God to deprive this Church and Nation of the Blessings of Truth, and Peace, and Unity, and the Means of Grace which we have so long enjoyed, by seeming to sleep while the Enemy is so busy in sowing Tares, and by neglecting to make use of all Means becoming the Spirit of the Gospel, to hinder such vile Tenets from spreading, to the manifest Danger both of Church and State; I beseech you, my Brethren, to join with me in putting a Stop, if possible, to the Beginnings of Profaneness and Infidelity;*

*BY convincing our People, from the Word of God, of the Necessity of holding fast the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience; that is, believing well, as well as living well; not being, [I-**lv**] like Children, carried away with every Blast of vain Doctrine; and of the prodigious Sin of those that teach, countenance, or embrace any thing contrary to the Gospel we have received. The Apostle saith, and repeats it, Let such be Anathema, let them be accursed.*

*BY detecting the Agents and Abettors of this Antichristian Spirit, that either they may be convinced of their Error in the Spirit of Meekness, or cut off from the Body of Christ, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

*AND for ourselves, my Brethren, let us endeavour, by Well-doing, to put to Silence the Ignorance of foolish Men, holding fast the faithful Word, as we have been taught, that we may be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the Gainsayers.*

Given under my Hand this 27th of *January*, in the Year of our Lord 1721, and of our  
Consecration the 25th.

*THO. SODOR & MANN.*

*To the Reverend Mr. Woods, Episcopal Register, to be communicated to the Clergy of this  
Diocese, 30 Januarii 1721.*

Copia vera Exa' per me *J. Woods, R. P. D. Tho. Sodor & Manniæ* Epis. Registr.

[I-**lvi**]

NOT content with these thundering Curses against this unfortunate Book, the Bishop of *Mann*, in the Plenitude of his Apostolical Power, conceived himself legally commissioned to seize it where-ever he found it. Accordingly, when Mr. *Richard Worthington* sent it as a Present to the Public Library of the Island, the Bishop commanded his Creature, one

*Stevenson of Ballidoole*, to take it and keep it, so that it should neither be deposited in the Library, nor yet restored to the Owner. The Party aggrieved by this lawless Procedure had recourse to the Justice of the Governor, who, when *Stevenson* refused to restore the Book to the right Owner, committed him to *Castle Rushen*, till he should make Reparation. Upon which Occasion the *Bishop of Mann* protested against his Imprisonment; which Act of the Bishop, as also the Governor's Answer, are faithfully set forth in the following Words:

***To the Honourable Alexander Horne, Esq; Governor of this Isle:  
The Remonstrance of Tho. Bp. of Sodor & Mann.***

*WHEREAS* John Stevenson, of Ballidoole, Esq; is now imprisoned in Castle Rushen for assisting me to suppress a most pestilent [I-lvii] Book, intituled, The Independent Whig; which Book has been industriously handed about, to the manifest Hurt of the Flock committed to my Care: And forasmuch as I am obliged and required, not only by his Majesty's late Directions, sent to me by his Grace our Metropolitan, but also by my Consecration-Vows, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange Doctrines, contrary to God's Word: And being convinced, that this Book, so full of damnable Errors, (if permitted to be again dispersed) is capable of doing more Mischief, than the very Plague we are so much justly afraid of: And since there is no other Method of obtaining Mr. Stevenson's Inlargement, than by delivering up the said Book; I do therefore protest against the evil Consequences which may attend the forcing it out of my Hands. And I desire, that this may be entered upon Record, to the end, that my Obedience to his Majesty's Commands, and a due Sense of my Duty, may appear hereafter.

Dated Feb. 21. Anno Dom. 1721, and the 25th of our Consecration.

THO. SODOR & MANN.

[I-lviii]

***At Castle Rushen, the 2d of February 1721.***

*THE* Concern the Bishop shews for John Stevenson, of Ballidoole, an Esquire of his own Creation, is a Recompence he could not well avoid making, since he has by such Ways and Means made him an Instrument to pursue any thing he shall think fit to put him upon.

*BUT* it is surprising to me, to find the Bishop making the Assistance Mr. Stevenson gave him, to suppress the Book, intituled, The Independent Whig, the Occasion of his Confinement; when they, and every body else that knows the Matter, can tell, that he was confined for refusing to restore that Book that was but lent him, which Mr. Worthington desired might be presented from him to the Library here; and if Mr. Stevenson would have returned that Book, or a Receipt from the Library-keeper, that he had received it for the Library, as was often told him, it would have prevented his Confinement, and saved the Bishop the Trouble of his elaborate Remonstrance, since a Receipt, which might have been writ in few Words, would have done as well; and when they had it in their Custody, they might have used their own Methods to suppress or prevent its being spread abroad.

[I-lix]

*BUT*, perhaps, he had a mind to shew his Resentment of this Book, under the specious Pretence of his Zeal and Obedience to his Majesty's Commands; but if he had thought fit to have used the Prayers that were composed in the Time of the Rebellion, which were ordered by his Majesty to be made use of in all Churches and Chapels, &c. it might have been a greater Instance of Affection, Zeal and Obedience to his Majesty and Government, than what he has done by censuring and condemning this Book; which I cannot find has been condemned in England, or thought to be one of the Books comprehended in his Majesty's late

Order.

*BUT though the Prayers above-mentioned were then delivered to the Bishop, in order to be used in the Churches and Chapels here, and that he (the Bishop) promised they should, yet I did not find that they were; nor do I now so much wonder at it, when I find, that rather than the Clergy will subscribe a Declaration, testifying their Affection to his Majesty and Government, and his Right to the Crown of Great Britain, &c. as established by several Acts of Parliament, and against all Pretenders, they will content themselves with supplying the Cure of some Parishes now vacant, upon Courtesy, rather than apply to the Right Honourable [I-lx] Lord and Patron of this Isle for a Presentation, upon these Terms.*

*AND since the Bishop has so earnestly desired this his Remonstrance to be recorded, he has given me an Opportunity of making these Remarks, and also of justifying my Desire of having the Prayers above-mentioned used in this Island, and leaves me less liable to the Reflections that might be made, for not using them.*

ALEX. HORNE.

It is also proper to annex the Certificate of those who tendered the Book, by the Governor's Command, to another of the Bishop's Creatures, the Library-keeper of the Island.

*We do hereby certify, that being this Day sent by the Honourable Governor with a Book, intituled, The Independent Whig, to be given to Mr. Ross, Library-keeper in this Island, as a Present from Mr. Richard Worthington, for the Use of the Library; We accordingly tendered the said Book to the aforesaid Mr. Ross; but he positively refused to accept the same, saying, he had read it, and that it was the vilest Book he ever saw; and, with solemn Repetitions, declared, he would as soon take Poison, [I-lxi] as receive the Book into the Library upon any other Terms, than immediately to burn it.*

Witness our Hands, this 21st of February 1721-2.

J. ROWE.

JOHN QUALE.

THIS *Bull*, and the subsequent Proceedings, (as they have been faithfully extracted from the Registers of the Diocese, and from the public Records of the *Isle of Mann*) give us a notable Instance of that virtuous and godly Spirit which appeared with such primitive Zeal against the *Independent Whig*. And when Mankind shall remember by no other Means, what a meek and Christian Prelate governed that Island in our Generation, these precious Memorials will exhibit in so lively a manner his Candour and Learning, his great good Sense and Humanity, his Charity and Piety, that I know not to which they will do the greatest Service, his own Reputation, or that Religion which he pretended to serve, and which it was his Duty to support, not to the Ends of priestly and worldly Ambition, but to the great and beneficent End of its divine Institution; not by the Means of Authority and Persecution, which it was instituted professedly in Opposition to, and which the very Genius of it abhors, as every Precept of it condemns [I-lxii] them; but it was his Duty to support it, as his Lord and Master dispensed it, by the Force of Argument, and by the Influence of Persuasion, by exemplary Meekness, Patience, and Charity, which are the Spirit of the Gospel, and the Essentials of true Religion.

INSTEAD of this, you have seen, that the *Bishop of Mann*, having taken Offence at a Book which was wrote in Opposition to the Claims and Conduct of *Popish* and *Popishly affected* Clergymen, first brands it with an infamous and odious Design of beguiling the Souls of Men; and then calls in the Aid of the Secular Arm to second his defamatory Censure, by pretending that his Majesty's Directions had condemned this Book, *even before it was wrote*;

and had empowered him to suppress it as a blasphemous Book, without any legal Trial, against the Laws of the Realm, and against the Rights of the People.

To colour this unjust and most dishonest Attempt, the *Bishop of Mann* thought fit to charge it, in the most avowed and licentious Manner, against the Authors of this Book, that their great Design therein was to undermine the *Christian* Religion; and, in Proof of this bold Detraction, he says, that it appears from their having represented *all Religion as a mere Contrivance of Ecclesiastics for their own Interest*.

[I-lxiii]

THIS is a Calumny supported by a Falshood, a Scandal maintained by gross Misrepresentation. The Authors of the *Independent Whig* had no-where said, had no-where suggested, that all Religion was a mere Contrivance of Ecclesiastics for their own Interests. On the contrary, they represented true Religion as the most useful, the most amiable and excellent Thing in the World; far from being contrived by Priests, but altogether founded in Reason, dispensed by the All-wise God, and perfectly agreeable to his divine Goodness. If any Religion, or any public Establishments, have at any time been contrived or modelled by Ecclesiastics, merely for their own Interests, could it be a Crime in these Authors to represent them, as they are, hateful to God, and injurious to Men? Are there indeed no such Institutions, no such pretended Religions upon Earth? Can the Bishop of *Mann* himself venture to say, that there is any established Religion in the World (beyond the Pale of the *Protestant* Churches) which is not almost wholly the mere Contrivance of Ecclesiastics for their own Interest? And is it not the Duty of all who profess, of all who love, or would serve, that Religion which hath Truth and Purity on its Side, to destroy, as far as they are able, the false, the corrupt and knavish Institutions, which so much abound in [I-lxiv] other Countries, and from which our own hath not always been free?

BUT for the *Christian* Religion, which the Bishop undoubtedly includes in that comprehensive Term of *all Religion*, can there be more glaring Falshood or Folly, than to charge the Authors of the *Independent Whig*, that they undermine this Holy Religion, by representing *All Religions* as the mere *Contrivance* of Ecclesiastics for their own Interests, when, through the whole Tenour of the Book, almost in every Paper, it is undeniably proved, that the Interests of selfish Ecclesiastics are utterly irreconcilable, and even destructive, to the *Christian* Religion; proved, that *Jesus Christ* was the greatest Enemy which they, or their Contrivances, ever met with; that his Gospel still remains, as formidable as himself was, against all their Schemes of Ambition and Avarice? And could the Authors of this Collection, by inveighing against false Religion, as the Contrivance of Ecclesiastics for their own Interests, represent Ecclesiastics as contriving that Religion for their Interests, which is utterly opposite to all their Interests? Could they represent Christianity as an Ecclesiastical Contrivance, when the Divine Founder of it, both by his Example and Arguments, contributed more to the Downfall of such Contrivances, than all the [I-lxv] Lawgivers, than all the Prophets, from the Creation to his own Times had done; and when this divine Example, these invincible Arguments, were the Authorities continually made use of in the *Independent Whig* against ungodly Ecclesiastical Interests, which are every-where in the Book treated and condemned as unchristian Contrivances?

So little Truth, so little Candour and Consistency, was found in the Bishop, when he *defamed* the Authors as Underminers of the *Christian* Religion. And sorry I am to say it, but from his Behaviour in this Instance, the Reasonings made use of in these Papers too fatally appear to be true; since here is a Bishop, whom neither the Imposition of Hands, nor his receiving the Holy Ghost, could inspire with Truth, or Temper, or Candour, or Patience; and since, notwithstanding that solemn *Ceremony*, that sacred *Fiat*, he seems as prone to Slander and Falshood, as the most *unconsecrated* Layman.

NOR is the following Paragraph, in this *spiritual* Libel, better supported with Truth, or less chargeable with Defamation; I mean that Rage and Malice which he pretends to be in the *Independent Whig* against the antient Creeds, even that called the Apostles not excepted, as if they had treated all such as have at any time [I-lxvi] contended for the Faith, as the Tools of Princes, and as the Pest of Mankind.

FOR the Authors of these Papers have not, as I know of, objected to any such Creeds, or treated them with Rage and Malice. But if they treated them as no Part of Holy Writ, as no Divine Institutions, as Systems and Forms composed by Men, and free for Mankind to receive or reject, so far they had Truth and Evidence on their Side. If they further shewed, That no Creed or Composition of Belief, no System of Faith, can compel the Assent, where it does not convince the Understanding; that it is Blasphemy against God, and Tyranny over Men, to command us in his Name to believe that which it is impossible to believe, or to damn, by his Authority, all those who cannot comprehend that which is commanded in his Name: If they shewed, from the Justice and Equity of the Supreme Being, from the necessary and unalterable Goodness of his Almighty Will, that no Man could be ungracious in his Sight by making use of his Reason in the highest Concerns of Religion, or by differing from others in that which only related to himself, or by disbelieving Creeds, if he could not possibly believe them, or by not understanding that which to him appeared unintelligible: If they [I-lxvii] shewed, that it was contrary to Reason, to Humanity, and to true Religion, to distress and to harass any Man for Opinions which could neither injure his Neighbour, nor offend his God, for Convictions of Mind which were irresistible to himself, and uncontrollable by others: If they shewed, that no Form of Words, nor any Antiquity of Creeds, nor even that which some are pleased to call the *Apostles Creed*, could alter the Nature of Right or Wrong, of Just or Unjust; but that, however true or certain they might be in themselves, yet those who conceived them otherwise through unavoidable Apprehensions, ought no more to be punished in this World, or damned in the next, than for disbelieving any other Proposition, or authoritative Opinion, which, however demonstrative in its Nature, or however supported by Evidence, by the Belief of Multitudes, or by Rewards annexed to it, cannot possibly appear equally true to all Men, nor will ever be universally agreed on by them: If this was the Reasoning of the *Independent Whig*, was this what the Bishop calls Rage and Malice against the antient Creeds? Or, though his clear Understanding is capable of receiving *all the three Creeds together*, as unerring Standards of Faith; yet is it any Affront, and Indecency to those Creeds, or any Misdemeanour against [I-lxviii] them, if any other Person in the World should be not altogether so clear in Opinion as this intelligent Prelate?

SUPPOSE that any Man should be so unorthodox as to differ from the damning Clauses of the *Athanasian Creed*, must he be damned himself for not consigning other Men to Damnation? And though the tender Mercies of the *Bishop of Mann* should send poor Mortals quick to Hell, in consequence of that extraordinary System; does it flow from Rage and Malice against the antient Creeds to say, that the just, the good, and beneficent Author of the Universe created Men for other Ends; and whatever their Opinions may be in Matters which they judge differently of, and cannot all agree in, that still this merciful Being will finally send them to a milder Place, and provide them better Company? Does this then undermine the *Christian Religion*, or does not the contrary Doctrine more undermine it, more blaspheme it, than all the Attempts of its Enemies collected together?

WHO then is the bitterest and most implacable Adversary to the *Christian Religion*, the Authors of the *Independent Whig*, who vindicate Almighty God, and his Revelations, from the absurd, the inhuman and cruel Purposes imputed to them; or the *Bishop of Mann*, who [I-lxix] loads them with all these monstrous and merciless Imputations, making that to be a *blasphemous* Book, which proves the Deity to be good and just; and that to undermine the *Christian Religion*, which maintains its Gospel to be as meek and as pure, as beneficent and

charitable, as the Person who first preached it? If I were not an utter an Enemy to all Kinds of Power and Persecution in Matters of Opinion, I could put the Laws against Blasphemy and Profaneness in Force against this violent Prelate, who seems to be even guilty of a greater Crime than that of denying the Being of a God; for he denies his great and essential *Attributes*, those of his Mercy and Goodness, and ascribes to the Deity a wicked and abominable Nature, making the Assertion of God's universal Benevolence to undermine the *Christian Religion*. But though I am against the Penal Laws, yet I expect, that whilst the *Bishop of Man* hopes for Toleration in his strange Notions, which seem to make the Almighty a wicked and arbitrary Being, and the Religion of *Jesus* more inhuman than that of *Moloch*; I say, whilst he is tolerated in these wild Opinions, I hope that he will not too rigorously insist, that the Laws be put in Execution against those who believe, that God is not a Tyrant, nor the *Christian Religion* a Plague.

[I-lxx]

To me the *Bishop of Mann* appears to see, and indeed to represent, God and Religion in a monstrous and terrible Light; since he makes it a Mark of Antichrist, to suppose that there can be no Sin in not conceiving rightly of Things which cannot be conceived at all. A Mystery is no longer one, when it is understood; and whilst it cannot be possibly understood by the dark and limited Capacities of Men, how can an Impossibility become their Crime? Does God require Impossibilities as Acts of Duty? Who dare say this? How then can right or wrong Notions of Matters, which are above all Notion, be intitled to Rewards or Punishments? Had they been necessary to have been understood, he who is the Author of them, and who only can explain them, would have explained them. Whatever is utterly without our Reach, can never be Part of our Duty; and whatever is not matter of Duty, is matter of Indifference. This is the Doctrine which the Bishop brands as coming from Antichrist; and by doing so, shews no Christian Spirit.

To damn Men for inevitable Misapprehensions, as it can never be of God, nor of his Son, who loved Men so well as to die for them, favours indeed of the Spirit of Antichrist; which Spirit the Bishop, with notable Confidence and Absurdity, imputes to the *Independent [I-lxxi] Whig*, a Book which every-where endeavours to infuse rational and amiable Ideas of God and his beloved Son. That the good God, who created us, and knows our Weakness, should subject us to everlasting Wrath for the involuntary Motions of our frail Minds; is a Principle full of Horror, and repugnant to the Character of the Divine Being; but has ever been the genuine Characteristic of bold Deceivers, who set themselves up in his stead, and claim a Commission to do every thing that is unlike him, every thing that is unworthy of him, but every thing, however hideous and wicked, that tends to aggrandize themselves, and to cheat or destroy the rest of the Creation.

THIS Reasoning, which is eternally true, and too well supported with Facts, the *Independent Whig* strongly inculcates. Does the Bishop answer it? No; he rages, misrepresents, and calls Names.

BEFORE the Mission of *Jesus Christ*, Mankind are not pretended to have been under other Hazards of Damnation, than what they were liable to through the imputed Guilt of their great Progenitor, and through the personal Guilt of displeasing God by unjust or unreasonable Actions. The Mission of *Jesus*, that Blessing to Mankind, foretold by the Prophecies of Ages, and ushered in by the Pomp of Angels, [I-lxxii] was to make the Means of Salvation, and of pleasing God, more intelligible, and more easy. Now if *Jesus Christ*, the Son whom he sent from his Bosom, had, according to the unhallowed Notions of the *Bishop of Mann*, dispensed a difficult and unintelligible Rule of Salvation, he had left the Souls of Men in a much more dangerous and precarious Situation than he found them; and had not the right or wrong Conceptions of his Incarnation been intended by him as no Matters of Duty, the Means of



Damnation had been multiplied, and Hell would have had an Advantage on its Side, great in proportion to these new Hazards of losing the Souls of Men: So that were the *Bishop of Mann's* wild Inferences true, the Devil would be a Gainer by the Gospel.

Now, since the Bishop seems of Opinion, that it is the very Spirit of Antichrist to deny, that Rewards and Punishments follow right and wrong Conceptions of Mysteries, even of such Mysteries as cannot be conceived at all, I would ask him to explain his own Notions about some of them: How (for Example) the Incarnation of the Deity could be effected without the natural efficient Causes; how this Divine Person was conceived without the Work of human Generation; how the Virgin his Mother became pregnant without Intercourse with Man; [I-lxxiii] how the Holy Ghost operated upon that *Blessed Woman*, or how the *Overshadowing* influenced her Conception? For these are such abstruse Speculations, that I should not think it concerned any Man alive in Reason, or Conscience, or from Duty to God or himself, to inquire how these prodigious Acts of Divine Power were formed, notwithstanding the Bishop makes it antichristian to treat these Matters as no Parts of Duty, or, as he calls it, as indifferent Matters.

If the *Bishop of Mann* then means, that certain fond and inexplicable Speculations of his own, are the Faith once delivered to the Saints, well might the Authors of the *Independent Whig* represent such Hypocrites, who have at any time contended for it, as the Tools of Princes, and as the Pest of Mankind; since Tyranny never had such Chains for the Minds of Men, as the Fears of Superstition; since Tyrants never had such Instruments of Oppression, as holy Knaves, and believing Fools; nor Armies nor Battles have laid waste the Creation in any Proportion to Religious Massacres, and Religious Persecution: Nor hath Conquest by the Sword ever enslaved Mankind in any degree like Monkish Devotion and implicit Belief. But that any of those who have at any time contended for the *Christian* Religion, as it was delivered [I-lxxiv] by *Christ* himself; that any of those who have advanced its pure Morals, and its peaceable Doctrines, its beneficent Views, and gracious Dispensations, are at all maltreated in the *Independent Whig*; or that they have not been treated by the Authors of that Book with the highest Decency, and with the warmest Elogiums, I defy this railing Prelate, and all his ghostly Abettors, to shew from any Passage in the whole Collection of their Papers.

INDEED the *Fathers* and *Councils*, whom it is said that these Authors have ridiculed, are, by the Bishop's Leave, as far from being venerable, as is his own Spirit and Behaviour in this whole Affair. It is not long Habits that convey Reverence, any more than the Imposition of Hands conveys Holiness. If they have been ridiculed, were they not sufficiently ridiculous? Were not the Reveries of many of those Fathers as wild, and false, and droll, as his own *Bull*? Were not the Decisions of many of those Councils as absurd? Take Nine Parts in Ten of their Writings and Decrees, you will find, that if they had not been written on the most sacred of all Subjects, the *Christian* Religion, or at least borrowed that amiable Name, they are so very foolish, so incredibly extravagant, that it would even have been below the Dignity of an Executioner to have burnt them. And is even the [I-lxxv] most sublime Subject to sanctify the most glaring Stupidity of Hypocrites, or ignorant Visionaries, however cloathed with pompous Names? Or would it not be for the Honour of Truth, and true Religion, that such *Gothic* Transformers of Religion and Truth, such Enemies to common Sense, had never undertaken to expound the plain and intelligible Precepts of the Gospel? Precepts which had never been made Matters of such Dispute, if these dreaming and wrangling Dotards had not multiplied gigantic Volumes in confounding Human Understanding about them! Is there any thing false or absurd, which hath not Authority from some or other of their Writings? Do any two of them agree with one another, or does any one of them agree even with himself? How few of them have common Sense, or Decency, or Dignity of Style? What Testimony do they give to the Truth? Or what certain determined Sense do they receive the Scriptures in? If

their Testimony was worth any thing, or if their Opinions were of Importance, what a doleful Condition must the *Christian* Religion be reduced to, lost in such a Mountain of illiterate Lumber? And what a more doleful Condition would *Christians* be in, whom the Holy Scriptures could not sufficiently secure in their Salvation without the Assistance of these voluminous, [I-lxxvi] these unintelligible Collections, filled with idle Rhapsodies, with senseless Commentaries, and endless Controversies; all which are of as little additional Weight to the holy inspired Writings, as the elaborate and sublime Nonsense of the *Mahometan* Doctors is of Service to the Reputation of their Impostor's *Alcoran*?

How then will the Bishop make it an Undermining of the Christian Religion, to ridicule a Set of Monks and Pedants, of whom and whose Writings the Truth and the Meaning of this Divine Law is, as it ought to be, utterly independent? Or what hath the Power of Hell to do in depriving the Church of Christ of their Assistance, which it doth not want, and when indeed they cannot give it any? If he means, that their mountainous Rubbish is the Assistance and the Support of a Craft; that it keeps up a Science of Juggle and Jargon; that it makes a Trade of Divinity, and proves the Livelihood of Dunces; I confess, that the Study of Fathers and Councils is worthy of his pious Care. The *Christian* Religion, I hope and am assured, wants no such wretched Support; but we may be allowed to attack these rotten Foundations of Fraud and *Priestcraft*, without being treated as Underminers of *Christianity*.

THIS Undermining Work is charged by the *Bishop of Mann* on the Authors of the *Independent* [I-lxxvii] *Whig*, in a very extraordinary Instance; namely,

“By making a very Jest of the Ordinances of the Gospel, and prostituting the Sacraments ordained by *Christ* himself to Contempt, magnifying those *Heretics* who do avowedly reject them.”

THIS is pure Defamation in the Bishop, who is also very unfortunate and unsuccessful in it, since there is not one Ordinance of the Gospel which these Authors jest with. They indeed treat the Gospel, and all its Ordinances, with high Decency and Respect. But if he means *bowing to the East, cringing Postures, long Habits, black Gowns, or white Surplices*; so far as these are supposed to have any relative Holiness in them, they are not the Ordinances of the Gospel; and so far as they are pretended to be so, they ought always to be made a Jest of. But such is the everlasting Blindness of Bigots, and such the Chicanery of interested Priests: whatever external Forms or Rites are most agreeable to their own Gain and Caprice, or most proper to dazzle the Croud, and to amuse the Vulgar, such *Fopperies* are always *Gospel-ordinances*, and it is Blasphemy to be in Jest on any such ludicrous Subject.

IN this manner it is made a Mark of prostituting the Sacraments to Contempt, merely because they are treated as not essential to Salvation, [I-lxxviii] but as Parts of Religion free to be dispensed with by all who are not so sensible of their *Soul-saving* Importance. But is this undermining Christianity? Is this, which restores its antient Simplicity, and removes its more modern and arbitrary Additions, to undermine it? No, it hath been most undermined by those who have taken away the *Morals*, and have left us nothing but the *Mysteries, of Christianity*; which is like removing a Foundation for the sake of a Superstructure; and thus that which was intended for a Rule of Manners, is quite laid aside for a System of Faith; and a perfect Scheme of Moral Virtue is turned into a Ritual of Monkish Devotions.

FROM hence it is made Antichristian, to plead for those who, observing quite the contrary Method, have shewed more Zeal for the Foundations of Things, and have intirely laid aside ambiguous Mysteries, and vain Ceremonies, for the sake of *Morals*, and solid Piety. Hence the QUAKERS are abused as *Heretics* by the charitable Bishop, and to magnify them, is to undermine Christianity.

It both surprises and alarms me, that one who pretends to act under Authority, and to appeal to the Royal Directions, should dare to treat those as *Heretics*, whom the supreme Head of the Church, and the States of Parliament, [I-lxxix] have acknowledged as *good Christians*: Insomuch that their Religion, their Persuasion and Opinion is as Orthodox by Law, as the *Bishop of Mann* can pretend his to be, only with the Difference, on his side, of Places and Preferments, and of Men being hired to preach for so much Money a Year. The *Quakers*, and our other Dissenters, are all Orthodox in the Eye of the Government, which might, if it pleased, establish them as the National Church, from which the Bishop would then be a Dissenter, nay, perhaps, deemed Heretical, unless he turned Conformist to those whom he now brands as Schismatics. There is no End of this mutual Imputation of Heresy; a Charge always denied, and generally returned: To Men of Charity and Sense the very Sound is stale and foolish; and it is scarce ever any other than the Language of Craft and Bigotry, of Knavery and Folly.

WHERE is the *Heresy* of not receiving the Sacrament according to the Rites of the Church of *England*, or, which has the same Effect, not receiving it at all? I hope, at least, that it is not heretical for Men to desire no profitable Employments, no Revenues or Endowments to support their Laziness and Luxury at the public Charge. Pray which are the most useful Body of Men, such who live upon the Labour of the People, without doing any Service to Society, [I-lxxx] or the *Quakers*, who by their honest Industry maintain themselves, pay their Proportions in all the Charges of the Commonwealth, and neither have nor desire any Advantage from Power or Favour, but merely common Protection? This is so modest, so reasonable a Request, that I may well wonder to hear one of the Order of Bishops, Men who riot in *Thousands per Annum*, not acquired by themselves, but drained from the Properties of others, stigmatize innocent and peaceable Men with hard Names and Mob-reproaches, when they desire no more than to enjoy their own, without envying those who live splendidly at other Mens Cost, though perhaps very little to their Profit. I will venture here to call upon this Bishop, one so very orthodox and conforming, and so very angry at Separatists, though he himself is a Separatist to all other Sects --- I say, I call upon this Father of the Church, to distinguish his Zeal by a clear and logical Confutation of what the *Independent Whig* says of the *Quakers*, and of what their more copious Apologist *Robert Barclay* says for them. I call upon him to undertake a solemn and general Confutation of the *Independent Whig*, especially about the Power of the Clergy, their Oaths and Pretensions, and about the Tendency of Priestcraft and Superstition: Else it will be justly taken for granted, that he rails (and rails [I-lxxxii] in a Corner) at what he cannot answer; and since, by vapouring at a Distance, he has in some sort entered the Lists, is defied to answer.

AFTER this Prelate had in this coarse and uncharitable manner libelled and defamed a considerable Body of Men, protected by the same Laws, incorporated under the same Constitution, and equally useful to the Community with the Members of the *Church of England* itself, treating them as *Heretics*, branding them with *Mob-reproaches*, and cursing them with his great *Anathema*, as guilty of a prodigious Sin in teaching and embracing Tenets contrary to those Opinions which the Bishop and his Brethren pretend to be the Meaning of the Gospel: After this damning and unchristian Procedure, he goes on to charge it as a most shocking Enormity in the Authors of the *Independent Whig*, an Evidence of their great Design to undermine the Christian Religion, *that they have treated the Peace of the Church, as the Bane of Society; and Unity among Christians, so much required by Jesus Christ, as the very Cause and Badge of Slavery.*

THIS, from the Mouth of the *Bishop of Mann*, is the most extraordinary Charge that could be broached. It is a Confutation of his whose Libel, an ample Vindication of the Authors whom he thus defames. For he has through the whole Rhapsody shewn us in a lively manner what he [I-lxxxii] means by the PEACE OF THE CHURCH, even that it is an intire Submission to

authoritative Opinions; that it consists in *implicit Belief*, and *unconditional Obedience*, yielded to a Set of Men, who, without ever appearing to be wiser or better, but on the contrary, too frequently weaker and more wicked, than the rest of the World, have confidently claimed the supreme Direction of Mankind, a dictatorial Power over the Understandings and the Morals of Men; which Power they have constantly employed for the Gratification of their own Ambition and Avarice, grossly deceiving the Understandings, shamefully corrupting the Morals, of all who have been in Subjection to their Sway, or influenced by their Persuasion.

THIS Peace of the Church (if Blindness and Vassalage can be called Peace) is the Desolation of the whole World; and preaching this Peace is making War on Mankind. It is drawing a Sword against the Rights of Nature and Nations; it is arming a Body of Men with *Damnation*; with the Magazines of *Confusion* and *Uproar*, which they never fail to hurl about against all who think fit to withstand them. It is a *Prerogative* vested in them, to set all Men at Variance and Strife, marking out those who are weak enough to be blinded and misguided by them, as Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven; [I-lxxxiii] sending others *quick to Hell*, only for being the Subjects of their private Dislike, or Opponents to their unrighteous and most impious Usurpations. And when these arbitrary Distinctions of *Heresy* and *Orthodoxy* have made the World quite drunk with religious Rage; when this Rage, this cruel and wide-wasting Pestilence, hath destroyed all before it; when the Orthodox, armed with Inquisitions, and strengthened by Massacres, have gained the Possession of the Earth; and those *pious Ecclesiastics*, who led them on to slaughter others, bind them down in Chains themselves; then is the *Church at Peace*; and this is that *Peace*, which the *Independent Whig* hath treated as the *Bane of Society*. God knows, and the World sadly feels, that it has eternally proved so.

CERTAINLY such an Unity among Christians must be the very Cause and Badge of Slavery; an Unity which is defined and described by a *Standard of Faith* made to govern even the involuntary Conceptions of all Men, and to require the Assent of all to it, whether they at all conceive, understand, and believe it, or otherwise. To require Unity among Christians in this extravagant manner, to command them all to agree in one or more Opinions, when they were created and constituted to differ and disagree in all Opinions, by the Make of their Bodies [I-lxxxiv] and Minds, by the Manner of their Apprehension, and by various Circumstances formed or educated to see Things very differently from each other—I say, to require this, would be setting up the *Law of Revelation* against the *Law of Creation*, would be imputing a wild and wicked Part to the gracious Author of the Universe, in first creating Men to differ unavoidably, and then commanding them, on pain of *Damnation*, to conceive alike. So that, as they cannot live or breathe in one World without Disagreement of Opinion, neither can they be saved or forgiven in the other, without Agreement of Opinion. Against the *Powers and Terms of Nature*, they are required to make their Terms and Peace with God; and, *born to Variety of Opinions*, are *commanded* to an Unity of Opinions. Under which Command no Man can live; and yet by transgressing that which cannot be obeyed, all Men must be damned.

Is not this a noble, an illustrious System of Divinity? Is not this a most extraordinary Summary of the *Christian Faith*? Yet this is the *Bishop's* System; a System formed by the vain and foolish Pride of Man, in Opposition to the Spirit and Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, and yet confidently fathered upon him. From this Imputation the Authors of the *Independent Whig* defended and cleared the holy Name of *Jesus* [I-lxxxv] *Christ*, who never commanded such unreasonable and shocking Laws, as would have been the Confutation of every Claim to a divine Mission. The Unity which he so worthily preached, in his glorious Capacity as Saviour of Mankind, was an *Unity of Affections*, which all Men are infinitely more capable of forming, than *Unity of Opinions*. Neither the Author of the *Independent Whig*, nor one honest or rational Man in the World, could ever treat it as the Cause or the Badge of Slavery, to propagate universal Love, Benevolence and Humanity; but in commanding universal Assent

to Notions, and arbitrary Propositions, every thing social and humane hath been rooted up and destroyed, every thing free and virtuous oppressed and enslaved. The Love of Mankind was never the favourite Passion of superstitious Priests; far otherwise: Their Affections regarded only themselves; and that *Unity among Christians*, which would have been the Blessing of Mankind, if preached and improved in the Terms of the Gospel, by reconciling them to mutual Benevolence, Forbearance and Tenderness for each other, was an Unity less gainful to selfish Priests, than beneficial to the World; and *Christian Unity* became no longer considered as consisting in *brotherly Love*, but in *implicit Belief*, which was to spread [I-lxxxvi] itself by destroying all who would not submit to the Yoke.

HERE it was that Unity indeed was lost, and Men, who differed before without dividing from one another, were armed against each other by the Influence of such Priests and Parricides; their Differences of Opinions became improved into the Division of their Interests; and all who assented to, or disagreed with, Ecclesiastical Systems, were ranged on the Side of *Heaven* or of *Hell*, merely for *advancing* or *opposing* the Cause of Priestly Authority. Hence God, and the *Son whom he sent*, were rendered Names of Discord and Confusion: Hence those whom these holy Deceivers had denominated Saints and Heirs of Glory, became zealous for the Extirpation of all who had not such gracious Marks of Distinction; and, had they fought under the *Banners* of SATAN himself, they could not have possibly been more zealously active for human Havock, and for desolating the Creation.

SUCH Agents of Iniquity, such flaming Instruments of Barbarity, roused the Indignation, and engaged the Hands, of the *Independent Whig* to oppose their Claims and Encroachments in every Shape. It became his Duty to do this, as a Lover of his Country, as a Friend to Mankind; [I-lxxxvii] and the Season most proper for such Opposition, is undoubtedly this Time of Liberty, whilst it is safe to speak, and whilst the Mischiefs, which he speaks of, are in our Power to prevent. To this remotest Corner of the World have Truth and Freedom fled. All the Nations round us know them not, nor are they permitted to know them. All those Countries subject to this Desolation and Slavery, were once as free as ourselves; but they became ensnared by Priests *who LYED*; and deceived them *in the Name of GOD*; and they are still enslaved by the Power of the Church, which rose by that impious Method of deceiving and enslaving. We that are free, as they were once, may become as much enslaved as they are now; nor are there any Means in our Hands to preserve our Freedom, and our Happiness, but by guarding against those Arts which subverted theirs; namely, the direful Arts and Practice of Lying and Ensnaring *in the Name of God*.

THIS Practice, and these Frauds, thus exposed by the *Independent Whig*, drew that Rage upon its Authors, which must be natural to all, whose Interests and Importance consist in the undue Advancement of Ecclesiastical Power. Among these stood foremost the *Bishop of Mann*, who published his *Bull* and *Anathema* against a Collection [I-lxxxviii] of innocent Papers, which advanced no other Propositions than those which our *first Reformers* avowed, and without which the *Reformation* itself can by no Pretence be justified: Nay, these Papers advanced nothing about Church-Power but what all the Clergy had sworn, and daily swear.

THE Inconsistency of this Bishop, who on other very important Occasions had manifested no such warm Zeal for his Majesty's Interests, and Royal Authority, appeared in the Instance before us abundantly gross, where he laid hold on that sacred Name, and on his Royal Orders for suppressing *Blasphemy* and *Profaneness*, to suppress a Book altogether written against *Superstition* and *Priestcraft*.

IN the Time of the *Preston Rebellion*, the *Bishop of Mann*, contrary to his Promise, contrary to his Duty, would not make use of the Prayers appointed to be used in all Churches and Chapels for the Success of his Majesty's Arms, for the Defeat of the *Popish Pretender*, who made War against him, and for the speedy Conclusion of that unnatural Scene of War.

With equal Indifference, he saw the Clergy of his Diocese refuse to subscribe the Declaration *in favour of the Protestant Succession, and against all Popish Pretenders*. It never once drew from him any Exhortations to their Duty, as [I-lxxxix] *Christians* or as *Englishmen*. The present Establishment, and the *Prince on the Throne*, were the least of his Care; and on their Behalf he shewed all the Coldness and *Moderation* imaginable: Here he denounced no Anathema's; here he issued no Bulls. But when *High-Church* and *Priestcraft*, which had so long been acting for the *Pretender* against the *House of Hanover*, when these were attacked, *he cried aloud, and spared not*. He even took Refuge in the King's Authority, pretending the highest Regard for his Pleasure, and Obedience to his Commands; and, after having shewn a notorious Contempt, a most indecent Indifference, for these Commands, where they concerned *the Pretender*, he shewed the highest Zeal for them, and Devotion to them, that he might stretch them to censure and suppress the *Independent Whig*.

CAN any one believe, that this Bishop had any Regard for the King in this Instance, when he had shewn so little Respect to the Royal Cause in Matters of the nearest and most immediate Concern to the Title, the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty? I fear, not. Did he not boldly prostitute, and indeed profane, the Name of the King, to serve his own *vile Ends* and *Passions*? And can it be well conceived, that he was more sincere, with relation to the Name or the Cause of that GOD, whom [I-xc] he drew in to authorize his unchristian Curses, than with relation to the *King*, whose Orders he would have strained to justify his lawless and arbitrary Proceedings? And is there not room to doubt, that it was neither *God* nor the *King* whom he was inspired with Zeal for? Did he not rather want the Assistance of the most tremendous Name in Heaven, and that of the supreme Power on Earth, to advance his own spiritual Authority, and to countenance him in the Exercise of *temporal Tyranny*? Indeed, thus it often happens, that *Religion* and *Government* are wickedly made the Pandars to the Ambition, and worst *Appetites*, of false and corrupt Men.

To serve these discreet and virtuous Projects, the *Bishop of Mann* bellowed out his Curses against the *Independent Whig*, calling the whole Book

“One continued Design, in which the DEVIL *and the Authors* have shewed the utmost Skill to lay waste the Church of *Christ*, to overthrow all revealed Religion, to reduce Men to a State of Nature, and to bring all Things into Confusion, both Sacred and Civil.”

WHAT then was to be done upon this dreadful Occasion? Why,

“To put a Stop, if possible, to the Beginnings of Profaneness and Infidelity, the Clergy of his Diocese were [I-xci] enjoined to convince the People, from the Word of God, of the Necessity of *holding fast the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience*, that is, *Believing well*, as well as *Living well*.”

Now I humbly apprehend, that this holding fast the Bishop's *Mystery of Faith*, this *implicit Assent*, which he so arrogantly requires, is the *Essence of all Superstition*, and the *Engine of all Priestcraft*. This Prohibition of Inquiry, and of the free Use of human Judgment, is exactly the very same Mandate which the *Bishop of Rome* would have given to his Diocese, with almost as much Warmth as the *Bishop of Mann*.

To *believe well* was undoubtedly meant to induce the laudable Practice of *living well*; and good Morals were the very Doctrines which Revelation was to *enforce*, and not to *supersede*. But whatever the Morals of Men are, or whatever the Integrity of their Lives may be, yet if they teach, countenance, or embrace any thing against the *Bishop of Mann's* Opinion, *let them be ANATHEMA*, says the Bishop; which, I presume, will influence Heaven, and convince the People, just as much, as if he had said, *let them be ABRACADABRA*.

THE People thus secured, we are next to inquire, What is to be done with the wicked Writers, who have been the Authors of all the Mischief [I-xcii] that provokes the *Bishop of Mann*? First then, *They are to be convinced of their Error in the Spirit of Meekness*; or, *They are to be cut off from the Body of Christ, that they may learn not to blaspheme*.

THE *Spirit of Meekness* is so prevailing in the Bishop and his *Bull*, that he cannot but rely on its certain Effect in convincing our Authors of their Error. To treat them as *Heretics*, as *Infidels*, as *Underminers of the Christian Religion*, as *worse than the very Plague*, as *Coadjutors with the DEVIL*, &c. is so wonderfully meek and charitable, that I know not how any Man can resist Conviction when the *Spirit is so meek*, and the *Arguments so strong*, in the Person confuting our Errors.

BUT I must freely acknowledge, that I am not so clearly of Opinion, that *cutting off People from the Body of CHRIST*, will learn them not to blaspheme: For, waving the Question, Who is impowered to dismember *Jesus Christ*, or to *cut off* any Parts of his *divine Body*? I do not see how Men may be taught *not to blaspheme* by Censures or Persecution. I rather apprehend, that the worse they are used, the more angry they will be; and therefore *cutting their Throats* would be a more effectual Remedy, than *cutting them off from the Body of CHRIST*. Nay, I am apt to fear, that it is the Bishop's Meaning: [I-xciii] For I believe he must have been often convinced, that Excommunication *stops no Man's Mouth*, nor does giving him up to the Devil ever bring him back to God. What then can be meant by *cutting him off, so that he may learn not to blaspheme*? How is he to be cut off? There is in this Part of the *Bull* something so candid and christian-like, as well as so humane and merciful, that will ever convince us, that it could be coined no-where except in the dark *Diocese of Mann*, or in the bloody *Inquisition of Portugal*.

LASTLY, We are to consider what the *Bishop* proposes to be done by himself and his Brethren: Verily all that the *Independent Whig* ever desired of them, or of their Order; even to *endeavour, by WELL-DOING, to put to Silence the Ignorance of foolish Men, holding fast the faithful Word, as we have been taught, that we may be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the Gainsayers*.

THIS is a tacit Confession of all that the *Independent Whig* ever advanced: This allows, that they are apt, by *Ill-doing*, to raise Objections against themselves; and if they would all of them receive and practise the useful Lesson of Doing well, they need never be afraid of any kind of Books, as capable of doing more Mischief *than the Plague*. But whilst they continue those [I-xciv] Enormities, and arrogant Claims, which justly provoked the Authors of the *Independent Whig* to appear against them, they will never be able to put Men to Silence, unless by the *Bishop of Mann's* Expedient of CUTTING THEM OFF, that they may learn not to blaspheme. For, whilst any honest Man hath Power to speak, I know not how he can be silent, when he sees the Iniquities of those who pretend they are commissioned to preach and declaim against the Sins of all Mankind. Is it not some Matter of Wonder, such as deserves our Attention, that though the Church of *England* was never endowed with the *Title of Infallibility*, even in its *whole Body*, yet, as if every particular Member (provided he be Ordained) were Infallible, every the *meanest Priest*, within the Pale of our Church, should pretend to do that which the *Pope* and all *his Cardinals* are not allowed a Right to, should curse and damn at Will and Pleasure, declare any one a Rebel against God, and give whom he pleases to the Devil! But, amidst all these monstrous and unchristian Absurdities, one Comfort still remains, one Privilege is the Lot of *Englishmen*, and I hope it will always be, That however such bold Hypocrites may damn, they cannot cut off; and therefore however they may rage and declaim, we have the less Reason to fear them.

[I-xcv]

It is with great Pleasure that I can finish my Observations on such a Libel, with Animadversions of another Nature; I mean with regard to the then *Governor of Mann*, Capt. HORNE, who shewed himself on this Occasion an honest and a brave Magistrate, protecting the People under his Care from the Insolence and Usurpation of this *small, assuming* Prelate, whose Inroachments he controuled, and whose *little Arts* he detected, with so much Resolution and good Sense, that this Instance of his Administration in that *Island*, will remain a Monument of his Abilities to sustain a much superior Character.

To you, Sir, I have therefore sent these Papers; and I hope, that Captain *Horne's* Example will powerfully recommend itself in every Country, where the Liberty of the People, or Inquiries after Truth, are looked on as worthy of Attention: May it ever be esteemed as it ought to be! And, whenever a *haughty, aspiring*, and time-serving Prelate shall invade the Rights of the People, to protect the Enormities of his own Order, and attempt to suppress all useful Writings, which strike at the Vices and Corruptions of the Clergy, cloaking his Malice and bad Designs under the fraudulent Covert of Zeal for the *King*, and Affection to the *Government*, perhaps without the least sincere [I-xcvi] Good-will to either; like *Land*, the Flatterer, Misleader, and Undoer of King *Charles the First*; may there never be wanting a *faithful* and an *able* Minister, willing and active, like *Captain HORNE*, to *abate his Pride, defeat his Malice, and confound his Devices!*

*I am, SIR,*  
*Your most humble Servant,*

*Decemb. 14.*  
1731.

W. A.

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## THE PREFACE. ↩

*I AM to acquaint the Reader, that I have carefully looked over and corrected this Edition of the INDEPENDENT WHIG, and made many necessary Additions and Amendments. It has been a general, indeed a just Complaint, that Books in England are shamefully and incorrectly printed. I think it great Dishonesty to publish any Book in a careless and faulty Manner; but such Dishonesty is grown so common, that few Booksellers are ashamed of it. Gain got this way is scandalously got, though some have prospered exceedingly by it. Books badly and incorrectly [I-xcviii] printed, like sophisticated Goods, ought to be forfeited and burned. I know some considerable Booksellers who have shewn such manifest want of common Honesty in this Matter, and even in publishing some of our best Authors, Authors by whom they have got infinite Profit; that they ought to be restrained by a particular Law from publishing any more Books for ever. What would you say of a Goldsmith, who, in selling you a Quantity of Plate, defrauded you in the Weight, or sold you Silver ill wrought and full of Dross?*

*TO gratify the usual Curiosity of Readers, I have, at the End of each Paper, put the initial Letter of the Name of the Gentleman who wrote it. As there were only Three Gentlemen concerned in the Undertaking, and as their Names are well known, it will be easy to distinguish them by this Mark.*

*THE Craftsmen, a Sermon published at the same time, under the Name, and in the Style, of the late Daniel Burgess, was, for the Conformity of the Subject, and [I-xcix] the Occasion of writing it, (which in the Advertisement prefixed to it I have explained) thought proper to be added to this Impression, and to all that shall follow; as was also the Bishop of MANN's Bull, or his Curse and Misrepresentation of the INDEPENDENT WHIG, addressed to the Clergy of his Diocese, and solemnly registred amongst the Ecclesiastical Archives there. It is therefore preserved here as a great Singularity, which shews the Spirit and Rage of the Man, and what such a Spirit would produce, were it let loose. His Performance, I thought, deserved no other Answer than this, and I designed to have bestowed none upon it: Yet I find, that the Letter to the Publisher has paid it a Distinction which I never should, and exposed at length his Nonsense, Fury and ill Names, with masterly Reasoning and Style.*

*THE Inscription upon Mr. Trenchard's Tomb is likewise inserted, with an English Translation of it, out of Respect to his Memory, and to the Share which he had [I-c] in the following Work. There is also added to this Edition, A Letter to a Gentleman at Edinburgh, concerning the busy and assuming Spirit of the Ecclesiastics, and their extravagant Demands upon the Laity: Written some Years ago, and never before printed.*

*AMONGST the many Invectives against the INDEPENDENT WHIG, there came forth one about eight Years ago, under the Name of a certain Clergyman, whom for his own Sake I bring not upon the public Stage, full of Declamation, personal Railing, and miserable Cavilling; of all which I should have taken no notice, but that I hear he boasts what a deadly Shock he gave by it to Mr. Trenchard. What his own Vanity may suggest to him, I know not; but this I know, that Mr. Trenchard, though then upon his Death-bed, and past all Hopes of Recovery, having read some Pages in it, laughed very heartily at it. He said, That he had always taken the Author to have been an honest and a grateful Man (for he owed much [I-ci] to Mr. Trenchard's Family): But since I was mistaken, I am glad, says he, to be undeceived, and I rejoice, yea, I rejoice. This was his Behaviour, these his Words. To all this I was Witness. The Author calls his Book, An Answer to the several Papers publish'd by the Name of the INDEPENDENT WHIG. But after much Boasting, Threatening, and Inveighing, he confines*

*himself intirely to the last Paper. Against that he rants and cavils, in such Language as I should be sorry to repeat, and yet has the Candor to call his Declamation an Answer to the Whole; though, as far as I remember, (for I happened to look into it at that time) he meddles with none but that one Paper, which he has still left unanswered.*

December 21. 1731.

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# THE INDEPENDENT WHIG.

[I-1]

## NUMBER I.

### *The* INTRODUCTION.↵

*Wednesday, January 20. 1720.*

WHOEVER goes about to reform the World, undertakes an Office obnoxious to Malice, and beset with Difficulties. It speaks a Confidence of his own Capacity, which prompts him to set up for the Schoolmaster of Mankind; and it infers a Charge of Corruption or Ignorance [I-2] in his Pupils, out of which he assumes to whip them. As every Man has a good Conceit of his own Merit, he thinks himself undervalued by Instruction, and is provoked by Correction. The Confession of our own Weakness, and that of another's better Sense, is generally, both, contained in the taking of Advice, which is seldom taken for that Reason.

BESIDES, Blindness and Prejudice are seldom to be resigned but with Pain: and therefore, for the most part, are not resigned at all. It is but an unacceptable Civility to offer to let in the Rays of Understanding upon those Minds, which are us'd to subsist in the Dark. It is like opening Day-light upon a Nest of Owls, it always sets them a Screeching.

THE Difference, however, is considerable between natural and acquired Ignorance, and the last is much more incurable than the first. The one is capable, and often willing, to be informed; whereas the other thinks itself above it, and is too wise to learn. There can be no Cure for one who is taught to be a Blockhead: His Ignorance is the Fruit of Instruction, and has cost him great Pains; and so his Pride is engaged to support it. As he has improved his Mind into learned Darkness, he stands upon his Guard against Common Sense, is Proof against all the Assaults of Reason, and scorns its Power. If he do [I-3] not take you for his Enemy, and use you accordingly; yet, at least, he will pity your Mistakes, and, perhaps, pray for your Illumination.

It will probably be said, by some of my Readers, that I here describe myself and my own Performances, and perhaps with too much Truth. There lived, not long since, a Poet, who made excellent Criticisms upon the most applauded Plays, and afterwards writ one himself obnoxious to them all.

BUT neither these, nor any other Difficulties or Discouragements, shall hinder me from the generous Attempt of endeavouring to reform Mankind. I have the Magnanimity to face them all, and set about the Work; though I am sufficiently sensible of the Greatness of the Design, and have long wished, that some abler Genius would have undertaken it.

I CONFESS there have been some seeming Attempts of this kind, which were carried on with great Dexterity and Wit, and brought great Credit, and other valuable Advantages, to the Authors; but I should be glad to know what Service they have done to the Public. The exposing of small Faults can do but small Service; and People may be singular in their Humours, and vain in their Dress, without hurting human Society. A Beau may wear a fine Coat, and a gaudy Sword knot, without prejudicing [I-4] the Commonwealth, or indeed any one Member of it: Nor can I see any dreadful Malignity in a hooped Petticoat. A Lady may keep a Squirrel, and diversify her Face with fifty Patches on a Side, without invading private or public Property. There is no Mischief in a harmless Snuff-box, or a Diamond-ring; nor do laced Cloaths, or a clouded Cane, prejudice Trade; nor the Flirting of a Fan shake our Constitution. A terrible Fellow with a long Sword may be a peaceable Neighbour; and a

Coquette may salute her Lap-dog, and yet not endanger our Liberties.

THESE little Sallies and Excrescences of Humour, as they give real Pleasure and Happiness to the Proprietors themselves, so they often entertain wiser People, who might otherwise grow too severe for want of a little Laughing. And yet, I will own, that many Papers upon that Subject have justly merited universal Esteem and Admiration.

BUT the greater and more important Mischiefs, which afflict human Society, have been, for the most part, left untouched by our finest Writers: Priestcraft and Tyranny have been seldom attacked by any, but rather flattered and supported. Mr. *Saville* is said to have replied to a *Frenchman*, who exulted upon the fine Writings of his Countrymen, *That there were [I-5] but Two Subjects in Nature worth a Wise Man's Thoughts, namely, Religion and Government; and they durst speak of neither.* But it is our peculiar Happiness to live in a Country, where we may speak our Minds freely and openly upon any Subject, within the Bounds of good Manners and Virtue; which, I hope, I shall never transgress.

I OWN, the *Free-Thinker* is an useful, as well as a fine Paper. I have seen some Discourses of his, which, in my Opinion, are inimitable; especially those upon *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm*. Most that come from him are instructive, and all are elegant. I hope so worthy a Writer has suitable Encouragement. I have not the good Fortune to know that ingenious and deserving Gentleman; but I am told, that, besides his Capacity and public Principles, and the Work he is now engaged in, he has done personal Services to the Government, which, in any other Country, would intitle him to a very good Station in it: If he have none in *This*, it is, no doubt, owing to the public Spirit of the Great; who will, by no Fault or Courtesy of theirs, divert him from instructing his Country twice a Week. I shall only add upon this Head, that as no Man is so well qualified as the *Free-Thinker* himself to execute his own Plan, [I-6] mine will not by any means interfere with his, as will be shewn in my next Paper.

THERE was one weekly Paper, which, had it gone on, would have prevented this; I mean the *Free-Thinker Extraordinary*. It breathed an uncommon Spirit of public Liberty, and shewed sufficiently the Capacity of the Author to do Service to Mankind. But when he had shewed his Skill, and engaged our Attention, he dropped us and his Subject; and made it necessary, though dangerous, to succeed him. It was never asked why he undertook it; for every one saw the Reasons and Advantages of it: But why he deserted it, has been the Subject of Inquiry; and the rather, because it was evident, that he wanted neither Art nor Materials.

FOR myself, who have no manner of Attachment to any Party, I shall not be afraid to speak my Mind of All, with that Freedom which becomes Truth and Independency; and the Flattering of Power, in any Shape or Hands whatsoever, shall be the last Charge against me.

THERE is no Power in Names to consecrate Persons or Things, or to alter their Nature; and yet the Majority of Mankind have always worshipped the Idols of Words and Sounds; [I-7] and a Monosyllable has often done more than an Army, towards keeping them under Awe and Servitude. In Catholic Countries, the Word *Pope*, or *Priest*, carries with it more Reverence than does the *Old* or *New Testament*, and more Terror than an armed Host. And lately in *France*, the Words, *Grand Monarque*, or the *Glory* of the *Grand Monarque*, could keep a vast Nation in Misery and Wooden-shoes, and carry a Hundred Thousand of them at a time to the Slaughter.

THIS blind Devotion to Names, so inconsistent with true Liberty, which shews itself in *Judging* as well as *Acting*, has also prevailed in this free Nation to a Degree shameful and dangerous. We know what terrible Lengths the Words *Church*, *Clergy*, *Divine Right*, and the like undefined Nonsense, have gone towards enslaving us; and what a steady and ridiculous Reverence is still paid to them, even when they are evidently applied to Purposes the most

impious and tyrannical.

NOR does this Charge of *worshipping Words* lie altogether at the Door of one Party only. Even that Side, which boasts a greater Share of Reason and Freedom, is manifestly guilty of the like Idolatry to Names and Persons, and in Instances of the greatest Importance. They do not consider the Speech, but the *Speaker*; nor [I-8] what is done, but the *Door*; and consequently praise, *by the Great*, in their own Leaders, what they would loudly condemn in any others.

CREDULITY and implicit Belief are equally dangerous in Government as in Religion: They have made the World Slaves, and they keep it so. Every Party has its Pope, and some have several; who, like him at *Rome*, never fail to make an ill Use of the Faith of their Followers, and deceive those who trust in them.

I HAVE said thus much to apprise the Reader, that this will be an Independent Paper, which will stoop to no Party, nor have any Friends or Enemies, but such as make themselves so, by espousing the Interests of Truth or Falshood.

[I-9]

NUMBER II.  
*The Design of this PAPER.* ↩

*Wednesday, January 27. 1720.*

RELIGION was design'd by Heaven for the Benefit of Men alone. It teaches us to moderate our Desires, calm our Passions, and be useful and beneficent to one another; and whatever does not contribute to these Ends, ought not to be called by that Name. For Almighty God has infinite Happiness in himself, which we can neither diminish nor add to; and therefore he can require nothing of us, but for our own Sakes; nor command any thing but what tends to our own Good, both here and hereafter.

I SAY it with the utmost Sincerity, that no Man living desires to pay a more true and affectionate Esteem and Reverence than myself to those Clergymen, who answer this End of [I-10] their Institution, and whose Lives and Manners grace and adorn their Profession and Doctrine.

I THANK God, I know many such; and perceive, with Pleasure and Transport, a noble Spirit of Liberty and true Religion rising up among them; which will soon flame out far and wide, if it be not stifled by those, whose true Interest and Honour call upon them aloud to give it Assistance and Protection.

THAT Profession must be always most honourable and deserving from Mankind, which is most useful and advantageous to Men. As it is therefore impossible to shew too much Respect to virtuous Clergymen, so the corrupt Part of them cannot be too much exposed. Since the Possession which they have of the Fears and Panic of superstitious People, and in the tenderest Seasons too, enables them to do the greatest Mischief; the strongest Antidotes ought to be applied to their Poison. It will be ridiculous to call for Protection from that Character, which they constantly disgrace, and to ask Assistance from the Religion, which they neither believe nor practise.

I HERE list myself under the Banners of the former Sort; and design by this Work to illustrate the Beauty of Christianity, by exposing the Deformity of Priestcraft; to distinguish the good Clergy from the bad, by giving to each [I-11] his Share of Praise or Infamy, according to the different Deeds done by them. I will lose no Opportunity of doing Justice to the former, nor, willingly, to the latter.

In doing this, I shall go far backward, and, taking Things from the Beginning, shew in the Course of these Papers the infinite Evils brought upon Mankind, from Age to Age, by the Pride and Imposture of corrupt Ecclesiastics. I shall shew what a *Babel* they have built upon the Foundation of Christ and his Apostles, who were made to father Doctrines which they never taught; and to countenance Power which they always disclaimed. I shall shew by what Arts and Intrigues they came, from being Alms-men of the People, to be Masters of Mankind; and how, by pretending to dispose of the *Other World*, they actually usurped and ruled *This*.

I SHALL shew, that notwithstanding Christianity was first propagated by Miracles and Mildness only, and the Teachers of it had no Power but to persuade; making it withal appear, in the whole Course of their Lives and Preaching, that they sought no manner of personal Advantage, or any manner of Jurisdiction over their Hearers and Converts; yet they who, without their Inspiration and Manners, called themselves their Successors, did by virtue [I-12] of their Names lay insolent Claim to Dominion, and carried all Things before them, by the Dint of Terror and Excommunication.

I SHALL shew, that though the Clergy, like other Militia, were raised and paid for protecting Mankind from their Spiritual Enemy, yet they soon made use of the Sword put into their Hands against their Masters, and set up for themselves. I shall shew, that notwithstanding the whole End of their Institution was to make Men wiser and better, yet where-ever *They* prevailed, Debauchery and Ignorance also prevailed; and the constant Lesson they taught, was blind Belief, and blind Obedience, of both which they made themselves the Objects. So that Superstition was an inseparable Creature of their Power, and the perpetual Issue of it; and tainted Morals, and darkened Minds, were the great Props of their Dominion. A good Understanding, and an inquisitive Spirit, led directly to Heresy; a pious Life was of ill Example, and a Reproach to the Clergy; and if any one gave Offence this way, it was but calling him *Heretic*, and delivering him over to *Satan*: The Man was then undone, and the Clergy safe.

I SHALL shew how they soon banished the meek Spirit of the Christian Religion, and, [I-13] growing to as great Variance with Mercy, as they were with Reason, perverted Religion into Rage, and Zeal into Cruelty. They made the peaceable Doctrine of Jesus a Doctrine of Blood, and excommunicated and damned by that Name, by which alone Men could be saved. It is true they damned one another as much as they did the rest of the World; for, agreeing in nothing but the great Principle of Interest, though they rode upon the Necks of their People, yet they never could be at Peace, nor Ease, among themselves, so long as each Individual was not in the highest Place. And therefore, because every one of them could not be above all the rest, they were eternally quarrelling, and giving one another to the Devil.

If one of them held any Proposition, true or false, it was Reason enough for another to deny it, and *curse* him into the bargain. At last, there was not one Principle in their System but what was contested, and they agreed in nothing but their own Power; though, at the same time, they disputed what that was.

In this everlasting Scuffle, and Civil War, they had so mangled Truth, and muffled it up, that few could distinguish it from the false Images which they had made of it. And yet these Men, who, by their constant Discords and Debates, confessed themselves in endless [I-14] Uncertainties, were the sure and infallible Guides to others, who were obliged to believe their Guesses and Contradictions, on pain of Hell-fire.

I SHALL shew what a shameful Hand they have always had in bringing and keeping Mankind under Tyranny and Bondage to such Princes as would divide the Spoil with them. In such Case, it was a Point of Conscience, and a religious Duty, for Subjects to be miserable

Slaves; and Damnation but to strive to be happy. But if the Prince happened to be a Lover of Mankind, and endeavoured to protect his People in their Civil and Sacred Rights; then were they the constant Incendiaries of every popular and wicked Faction. They preached nothing but Sedition and Blood, till they had worked up their blind and stupid Votaries to Rebellions and Assassinations. To such Conduct is owing a great Part of their Power and Wealth.

I THINK no one, who is the least conversant with Ecclesiastical History, will deny that this was the Condition of Christianity before the *Reformation*. The chief Intent of this Paper is to let all the World know it, that they may be upon their Guard against the like Mischiefs. It is certain, that the Demands of the High Clergy, upon the Laity, are as great, if not [I-15] greater than they were at that Time. As Father *Paul* says of *England*, *The Horse is bridled and saddled, and the old Rider is just getting upon his Back*.

It is Time now to conclude this Paper, by saying, that if my hearty Endeavours shall any ways contribute to detect the Impostures, and expose the wicked Practices, of those, who, under the prostituted Name of Sanctity, are Foes to Truth, to Liberty, and Virtue; I shall think my Time and Pains well spent. But if not, I shall have the internal Satisfaction of having attempted at least to attack Vice and Corruption, however dignified or distinguished; and the worst which can be said of me, is,

--- *magnis tamen excidit ausis*.

G.

[I-16]

### NUMBER III. *Of the Contempt of the Clergy.* ↩

*Wednesday, February 3. 1720.*

RING the Bells backward! The Temple, the Temple is on Fire! The High-priests look aghast, and the People stare, and all cry out, The Craft, the Craft is in Danger!

THIS I expected, and was prepared for, when I first engaged in the Undertaking: Touch a galled Horse, and he will wince, though 'tis in order to cure him. I knew a Gentleman, who found out a Murderer, by looking stedfastly in his Face: When any one is conscious of his own Crimes or Infirmities, he is jealous of every Approach towards a Discovery, and often makes one by it.

It is remarkable, that no Order or Society of Men is so apprehensive of Disrespect, or can so little bear the Examination into their Pretensions, [I-17] as the greatest Part of the Ecclesiastics. If you ridicule or laugh at the Professions of Law and Physic, the Lawyers and Physicians will laugh with you. The same is true of Soldiers, Merchants, and the Professors of almost all Arts and Sciences, who generally are the first to expose the Knaves and Fools amongst them.

If a Lawyer, Soldier, or Merchant, deserve the Pillory; neither *Westminster-hall*, the *Army*, or the *East-India* Company, are in an Uproar; or complain that the Law, Trade, or the Soldiery, are wounded through his Sides; nor endeavour to raise a Mob in his Behalf, or rebel in token of their unlimited Submission to Government. The Fair Sex do not think themselves ill used, when a Baud is tied to a Cart, or naughty Nymph beats Hemp: The Eleven Apostles lost no Credit when *Judas* hanged himself; nor would any honest Clergyman, tho' even so many of the other Sort did the same, or if it was done for them.

BUT I do not know by what Judgment or Family it happens, that if you but touch the Pretences or Vices of the Meanest of the Ecclesiastics, so many of their Body are in an Uproar: They roar aloud, their Order is exposed, their Mysteries derided and profaned, and Religion itself in Danger of being subverted; [I-18] and *Socinian, Deist, or Atheist*, is the best Word, that is often given to their best Friend; and sometimes all of them are given.

ALL other Societies of Men are contented with the Esteem and Honour, which result from the Usefulness of their Employments and Professions, from the Worth and Capacity of their Members: Yet none stand in such a Situation, none have so many Advantages to acquire Respect and Homage, as the Clergy.

THEIR Office is evidently adapted to promote the Welfare of Human Nature, to propagate its Peace and Prosperity in this World, as well as its eternal Felicity in the next; so that it is the Interest of all Men to honour it; and none but a Madman will condemn and ridicule what has a manifest Tendency to the Security and Happiness of all Mankind.

THE Temporal Condition of the Clergy does likewise place them far above Contempt: They have great Revenues, Dignities, Titles, and Names of Reverence, to distinguish them from the rest of the World; and it is too well known, that Wealth, Power, and Learning, carry to the Vulgar a kind of Mystery, and distant Grandeur, and command not only Admiration and Reverence, but often a superstitious Veneration.

[I-19]

ADDED to this, they have the Possession and Direction of our Fears; they are admitted in Health and Sickness: Every *Sunday* they have the sole Opportunity of gaining our Esteem by worthy and useful Instructions, and all the Week by their good Lives: They educate us whilst young, influence us in our middle Age, govern us in our Dotage, and we neither live nor die without them.

A numerous Body of Men, so constituted and endowed, so privileged and posted, are capable of being most useful and beneficent to Society, if their Actions be suitable to their Professions. All the World will acknowledge, and pay a willing Homage to their Merit, and there will be no need of demanding, much less of extorting Respect, or of Complaints and Exclamations for want of it. The Danger lies on the other Side; for there are such Seeds of Superstition in human Nature, that all our Prudence and Caution will be little enough to prevent even Adoration to their Persons. If, therefore, they want that Respect which they are so fond of, they cannot be to seek for the true Reasons, namely, their own Corruptions and Worthlessness, which must be exceeding great, to get the better of so many Advantages.

IF Clergymen would avoid Contempt, let them avoid the Causes of it. Let them not [I-20] be starting and maintaining eternal Claims to worldly Power: Let them not be hunting after Honours, courting Preferments, and bustling for Riches: Let them not be assuming to give Models of human Government, or to adjust and determine the Titles of Princes: Let them not pretend to punish any Man for his Way of Worship, and to give him to the Devil for his Money or Opinion: Let them not join in Factions, and foment Rebellions: Let them not defy Heaven by swearing falsely: Let them not promote Servitude in the People, and Barbarity in the Prince: and let them not flatter wicked Kings, and plague and disturb good ones.

LET them win Respect, and wear it; but let them not earn Infamy, and demand Veneration. Let not those of them, who gratify brutish Appetites, and live in all Vileness, add Want of Shame to their Want of Grace, and bewail that they are contemned, while they are deserving it. If a Man pretending to great Gravity and Regard, should dress himself up in a Fool's Coat, and a Pair of Horns, would not People laugh at him in spite of themselves? And would not his Resentment and Rebukes add still to their Mirth? A Clergyman, who is drunk on



*Saturday*, will but, with an ill Grace, talk of his Dignity and Ambassadorship on *Sunday*. Ought we to own and reverence that [I-21] Man as our Guide to Heaven, who is himself going a contrary Road, and rioting in those Vices which his whole Duty is to restrain?

THE Honour therefore of the good Clergy is consulted and promoted, by exposing the bad. A profane Priest is the Disgrace and Bane of his own Order, and they who stand by him, adopt his Infamy, and defile themselves. If he neglect God, and disturb Human Society, how do the Clergy suffer, though he be whipp'd or hang'd? His Punishment is their Credit and Security, because by it is lopped off from their Body a gangrened Limb, that incumbred and deformed the rest.

ATHEISTS, who are not restrained by the Fear of God, which is stronger than all the Laws in the World, ought, in the Opinion of Politicians, as well as Casuists, to be expelled from the Society of Men. And shall more Mercy be shewn to those, who are so hardened in Impiety, that though they believe a God, yet dread not his Vengeance, but swear by his great and terrible Name to an avowed Falshood? Or can the Clergy suffer by the Loss of such execrable Company?

AN unfortunate *Levite*, some Years since, had his Head cleft by a Butcher, who caught him in Bed with his Wife; and neither the Number of Reverend Auditors, who attended [I-22] the Tryal, a due Regard to the Cloth, or an Apprehension of the Carnage it might produce, could hinder the Judge from directing the Jury to call the Crime only *Man-slaughter*. This so provoked the meek Spirit, and Patience, of a Holy Brother, then present, that he cried out in the Court, *Here's a fine World! If these Things be suffered, there will be no living for us.*

No chaste or sober Clergyman could be terrified with such an Example, or think the Church in any Danger by it. Does any virtuous Member of the Holy Order suffer either in his Person or Character, if *Biss* divert his Spectators in a Pillory, or Parson *Paul* his Auditors upon a Gallows? None can share in their Disgrace but those who sympathize in their Crimes, or censure their Punishment. How much more honest, as well as prudent, would it be to remove the Guilt from themselves, by throwing it all upon the devoted Head; to put the evil Thing out of the City; and to imitate the Sagacity of the horned Herd, who always drive the blown Deer from amongst them, where he seeks his Refuge, though at the Hazard of involving the whole Tribe in his Misfortune!

T. & G.

[I-23]

#### NUMBER IV. *Of the Explication of the Scripture.*↵

*Wednesday, February 10. 1720.*

TO fear God, and keep his Commandments, is the Summary of the Old Testament; and to believe, that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is the Compendium of the New. Whoever can prove his Obedience and Faith, by these two plain Duties, fulfils the Law and the Gospel.

It was most agreeable to the infinite Goodness and tender Mercies of God, to make every thing which he requires of us weak Men obvious and clear. The Importance of the Duty implies its Certainty, which is not to be found in Phrases either doubtful or obscure. The Scriptures are justly styled the *Revealed Will* of God; they are addressed to *all* Mankind, and given to remain as a Rule of Faith [I-24] and Manners to the End of the World. It must therefore follow, that whatever is necessary to be known in them, is to be as easy and intelligible at one Time as another, and to all Men alike.

WHERE their Meaning cannot be positively determined, a new Inspiration will be necessary to reduce them to Certainty; and if that be wanting, every thing else is but Conjecture. Whoever therefore goes about to put a Construction upon such Passages in Scripture, and enjoins us to believe his Interpretation, does not demand Submission to the Word of God, but to his own Authority and Imagination.

WHAT Use is there of an unintelligible Proposition? Or of a Revelation which wants to be revealed? Almighty God will never require of us to see in the Dark, till he has given us new Eyes; nor to believe any Article, or obey any Precept, till we understand him, and know what he means. A Rule, which is not plain, is no Rule at all: Nor will he make a Law binding, or the Transgression of it a Sin, till we know what it is.

It is true, that human Laws oblige all Men to submit to the Penalty annexed to the Transgression, though many perhaps may never hear of them. But this is to prevent the constant [I-25] Plea of Ignorance, which otherwise would be made by all Offenders. The Corruption and Imbecility of human Nature make this Procedure necessary. But it is far otherwise in the Dispensation of Providence. The Author of it sees our Hearts, penetrates the most secret Recesses of our Souls, makes indulgent Allowances for our Weaknesses, and expects nothing from us, but what he has given us the Means and Abilities of knowing and performing. He requires us not to make Brick without Straw. He judges by the Intention, not the Action. We cannot offend him, but voluntarily, much less offer him an Affront, when we design Respect and Obedience.

THE Creator and Preserver of Mankind cannot take Delight in puzzling his Creatures with Darkness and Ambiguities, and in Points too where their Souls are in Danger. He is not a rigid Master, who would reap where he did not sow. This would be a cruel Mockery, unworthy of the Divine Being, *who has brought Life and Immortality to Light*.

NOTHING is plainer than the Law and the Gospel. Whoever says the contrary, does no less than accuse the great and good God, and justify wicked and wilful Men, whom he has left without Excuse, by telling them clearly what he expects from them. *What [I-26] does God require of thee, O Man, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly?* said one of his Prophets out of his Mouth. I am very sure there is no Difficulty in understanding this.

THE obscure Passages in Scripture could not be intended for our Instruction. Infinite Wisdom has hid them from our Eyes, to be brought to Light in his own Time, and then to answer the Ends of his Providence; or perhaps to baffle our vain Pride and Curiosity. Who art thou, O Man, who wouldst be wiser than the Omniscient; make those Things necessary, which he has not made so; discover what he has thought fit to conceal; and know his Secrets whether he will or no? This would be to mend the Scripture; to make it more useful than God has made it; to help the Holy Ghost, and to teach the Almighty how to express himself.

How absurd would it be to send Cookmaids and Day-labourers to study *Aristotle* and *Suarez*; to rake into the Jargon of the Schools; to learn all Languages, examine all Systems; and to discover of themselves all Errors, Interpolations and Mistakes; or to do what is much more ridiculous, *that is*, wholly throw themselves, and their Salvation, in most Countries, upon a Confederacy of Men, who [I-27] have an Interest to deceive and oppress them, and ever did so when they had an Opportunity; who have been always at Variance with one another, and with themselves; and have agreed in nothing but the misleading of those who trusted them! And yet one of these must be the unhappy Circumstance of the greatest Part of Mankind, if what I have said before be not true; which we may be sure the Divine Goodness cannot permit.

NOTHING is more evident from History, than that most, if not all, the Improvements and Reformations of Religion have been made, not only without, but in Opposition to these Men. There have been near a Million of them kept in constant Pay for the best Part of Seventeen hundred Years, to teach the World by their Precepts, and reform it by their Example; and yet I am persuaded, they will not pretend, that Religion is plainer, the Scriptures better understood, or that Mankind are more wise or virtuous for all their Instructions. So little have we been benefited by their Labours, and for all the Money they have received! I wish I could not say, that the World has gradually decreased in Piety and Virtue, as these its Teachers have advanced in Riches and Power. It is owned by the best of themselves.

[I-28]

It is the farthest from my Thoughts, by any thing I have before said, to undervalue their true Office, much less to make it useless. I sincerely think it absolutely necessary to the Peace and Happiness of Society. The *Roman* Consuls had an Officer attending their Triumphal Chariots, whose Business it was to cry out, *Memento mori*.

I WOULD have these too answer the same End of their Institution; to press the Reading of the Scripture upon their Hearers; to shew its Excellency and Advantages; to inculcate the *plain Precepts* of Faith and Morality contained in it; and to demonstrate the Goodness of God to Men by proving, that he has laid down to us in plain Words, every Duty which he requires of us, either to himself, our Neighbour, or ourselves. But let them not distract instead of instructing, and confound ignorant People with Metaphysical Subtilties, which the Wisest cannot comprehend. Let them not strain ridiculous and selfish Consequences from obscure Parts of Scripture, and make the Almighty mean what he never said. Let them give us God's Will in God's Words.

ANOTHER End of their Office, is to execute those Duties of our most Holy Religion, which the Word of God has left at large for every one to do, but which indeed are necessary [I-29] to be performed by single Persons in the several Churches or Societies of Christians; such as Reading the Scriptures, and public Prayers, aloud to the Congregation, and Administring the Sacraments: What by the Gospel Liberty is the Right of every one, (as shall be unanswerably made out hereafter) is by the Consent of voluntary and national Churches become the Duty and Business of particular Persons, who are set aside and paid for that Purpose.

IN what I have before said, I have the Concurrence of the best and wisest of our own Clergy, who acknowledge and contend, that we are not to take the Almighty's Meaning at Second-hand, nor receive that for his Will, which we ourselves do not find to be so; but that we are to inquire before we believe, and to be convinced before we assent; every Assertion or Proposition, before it is examined, being alike to the Understanding, as every Colour is to the Blind. They own, that our Judgment ought to be at no Man's Service, nor our Minds controuled in religious Matters, but by God alone; for as no Man's Soul can be saved by Proxy, so no Man ought to exercise his Faith by Proxy.

G.

[I-30]

#### NUMBER V.

### *The Unfitness of the Clergy to Teach Others.* ↩

*Wednesday, February 17. 1720.*

AS in my last Paper, I hope, I have fully shewn, that Clergymen have no Right to interpret the Scriptures for other People; so I shall endeavour in this, to prove that they are, for the generality, the least qualified to do so, of any Set or Society of Men, in their present

State of Learning and Virtue. This I do with a sincere Design to serve them, as well as the Laity; hoping, that when they see from what Source the Neglect and Contempt, which they so much complain of, proceed, they will join heartily in their own Reformation, in answering the Ends of their Institution, and in being hereafter as useful to their Country, [I-31] as many of them have been formerly mischievous.

USE makes every Posture familiar to the Body, and every Opinion to the Mind. We are told, that the *Brahmans*, in *India*, do, by long Habit, so distort their Limbs, that they grow in the Situation which they are put in. Every Day's Experience proves, that we assimilate with the Company we keep, as well in our Sentiments, as in the Air and Mien of our Bodies. Not only different Nations, but often Sects, Professions, and Trades, are to be known by their Phiz and Behaviour. A Sailor, or a Taylor, (to say nothing of their Betters) may be found out, however they disguise themselves.

NOTHING but keeping the best Company can give a free and easy Carriage; and an open and generous Conversation alone can disengage our Minds from the strong Impressions of our early Education. The Habit of thinking freely, and of expressing freely those Thoughts on all Occasions, enables us to judge well of Men and Things. Our Minds are polished by Collision, and a liberal Conversation not only starts all Difficulties, but solves them, if they are to be solved.

ALMIGHTY God gives us Faculties to use them; and it is Ingratitude, as well as Folly, [I-32] to return the Gift upon his Hands. Truth can never suffer by an impartial Examination, but on the contrary will receive Strength and Advantage from it. It is Error and Imposture alone, which dread a fair Inquiry, as being conscious of their own Weakness.

I think I may therefore safely affirm, that whatever Body or Society of Men are most restrained by themselves or others, from Reasoning freely on every Subject, and especially on the most important of all, are the least qualified to be the Guides and Directors of Mankind.

I will now examine how far this is the Circumstance of the Clergy in most Countries. They are no sooner discharged from the Nurse and the Mother, but they are delivered over to Spiritual Pedagogues, who have seldom the Capacity, and never the Honesty and Courage, to venture at a *Free Thought* themselves, and must consequently be improper Channels to convey any to their Pupils.

FROM thence they are sent to the Universities, (very commonly upon Charity) where they are ham-stringed and manacled with early *Oaths* and *Subscriptions*, and obliged to swear to Notions before they know what they are. Their Business afterwards is not to find out what is Truth, but to defend the received [I-33] System, and to maintain those Doctrines which are to maintain Them. Not only their present Revenues and Subsistence, but all their Expectations are annexed to certain Opinions, established, for the most part, by Popes and Synods, in corrupt and ignorant Ages; and even then often carried by Faction and Bribery, in Concert with the Designs and Intrigues of Statesmen; but become sanctified by Time, and now to be received without Inquiry.

No one can fairly examine what is Truth, who has an Interest on either Side of the Question. We are bribed by our Inclinations, in spite of our best Resolutions. Who can be heartily angry at an Opinion, which will keep a Coach and Six, or strenuously endeavour to find out any Heresy in it? Besides, all Men are fond of Respect and Homage, and when they are in Possession, will esteem it but an unprofitable Study to find out, that they do not deserve them.

As Clergymen so educated cannot, for the Reasons aforesaid, be fair and impartial Judges themselves of what is Truth, so their Authority can give but little Weight to such Doctrines as they may think fit to teach to others. The first Question asked of a suspected Witness in every Court of Judicature is, Whether [I-34] he gets or loses by the Success of the Cause? And, if either appears, he is constantly set aside, and not trusted with an Oath.

It is demonstrable in Reason, that every Man's Pretences ought to be tried by the same Test and Rule; and where the Evidence of a Proposition cannot be clearly shewn by one who has an Interest to advance it, nor proved by Miracles, all other Persons have Reason to suspect it of Imposture: When what he offers will indisputably conduce to his own Benefit, and I have only his Word, that it will conduce to mine, I cannot doubt but his Kindness is greater for himself than for me, and shall consequently believe, that he is not doing my Business, but his own.

THE Apostles, and some of the first Christians, did not so teach Christ. They not only convinced Mankind of the Truth of what they said by Miracles, but made it apparent to all the World, that they sought no temporal Benefit: On the contrary, they left their Families, their Professions, and all the Comforts of Life, to wander about the Earth, and preach a Doctrine infinitely advantageous to the present, as well as eternal State of others; and expected no Reward to themselves in this Life, but Beggary, Stripes, and even Death itself.

[I-35]

It is not to be wondered, that, in Universities abroad, no such Discourses, or even such distant Hints, are countenanced or permitted, which have the least Tendency to oppose the Pride or temporal Grandeur of the Clergy; nor any Speculations suffered to be vented there, which ever so little break in upon received Opinions. It is not only a certain Stop to all Hopes of Preferment, to question the Truth of any of their darling Notions; but you are in Danger of being expelled, and are sure to be discountenanced and contemned.

THE Philosophy and Learning, there taught and encouraged, are exactly calculated and adapted to this State of Darkness and Ignorance: These are nothing but an unintelligible Jargon of undefined Words, and bare Sounds, which mean nothing, and yet can prove every thing. With this Gibberish the Pupils there are diverted from sound Knowledge, by being put upon a wrong Scent; and are hindered from attaining true Wisdom, by believing that they have got it.

ALL Attempts towards useful Learning are neglected and discouraged; and nothing is found out to be true in Philosophy, but is made false in Religion; and the Authors and Discoverers are branded with Heresy, if not Atheism. Of this the Examples are infinite.

[I-36]

THUS accoutred, and thus set out, our young Ecclesiastic commences Governor and Director of Mens Consciences. He is impatient of the least Contradiction, and is all in a Flame at an Opposition which he has not been used to. As he never questioned the Truth of any of his own Notions himself, he grows outrageous at any one else who does, and immediately cries out aloud for Fire and Faggot.

To this it is owing, that the Difference between the controversial Writings of Gentlemen, and those of Divines, is so very remarkable. The first are carried on, for the most part, with Humanity, and always with good Manners, even when the Matter is most poignant and sarcastical. In the latter, at first Sight, appears the *Odium Theologorum*; and Rage, Ill-breeding, and Revenge, breathe thro' every Part of them. A proper Disposition this to make Converts, and govern the World!

THIS Temper has (even in *England*) shewn itself visibly, in their Treatment of a modern Bishop [\*], whom neither his great Penetration, his pious Life, nor the pretended Regard to his pastoral Function, could protect from Ecclesiastical Hatred and Fury, for his having dared to engage in the Interest of Mankind.

[I-37]

As it is undeniably true, that what I have before described is the unhappy Circumstance of the Clergy, in most Countries; so no Man, who has the least Desire to promote useful Knowledge, true Virtue, and sound Religion amongst Mankind, but must endeavour to manumit them from this State of Servitude and Darkness, even though they should oppose it themselves. Birds and Beasts used to Lodges or Dens, are afraid to go out of them; and even Men long shut up in dark Dungeons, cannot for some Time bear the Light of the Day. Galley-Slaves, not knowing what to do with Liberty given them, have often, of their own Accord, returned to their Chains; nay, God's own People themselves longed again for *Egyptian* Flesh-pots, and *Egyptian* Slavery, when they were fed with Food from Heaven; notwithstanding which, *Moses* would not gratify their brutish Appetites, but made them happy in spite of themselves.

I would therefore have every Clergyman enjoy the full Liberty which every Layman enjoys. We are not confined in our Searches after Truth; and why should the Clergy be confined, in whose Hands it is more powerful and advantageous than in ours? The granting of *Ecclesiastical Freedom* to Churchmen is [I-38] as equitable as that of *Civil Freedom* to Laymen. I thank God, we possess a glorious Portion of the latter; and I heartily wish *them* an equal Portion of the former.

T.

## NUMBER VI. *Of Creeds and Confessions of Faith.*

*Wednesday, February 24. 1720.*

I Have shewn in my Fourth Paper, the Boldness and Absurdity of the Exposition of Holy Scripture, when that Exposition is maintained and imposed for Canonical Truth. I shall here prosecute the same Subject merely as it relates to *Creeds* and *Confessions of Faith*.

In our Disputes with the Church of *Rome*, we contend, that the Scripture alone is a sufficient Rule of Faith and Practice; and our Divines have proved it unanswerably. But when our High-Church Priests argue with Dissenters, and those whom they are pleased to [I-39] christen Heretics, Holy Writ is not so highly complimented: It is then very subject to lead us into Mistakes, and hard to be understood. It is true, 'tis infallible, and was given us from Heaven to be *Light unto our Feet, and a Lamp unto our Paths*; but still it is dark and insufficient without *human Aid and Explication*. For, though it be exceeding plain to us of the Established Church of *England*, and proves us to be in the Right in every Article, Ceremony and Habit whatsoever; yet it is utterly hid from those who will not accept of *our* Guidance, and submit to *our* Authority. And therefore if they refuse to believe and obey our *Supplements* and *Improvements* of the Bible, and to accept of the Salvation, which is to be had in our Church, and the Church of *Rome*, they shall have no Salvation at all. It is fit and orthodox, that Men should perish for following their Consciences, and for understanding the Scripture without the Leave of the Ordinary.

THUS, when they debate with the Papists, they praise the Scriptures, inveigh against the imposing of Opinions, and speak in the Style of Dissenters. But when they are pleased to rebuke Nonconformists, they borrow the Language of Papists, urge the Authority of our

Apostolic Church, and hear Divine Right to [I-40] judge for others; and deal hard Language, and worse Usage, to all that take the same Privilege which they do. There is, however, this small Difference between us Conformists and the Schismatics: We have good Pay for being Orthodox, and the Separatist pays dear for being in the Wrong. If these are not two good Reasons for delivering him over to Satan, I despair of finding better.

IN Consequence of this Power in High-Churchmen to be the Mouthmen of the Bible, which, if we take their Word, cannot speak for itself, they claim a Right to make *CreeDs* for others: And this is what I am now to examine.

I think it but Justice to the Goodness of God to affirm, that Belief or Disbelief can neither be a Virtue or a Crime in any One, who uses the best Means in his Power of being informed. If a Proposition be evident, we cannot avoid believing it; and where is the Merit or Piety of a necessary Assent? If it be not evident, we cannot help rejecting it, or doubting of it; and where is the Crime of not performing Impossibilities, or not believing what does not appear to us to be true? Are Men, who have good Eyes, the more righteous for seeing? Or do they offend in seeing too well? Or do blind Men sin in not distinguishing Colours?

[I-41]

WHEN we clearly see the Connection of a Proposition, or know that we have God's Word for it, our Assent is inevitable. But if we neither comprehend it ourselves, nor see God's Authority for it, and yet swallow it, this is *Credulity*, and not *divine Faith*, which can have nothing less than *divine Truth* for its Object. When we are sure, that God Almighty speaks to us, we readily believe him, who cannot lye, nor be mistaken, nor deceive us: But when Men speak, though from God himself, our Belief in them is but human Confidence, if we have only their own Authority, that they had it from God: Their being Bishops, their being learned, their meeting together in Synods; all this alters not the Case: We can judge of their Opinions no otherwise, than as of the Opinions of Men; and of their Decisions, but as of human Decisions.

WHEN the Articles of any *Creed* appear to be contained in Scripture, whoever believes *that*, does in Consequence believe *them*; and then such *Creed* is unnecessary: But when we cannot, or think we cannot, find them in Scripture, and yet give equal Credit to them, we depreciate and profane the Divine Authority itself, by accepting the Words of Man's Invention as wiser, and more significant, than the Words of God's own choosing.

[I-42]

WE are sure, that the Scripture-Phrases were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and as sure, that our own Forms and Injunctions are human, and framed by Priests. It is therefore strange, that the former should be insufficient and unintelligible, and the latter infallible, and to be embraced and obeyed on the Pain of Damnation; and that the Priests must do what God Almighty has, without Success, endeavoured to do.

BESIDES, as the Imposition of human *CreeDs* is contrary to Reason, so is it also to Charity. They were generally made in a Passion, not to edify, but to plague, those for whom, or rather against whom, they were intended. They were the Engines of Wrath and Vengeance, nor could they serve any other Purpose. Those who believed them already, did not want them; and those who disbelieved them, were not the better for them. But this was not the worst of it; for they who did not receive them against their Conscience, were cursed; and they who did, deserved it. So that either the Wrath of God on one hand, or the Wrath and Cruelty of the Clergy on the other, was unavoidable. If People said they believed, and did not, they mocked God, and shipwrecked their Souls; and if they did not believe, and owned it, though they saved [I-43] their Souls, they provoked their Reverend Fathers, and were destroyed.

WHENEVER these Dictators in Faith had a mind to be mischievous, and to undo one who gave them signal Offence, either by his good Reputation, or good Bishoprick, they began his Ruin by their great Care for his Soul; and so invented a Creed for him, which ruined him effectually, by giving him, as they said, to *Satan*, but, in Truth, to Beggary, Stripes, or Flames. He therefore who had any Virtue or Religion, was a certain Sufferer by these Systems of Faith, which were contrived for that Purpose. The Man that had no Conscience nor Honesty, was not worthy of their Anger; or, which is most likely, was on the Orthodox Side; or at least quickly became a Convert to it, being, like themselves, able to swallow any thing.

THUS Creeds, as they were the Result of Revenge, Pride, or Avarice, were the constant Preludes and Introductions to Ignorance, Cruelty and Blood; and the wretched Laity were craftily, as well as inhumanly, made the deluded and unnatural Instruments of butchering one another, to prove the Infallibility of the Faith-makers; who, while they were wantonly shedding Christian Blood, and dooming to Damnation those who called upon the Name [I-44] of the true God, had the shameless Assurance to miscall themselves the Embassadors of the meek Jesus.

AND indeed, what better could be expected from Men so chosen, so unqualified, and so interested, as the Members of these general Creed-making Councils for the most part were? They were chosen from several Parts by a Majority of Votes; and they who were most aspiring, factious or crafty, carried it: They sprung from the meanest of the People: They were bred in Cells: They popped into the World without Experience or Breeding: They knew little of Mankind, and less of Government, and had not the common Qualifications of Gentlemen: They were governed by Passion, and led by Expectation: And, either eager for Preferment, or impatient of missing it, they were the perpetual Flatterers, or Disturbers of Princes.

THESE were the Men, this their Character. When these Reverend Fathers were got together in a Body, by the Order of a Prince, or a Pope; who, having his Necessities, or the Ends of his Ambition, to serve, chose proper Tools for those Purposes; they were directed to form such Creeds and Systems of Faith, as his present Views or Interests made requisite for Mankind to believe.

[I-45]

In this new Employment every Member, we may be sure, was forward to shew his Talents in starting new Tenets, or in contradicting those already started, and so to make himself considerable enough for that Preferment which he was resolved to earn one way or another. And this being the great Aim of them all, Jealousies and hard Words were carried to the most violent Pitch. There was no End of their Wrangling and Reviling. Not content to abuse each other by Word of Mouth, they sometimes scolded in Writing; and every Reverend Father drew up a bitter *Billingsgate* Petition against another Reverend Father. Sometimes, not satisfied with Vollies of Scurrility, unheard of in Assemblies of Gentlemen, they had recourse to Club-law, and made good their Inventions and Distinctions with Blows and Blood. And if the Truth could not be found out by Scolding, Contradiction, and Battle, it was not found out at all.

THUS any Emperor or Pope might have what Creed he pleased, provided he would be at the Pains and Price of it. And for the rest of Mankind, they had this short Choice, *To comply*, or be undone.

G.

[I-46]



NUMBER VII.  
*Of Uninterrupted Succession.* ↩

*Wednesday, March 2. 1720.*

SINCE all the most idle and visionary Pretences of the Popish and Popishly-affected Clergy, have their Ends, and their Danger, and therefore should be narrowly watched, and vigorously opposed, I shall in this Paper inquire into the Validity of a principal Claim of theirs, I mean that of *Uninterrupted Succession*; and endeavour to find whether there is any Foundation to support this Corner-stone of their Authority, except in their own wild Imaginations.

ONE might reasonably imagine, that a Doctrine of so much Importance to the temporal and eternal State of all Mankind should be expressly laid down, and fully explained, in the Holy Scriptures, to prevent all Possibility of [I-47] Mistake about it. But, instead of this, the Word, as far as I remember, is not once mentioned there, nor any other Word equivalent to it; so that we are under a Necessity of recurring to the Clergy themselves for Information: And here too we are as much bewildered as before; for some of them boldly assert it, and others flatly deny it.

BESIDES, those who hate and damn one another, claim it equally to themselves, and deny it to others. Those who are Successors to the Apostles in *England*, disown their Brother-successors beyond the *Tweed*, and about the *Lake*; and they their Brother-successors at *Rome*; and they theirs in *Greece* and *Armenia*, as well as every-where else. Now all these, who so confidently assume the Successorship to themselves alone, are as opposite to each other in Sentiments and Worship, as Light is to Darkness. They cannot therefore all have it; and if only one has it, how shall we know who he is? No Man's Testimony ought to be taken in his own Case; and, if we take that of other People, there are twenty to one against them all.

If the Clergy of the Church of *England*, as by Law established, be, of all the Reformed, supposed to enjoy this Line of Entail intire to themselves; pray, how came they by it? Not [I-48] from the *Reformation*, which began not till near Fifteen Centuries after the Apostles were dead; and *Cranmer* owned Ordination *then* to be no more than a Civil Appointment to an Ecclesiastical Office. It is certain, that at that Time this *Utopian* Succession was not so much as thought of by any who embraced the Protestant Religion. At present, indeed, and for a good while past, the Jacobite High Clergy contend for it with equal Modesty and Truth. But, in order to adopt it, they are forced to drop the *Reformation*: For,

YOU must know, courteous Reader, that this same Succession is now deduced from *Rome*, and the Pope has had the keeping of it, who, by all that adhered to the *Reformation*, was held to be *Antichrist*, and the *Man of Sin*. He was often an Atheist, often an Adulterer, often a Murderer, always an Usurper; and his Church has constantly lived in gross Idolatry, and subsisted by Ignorance, Frauds, Rapine, Cruelty, and all the blackest Vices. It is certain, that she was full of Wickedness and Abomination, and void of all Goodness and Virtue, but that of having kept the Apostolic Orders pure and undefiled for our modern High-Churchmen.

HOWEVER, I think, they themselves seem to be now sensible, that it will be a difficult [I-49] Matter to make out, this way, their Kindred to the Apostles, without being nearer akin to Popery. They are therefore forced to own the Church of *Rome* to be a *true Church*. Nor ought we to be surprised, if, in succeeding to the Orders of that Church, they also succeed to most of her good Qualities. I confess, amongst us Laymen, it would look a little absurd, if any one should gravely assert, that

“indeed *Lais* was a filthy Strumpet, and no virtuous Woman would converse with her; but, for all that, she was a *true Virgin*, and *all Chastity* was derived from *her!*”

BUT such Absurdities as these go for nothing amongst some Sorts of Ecclesiastics. We will therefore, in the next Place, inquire what it is which they would succeed to. The Apostles had no Ambition, Jurisdiction, Dignities, or Revenues, to which they could be Successors. We read not in Scripture one Word of Ecclesiastical Princes, Popes, Patriarchs, Primates, &c. On the contrary, our Saviour himself declares, that *his Kingdom is not of this World*; and when the young Man in the Gospel (St. *Matth.* chap. xix.) asked of him, *What he should do to obtain eternal Life?* he answered, that, besides keeping the Commandments, he should *sell all that he [I-50] had, and give it to the Poor.* N. B. He did not bid him give a Penny to the Priests.

IN the xxth Chapter of the same Gospel, our Saviour takes Notice to his Disciples, that the *Princes of this World exercise Dominion over them*; but, says he, *it shall not be so amongst YOU*; but *whoever will be great amongst you, let him be your Minister*; and *whoever will be Chief, let him be your Servant.* Nay, he says, that even the *Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.* In the xxiiiid Chapter he condemns the *Scribes and Pharisees*, for loving the *uppermost Rooms*, and the *chief Seats* in the *Synagogue*, and their desiring to be called of Men *Rabbi*; and he forbids all this Pride to his *Disciples*, as well as his other Hearers; and orders them not to call one another *Master*: *For one*, says he, *is your Master, even Christ*; and *he that is greatest among you shall be your Servant.* Nor do I find, that, while he was upon Earth, he laid Claim to any Power but *to do the Will of Him that sent him.* Indeed, after his Resurrection, he tells his Disciples, that *all Power is given to him in Heaven and in Earth*; and he bids them teach it to all Nations, and baptize them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but he does not give them the least Power or Dominion, of any kind whatsoever.

[I-51]

AND it is plain, that his Disciples understood him so. St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, in his second Epistle to them, Chap. i. that they had not *Dominion over their Faith*, but *were Helpers of their Joy.* In the fourth Chapter of the same Epistle, he tells them, that *they preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus their Lord, and themselves THEIR Servants for Jesus sake.* In the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. iii. he admonishes them *not to glory in Men*, nor not in himself, nor *Apollos'* nor *Cephas*; and tells the People, that even the Apostles themselves, and all Things, are *THEIRS*, and they are *Christ's*, and *Christ is God's.* In the ninth Chapter he tells them, that though he is free from all Men, yet he has made himself *SERVANT* unto all, that he might gain the more. St. *Peter* also, in his first Epistle, Chap. v. exhorts the Elders to *feed the Flock of Christ*, and to take the Oversight thereof, not by *Constraint*, but *willingly*; not for *filthy Lucre*, but of a *ready Mind*; neither as being *LORDS over God's Heritage*, but as being *Examples to the Flock.*

Now either these Elders were Clergymen, or they were not: If they were Clergymen, their pretended Successors may see upon what Terms they are to be *Feeders*, and *Overseers* of the *Flock of Christ*: But, if they were only [I-52] Laymen, then it is plain, that no other Qualifications were necessary to a *Spiritual Shepherd*, than a willing, disinterested, and humble Mind; and all Subjection is, in the fifth Verse, commanded to be reciprocal --- *Likewise, ye Younger, submit yourselves to the Elders: Yea, all of you be subject to one another, and be cloathed with Humility; for God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.*

For myself, I confess, that I am not Master enough of any Language to find Words more expressive, or which can more fully renounce all Sorts of Jurisdiction and Dominion, than those in the Passages which I have here quoted: And nothing can be more ridiculous, as well as impious, than to oppose them with equivocal, doubtful, and figurative Expressions. If the Popish Priests could but find out one such clear Text on their Side, how would they exult upon it!

As I have made it fully appear, that the Apostles understood our Saviour in this Sense; so it is evident, that the first Christians had not the least Apprehension, that the Apostles claimed any Power or Authority to themselves. They were poor Men, of mean and mechanical Professions, who left Fathers, Mothers, Children, Families, Trades, and renounced all the good Things of this World, to wander about [I-53] it, and preach Christ. Their Disinterestedness and Sufferings were powerful Arguments of the Truth of their Doctrines: Whereas, if they had told their Hearers, in the modern High-Church Strain, That

“as soon as they became their Converts, they became also their *Spiritual Subjects*; That they themselves were *Ecclesiastical Princes*; and that Spiritual Government was as much more excellent than the Civil, as Heaven was than Earth, yea much more so; That the Episcopal Honour, and sublime Dignity, could not be equalled by the Glory of Kings, and the Diadems of Princes; That Kings and Queens ought to bow down to the Priests with their Face towards the Earth, and lick up the Dust of their Feet”

----- With whole Volumes more of such blasphemous Trash, as is vended by Dr. *Hickes*, Mr. *Lesley*, and indeed by almost all the High-Church Writers; and yet not publicly disapproved or censured by the *Convocation*, or any *Body* of the Clergy, though they have shewn an outrageous Enmity to all who have asserted the contrary Principles: If the Apostles had told them too, That they themselves had a Right, not only to the Tenth Part of their Estates, but of their Labour; and

“that since they (their Hearers) administered so many Things to a King, who administers [I-54] Peace and War for bodily Safety; how ought they not to administer more liberally to him, who administers the Priesthood towards God, and secures both Body and Soul by his Prayers?”

I SAY, if any of this choice Fustian had been broached to the World, at the first Opening of the Gospel, what Progress could Christianity have made? How could the Apostles have been disinterested Witnesses of the Truth of the Doctrines, which gave them such Jurisdiction, Dominion and Riches? And how justly would the Princes and Powers of the Earth have punished such Usurpations upon their Civil and Ecclesiastical Authority?

THE Silence alone of the Enemies to Christianity, is a sufficient Confutation of this wicked and black Calumny, cast upon them by their pretended Successors; but which their bitterest Opposers had more Modesty than to charge them with, though they ransacked Earth and Hell for all other Sorts of Scandal.

T. & G.

[I-55]

NUMBER VIII.  
*Of Uninterrupted Succession. P<sup>t</sup>. II.* ↩

*Wednesday, March 9. 1720.*

DR. *Tillotson*, in his Sermon against *Transubstantiation*, tells us, that

“it might well seem strange, if any Man should write a Book to prove, that an Egg is not an Elephant, and that a Musquet-bullet is not a Pike.”

He might have added, that this was the hard Circumstance which the Laity were reduced to in their Disputes about Religion with most Sets of Ecclesiastics; and, what is still worse, when they had proved these Propositions, they were never the better.

THE greatest Part of Mankind have learned to judge of Religious Matters by other Faculties and Senses, than those which God Almighty has given them. The first Thing they are taught is, that Reason may be on one Side [I-56] of the Question, and Truth on the other; which Maxim being well established, there will be an End of all Reasoning ever after; and there can be no longer any Criterion between Truth and Falshood: But those, who, by Education and Custom, have once got Possession of their Superstition and Fears, may impose upon them what crafty and advantageous Doctrines they please.

BY these means the Christian Religion, most easy and intelligible in itself, and adapted to the meanest Capacities, is become, in most Countries, a Metaphysical Science, made up of useless Subtleties, and insignificant Distinctions; calculated to gratify the Pride of corrupt Clergymen, by making them admired and revered by the People, for their profound Knowledge, and deep Learning; and consequently Religion is wholly left to their Care and Conduct, as being infinitely above poor *Lay-apprehensions*. And to this the World is beholden for the Depravation of Virtue and Morality; and for all the Domination, Pomp and Riches of the Popish Priesthood.

I THEREFORE hope, that no one will condemn an Undertaking intended to restore Christianity to its primitive Innocence, and native Simplicity; to oppose common Sense against pompous Nonsense, and learned Absurdity; [I-57] and to shew how, and in what Meaning, *The Kingdom of Heaven is said to be revealed to Babes and Sucklings, and hid from the Learned and Wise*: That is to say, it is easily learned and known, by those who make use of their natural Faculties, and uncorrupted Reason; but will always be hid from such, who hunt after it in the Schools of the Philosophers, or in any ambitious and factious Assemblies and Synods of Popish Ecclesiastics. I shall therefore endeavour to keep this plain and easy Subject clear of all vain Philosophy, and Metaphysical Gibberish, with which the Adversaries always attempt to entangle it; as knowing well, that if they can but make it unintelligible, their Authority alone will decide every Question in their own Favour.

As I conceive I have fully shewn, in my last Paper, that the Apostles claimed no Jurisdiction, Authority, or coercive Power of any kind whatsoever, over their Hearers; but only obeyed the Will of their Master, in delivering a Message from Heaven, for the infinite Benefit of Mankind; and to prove their Mission, brought their Credentials, namely, *The Power of doing Miracles*, along with them: So I shall shew, that what Power they had, (except that which was miraculous, and died with them) or, to speak more properly, *what Right* they [I-58] had to perform the Duties and Offices of Christianity, did not descend to one Christian more than another; but that all were equally empowered to exercise alike the Functions of their most holy Religion.

WHEN a Command is given from God to Men, to do and perform any Action, it is not only the Right of every one, but it becomes his Duty, to execute it himself, when he is capable of doing it; unless the Precept directs some other Manner of Performance: And whoever asserts, that it does, is obliged to prove it. And he must not be surprised, if in a Case of this great Consequence, we shall expect plain and direct Texts, describing the Extent of the Power demanded, and the Persons to whom it is given. It will not do his Business to pick up Two or Three scattered and disjointed Sentences, and, putting them upon the Rack, torture them till they confess what they never meant, against the whole Current of Scripture. It must

be laid down plainly and directly, and made obvious to the meanest Capacities; not depending upon the Criticisms of *Rabbinical* Learning; not sublimated from *Jewish* and *Heathen* Traditions; nor extorted from doubtful, equivocal, and unintelligible Expressions. It is not consistent with the Goodness of God, to suffer a Power, upon which [I-59] the Being of Christianity, and the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of all the World, depend, to remain in Obscurity and Darkness; and therefore we may be sure, that whatever of this kind does so, is the Invention of ambitious and wicked Men, and not the Will of the great and good God.

It will be incumbent on them to shew one clear and direct Text, where our Saviour confines the Administration of the Sacraments to any Set of Men whatsoever. The contrary of which is so evident, that there is not in Scripture one Instance where the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper was ever administered by any one, who, in our Translation of the *New Testament*, is styled *Bishop* or *Presbyter*. And it is as plain, that the Right of Baptizing belonged to all Christians equally. Both which I shall make out unanswerably hereafter, in separate Papers. I shall also shew, that the boasted Power of Excommunication is nothing else but a Liberty, which every Man has over his own Actions, in conversing or mingling with what Society he pleases; or, at most, only a Precept or Exhortation, not to keep ill Company, and to remove such, or separate from them.

BUT to proceed with my Subject: If a Chain of uninterrupted Succession had been necessary, an uninterrupted Course of Talents, [I-60] Grace and Abilities, superior to those of all other *Lay-Christians*, had been necessary also, to have made the Clergy resemble those whom they were to succeed in an Employment which required the highest. But there is no such peculiar Genius or Virtue found amongst them. They are qualified by Means evidently human for this Divine Calling. They are sent to Schools and Universities to learn to be Successors to the Apostles (I will not say of them, what Mr. *Dodwell* says of the *Jewish* Priests, *that they make use of Wine, amongst other bodily Helps, to obtain the Prophetic Spirit*): And all who have the same Sense and Opportunities, thrive at least as fast as those who are Candidates for the Priesthood. They might, if they pleased, apply their Learning to the same Uses. And as to Grace, Piety, and Humanity, I think verily, that the Modesty of the Clergy will not let them pretend to excel their Lay-neighbours in those Endowments.

THE Apostles were inspired, had the Gift of working Miracles, could bestow the Holy Ghost, had the Discernment of Spirits: They were consequently proper Judges of the Fitness of Men for the Ministry, and could confer that Fitness. Our modern Divines are not inspired, cannot work Miracles, nor give the Holy Ghost; nor can many of them even find out their [I-61] own Spirit, so far are they from discerning that of other People.

THE Apostles were a Set of extraordinary Persons, appointed by the Son of God to convert all Nations, and had extraordinary Endowments given them for that End. Their pretended Successors are a Race of very ordinary Men, possessed of no extraordinary Abilities; sent by no Divine Authority; nor to convert any Nation; but only take up a Trade to get a Livelihood.

CHRIST'S Apostles were Pen-men of the Holy Ghost, and writ Books of Scripture: But, pray, what New Gospel do our modern Apostles give us? (I wish none of them had ever confounded the Old) They are at best but Notemakers and Commentators; in which Characters Laymen have succeeded as well, even by their own Acknowledgment.

MINELLIUS and *Gronovius* have written Notes upon *Virgil* and *Livy*: Pray, are they Successors to *Virgil* and *Livy*, for that Reason? And are the stupid Commentators Successors to the great *Roman Orator*, because they have slept over his Works, and darkened them with Illustrations? Or is every one, who sails to *America* for *Gain*, a Successor to *Christopher Columbus*, who discovered and pointed out the Way to the *New World*?

[I-62]

THE great Business and Commission of the Apostles, was to convert Mankind. Now, I would be glad to know how they can be succeeded in a Thing, which could be done but once; and in Countries, where it is already done? I mean, the Converting of a Nation, suppose *Greece, England*, or any other. What must the *Jews* have thought of a Set of hare-brained *Israelites*, who would have demanded of them vast Respect and Revenues, for succeeding *Moses* in redeeming them from Captivity to *Pharaoh*, and for leading them every Day of their Lives out of the Land of *Egypt*, Seventeen Hundred Years after they had left it? Or could any Number of *Jews* succeed *Nehemiah* in bringing back the captive Tribes from *Persia* and *Babylon*? Can any one succeed the Duke of *Marlborough*, in fighting the Battle of *Hochsted*, and relieving the *German Empire*? I presume, that every Foot-Soldier is not a Successor to *Alexander the Great*; nor every Sergeant of the Guards descended in a *Military Line* from *Julius Cæsar*.

*N. B.* Having shewn that the Apostles have left no Successors, there is an End of the Question, Whether their No-Succession is Interrupted or not? But my Respect to the High Clergy obliging me to give them all Advantages, I will, in some future Paper, admit, [I-63] that such a Succession had once a Being: And then will undeniably prove, that it has been frequently, I may almost say constantly, interrupted and broken, under all those Heads which they make necessary to the Continuance of it.

T. & G.

**NUMBER IX.**  
***Of the Clearness of Scripture.*** ↩

***Wednesday, March 16. 1720.***

I SHALL in this Paper endeavour to confirm what I have said in my last; by shewing, that God Almighty, in revealing his Will to Mankind, has always taken effectual Care, that it could not be mistaken; and therefore made it so plain, as to need no farther Explanation, in all Things which are necessary for us to know.

WHEN God would have his Pleasure known to Men, it is agreeable to his Goodness to make it evident; when he would not, it is [I-64] agreeable to his Wisdom to make it impenetrable. Scripture was not given to make Work for Interpreters; nor to teach Men how to doubt, but how to live. The Holy Spirit has made undeniably clear and manifest, all those Precepts that injoin Faith and Obedience, which are the great Points of Religion; and weak Men cannot correct him, and do it better themselves.

I THINK it is generally granted, that Revelations are no more, and that Prophecy hath ceased. The Reason given for this, I take to be a very good one; namely, that God has already sufficiently discovered his Mind to Men, and made his Meaning manifest: If it were otherwise, we should, doubtless, have his extraordinary Presence still; but as we have not, it is to be presumed, that we have no Occasion. He appeared himself, whilst Men were in Darkness; but now, that he has shewn them his *marvellous Light*, he appears no more. His Presence is supplied by his Word; which being addressed to all Men equally, and not to *one Tribe of Men* to interpret it for the rest, it follows, that all Men have in their Power the Means to understand it. *Old Revelation* therefore does not want the Assistance of *New*, nor has the Omnipotent any need of *Prolecutors*.

[I-65]

WHILE God is delivering his Law to the World, he is plain even to Exactness; and his Orders are full and circumstantial even about the minutest Points. This is eminently proved by his Manner of giving Laws to the *Jews*. Every Ceremony, every Instrument and Garment, used in their Worship, is precisely described and directed. The Trumpets, the Candlesticks, the Lamps, the Spoons, the Snuffers, are all of his own Appointment, both as to the Materials, and the Use of them. He makes it impossible to mistake him. He calls the Priests by their Names, points out their Persons, and shews them every Branch of their Office. He limits and governs their Behaviour while they are about it; and does not leave it to *their* Wisdom to invent such Postures and Ceremonies, as *they* think fit to call *decent* and *significant*. They had not the Privilege to chuse their own Garments. *Moses*, who was the *Civil Magistrate*, had it in his Charge to *sanctify* and *consecrate* their Persons. Their Business in the Sacrifices, is pointed out to them: They are to put their Hands upon the Head of the Beast, and to receive its Blood, and to make Fires. They are not, as I remember, once made use of to speak God's Mind to his People; *That* is the Duty and Commission of the *Civil Magistrate*, and *Moses* [I-66] performs it. They had not the least Hand in the Celebrating of the *Passover*, the *Jewish Sacrament*, to which ours of the *Lord's Supper* hath, it is said, succeeded: And as little were they employed in that other of *Circumcision*, the reputed Ancestor of *Baptism*. In short, their whole Function was to be *Servants* and *Operators* in the *House of Sacrifice*.

If Almighty God was thus punctual and particular in the Rituals and Outside of his Worship, can we imagine, that he was defective or obscure, in declaring the more weighty Points of the Law? No ---- When our first Parents broke the Covenant, they did it wilfully, and could not pretend, that they understood it not: *Of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it*, was all the Injunction that was laid upon them. And there was no need of a Commentator here. The Text might have been rendered more perplexed, but not more plain.

THE Covenant which he made with *Abraham*, was not less clear. He was to *be the God of Abraham, and of his Seed*; and *every Male of his Race, and those that were bought with Money, were to be circumcised*. There were no more Words to this Contract; and the Patriarch and his Issue had but one short System of [I-67] Divinity, most intelligible of itself, and in no wise darkened with Glosses.

THE Decalogue, or the Law of the Ten Commandments, delivered by God himself from *Mount Sinai*, with great Glory, and astonishing Circumstances, was little else but the Law of Nature reduced into Tables, and expressed in Words of God's own chusing; and they were worthy of the Omnipotent and Infallible Author; for they were so plain and indisputable, that not a single Person of all the Twelve Tribes, so addicted on other Occasions to Contradiction and Wrangling, so much as pretended not to understand them: Nor was there one Man, much less a *Body of Men*, set apart to explain them.

WHEN God spoke to the *Jews* by his Prophets, the same Method of Clearness was observed. The Admonitions given, and the Judgments denounced, were adapted to the Capacity of every one concerned. The *Jews*, it is true, did not often believe them, at least not mind them; but it was never pleaded, that they did not comprehend them. God inspired, the Prophets spake, and all understood; but neither *Creeds* nor *Paraphrases* were made, for they were not necessary. At last, indeed, the *Priests and Pharisees made void the Word of God by their Traditions, and very rigidly tithing* [I-68] *Mint and Camin, neglected the greater Things of the Law, and taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*. But we know what Thanks and Character they had for their Pains from the Saviour of the World, and what a terrible Doom he pronounced against them. Read the xxiii<sup>d</sup> Chapter of St. *Matthew's* Gospel, and see the Description of these vile Hypocrites, and then consider, whether they be at this Day without Heirs and Successors. Indeed it seems to me to be the only Succession which has not

been interrupted.

THE Gospel, when it came, as it was to excel all other Laws, in its End and Usefulness, so was it the shortest and plainest Institution in the World. It only added the Duty of Faith to that of good Works, which was the great, if not the only, Business of the Moral Law. To believe that *Jesus Christ was the only Son of God*, was the great Principle of the Christian Religion. Nor was the Practice of this Belief attended with the least Difficulty, since our Saviour proved his Mission and Omnipotence, by Miracles that were undeniable and convincing. For the Truth of them he appealed to Mens Senses; there was neither Mystery nor Juggling in his Actions, nor did they want any body to explain them.

[I-69]

ALL this is further confirmed by the Conduct of the Apostles. The constant Drift and Tenour of their Lives and Preaching, was to persuade Mankind to believe in *Jesus Christ*. In order to which they worked Miracles, and gave the Holy Ghost. The Precept was thus short, and the Motives to comply with it, were thus irresistible. Hence it was, that sometimes Thousands were convinced in a Moment, without either *Commentaries*, or *Creeds*, or *Catechisms*. And indeed who could avoid believing a Proposition that proved itself?

THE Apostles, when they had converted one City, did not stay to establish a Hierarchy there only, and to tell the *same Thing* over and over again to those that knew it already. No — — — when they had planted the Faith in one Place, they travelled to another, and preached the Gospel to the unconverted World; leaving those already converted, to perform Christian Worship *their own Way*. If they believed in Christ, and lived soberly, the Apostles desired no more. Those were the *Two Things needful*; nor were they more needful than clear.

In this plain Manner did God Almighty always discover himself in his Will, whenever he dispensed his Laws to Men. On the other hand, while he hid himself from the Heathen [I-70] World, did their Priests ever discover him? No, they had Deities without Number; they worshiped Stocks and Stones, Trees, Rivers, Bulls, Serpents, Monkeys and Garlick. Both their Religion and their Gods were of the Priests making, and therefore we may be sure they were hopeful ones. They created their Deities *after their own Likeness*; angry, cruel, covetous, and lustful. Their Mysteries were full of Horror, Obsceneness, Craft, and Delusion. The Will of their God was searched in the Guts and Ordure of dead Beasts; and a Coop of Chickens were his Privy Counsellors. His Favour or Displeasure depended upon their Craws; if they had puny Stomachs, the God was in a Fit of the Spleen; if ravenous, he was in a giving Humour, and would grant you any thing, even to the Cutting of the Throats of a whole Army, or Burning of a City, or plundering a Province: And when he was tired of his Kindness to you, he would perhaps in a Day or two do all this for your Enemy.

UPON the Whole, when Almighty God reveals his Will, he does it effectually; but when he disguises it in dark and doubtful Expressions, it is plain, that the Time of making himself *further* known to Men, is not yet come, and it is in vain for them to pry into his Secrets.

[I-71]

THE all-merciful Being does never require of us, that which we cannot find he requires. It is not consistent with his Wisdom and Goodness, to make that necessary which he hath not made plain. He has, with the greatest Perspicuity, described the Candlesticks, Tongs, and other Tools of Worship under the *Jewish Law*; and yet in the Gospel has not said one Word of some Doctrines, which we are told are necessary to Salvation. Altars and Priests are divinely appointed in the *Old Dispensation*, but are neither directed nor described in the *New*; and yet we know of what Importance they are present in the *Popish Church* and *elsewhere*. The Priest's Office is particularized and circumscribed, even to the Killing of a Goat, or a Pair of



Pigeons; and yet under the Gospel it is not so much as hinted, that a Priest shall administer either of the Sacraments; though, if we will take their own Words for it, there can be no Sacrament without them. In the *Levitical* Law, the *Sons of Levi* are expressly appointed to be Priests continually; but it is not once said in the Christian Law, that there must be an uninterrupted Race of Bishops, or Popes, or Priests, to the End of the World; and that there can be no Church where it is not; tho', if this had been needful, it must have been [I-72] particularized. So essential a Part of the Christian Religion, and so absolutely necessary to every Man's Salvation, could never have been wholly omitted, or so much as left in Doubt.

As, by the Law of *Moses*, the Priests Office and Duty were minutely described, so their Maintenance was ascertained: But by the Law of Christ, there is not any Priesthood at all appointed, (as I shall fully make out hereafter) and consequently no certain Provision made for them. It is indeed said, that *the Labourer is worthy of his Hire*; and I acknowledge it is fit, that those who hire them should pay them: But sure this Text leaves every one at Liberty to chuse his own *Labourer*, and to make as good a Bargain as he can, or to do his own Business himself. What Pretence is there of a Divine Right to just a Tenth Part; and not only of our Estates, but of our Stock and Industry too, which, in some Corn-Lands, comes to double the Rent that the Landlord receives?

THE Tribe of *Levi* amongst the *Jews* were the Twelfth Tribe of *Israel*, and, in the Division of the Lands, had a Right to the Twelfth Share, without any Regard had to their Priestly Office; and consequently were allowed but a very small Proportion towards their *Hire*, and much less, than, I doubt, their [I-73] pretended Successors would be satisfied with. I would therefore, as a sincere Friend to their Order, recommend to their Consideration, whether it would not be most adviseable, to quit their Divine Right, and be even content with the Laws of the Land.

G.

## NUMBER X. *Of Ordination.*

*Wednesday, March 23. 1720.*

I Take Honesty and Knowledge to be the essential Talents required for the Work of the Ministry: The one is acquired by Study, and the other depends upon the Disposition of the Heart, or the Grace of God. He therefore who has the Capacity to teach and edify, has a Right to do both.

THOSE who are Candidates for the Priesthood, carry their Qualifications along with them; and having passed Examination, receive a Power from the Bishop, which he receives [I-74] from the Law, to put these Qualifications in Practice. But if, upon Trial, they be found insufficient, they are, or ought to be, rejected.

A PHYSICIAN does not receive from the College an Ability to practise; but only a Declaration that he already has it. Such a Declaration, are *Holy Orders*: They convey nothing; neither Righteousness, nor Learning, nor Wisdom. They are only a Diploma or Privilege to exercise a certain Calling, during good Behaviour. Any further than this, what signifies the Hand of a Bishop laid upon the Head of a Stripling, who seeks Promotion or a Livelihood? If that Hand puts any thing into that Head, I would ask what it is, and how does it appear? What Alteration for the better is to be found in the Person, or Endowments, or Spirit, of the Party ordained? How does it appear, that he has any Moral Sufficiency which he had not before? Or any Spiritual Gift, besides that which he carries home in his Pocket; and which was *conferred* by the *Bishop's Secretary*, for a *Fee*? Can there be any new Ability or Character without some Marks of it? Or is there an Alteration without a Change? It is an

inconceivable Mystery to me, that the *same Man* should be *another Man!* I have known many a Man's Pride [I-75] swell, and his Morals decay, after Orders; but very seldom his Manners, or his Capacity, enriched by them. He who has the Spirit, will do the Works of the Spirit: *By their Fruits ye shall know them.* The Thing, were it true, is very capable of Proof. Indeed, it could not be hid nor disputed. On the contrary, when neither the Heart is mended, nor the Understanding enlightened, it is manifest, that the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with either.

ALEARNED and virtuous Layman can instruct more effectually, and pray more devoutly and successfully, than an ignorant and profane Priest; and is consequently a more proper and secure Guide to others. To say that he has no Call, is no more than to say that he has not *entered his Name:* Besides, it is false; for I will lay it down as a Proposition, which I will abide by, that *he who has a Power to do Good, has a Call to do Good;* and the promoting of Virtue, and securing of Souls, is doing the greatest Good of all. St. *James* tells us, that *the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much;* but he does not say, that he must be *in Orders,* or that he must perform the same in a consecrated Place: Though the Convocation, in the latter Part of the Queen's Reign, thought fit to differ with the Apostle in this Point.

[I-76]

APOLLOS, without any Call at all, but from his own Abilities, *being an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures, and instructed in the Way of the Lord, and fervent in the Spirit, spake and taught diligently the Things of the Lord, and boldly in the Synagogue.* It is plain, that he had not the Holy Ghost, for that he *knew only the Baptism of John:* And it is also plain, that he was not *ordained,* unless it was by the Tent-maker and his Wife, *Aquila and Priscilla: And they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the Way of God more perfectly.* (Acts xviii. 24, &c.)

I DOUBT the Holy Ghost is too often made free with in Popish Countries, upon the Occasion of young Mens taking Orders. I believe it will be found, that their Motives are much more temporal. It is considered as a secular Employment, as much as any other; and the Labour of a Clergyman is as evidently bought and sold, as that of an Attorney, or any Tradesman. Besides, the Way to this Calling is easy and obvious: Where is the Difficulty of learning a little *Greek,* or chopping a little Logic, and of getting by Heart a few Questions in School-Divinity? Nay, there are many ordained there, even without any of these momentous Accomplishments.

[I-77]

THERE are some who take the Orders of Clergymen, and yet never exercise the Function of Clergymen, either through Idleness, or Weakness. Does the Holy Ghost call Men to the Work of the Ministry, not to do the Work of the Ministry? Or does he call Men to an Office, without giving them Gifts and Grace to perform it? It was not so in the Apostles Days, when God inspired all whom he sent; and where the Divine Commission or Call was given, *a Door of Utterance* was also given. But there were then no *Sine-Cures,* no great Revenues; no great Doctors, nor small Curates.

It is evident, that neither the Church of *Rome* in general, nor any of its Bishops in particular, believe a Word of this pretended Call of the Holy Ghost, in the Business of taking Orders. For, by the Canons, the Person demanding Ordination, is to be examined as to his Capacity for the Ministry, and must produce a Certificate as to the Innocence and Morality of his Life; both which were unnecessary, if there was any Proof or Assurance of his Call from God. And the Questions asked him upon that Occasion are such as demand no more than ordinary human Aid to answer them. Nor is it at all expected of him, that the Goodness of his

Life should exceed [I-78] that of other Laymen: If it be as good, it is well.

WHENEVER the Holy Ghost was given, it was given upon some extraordinary Occasion, for the doing of some extraordinary Action; as it was to the Apostles, for converting the Heathen World. *They* shewed the Power which they had, by the Wonders which they did; and gave effectual Evidences, that they were divinely assisted. But some modern Priests, who have no extraordinary Work to do, assert, notwithstanding, that they have an extraordinary Call from the Spirit; which would also infer his extraordinary Assistance. But they say it without shewing it, and pretend to it without proving it. It is a Happiness, that we are not obliged to take their Word; for though Faith itself be *the Evidence of Things not seen*, yet still it is the *Evidence*: that is, Proof must precede Belief.

WHEN the Popish Clergy are charged with Frailties, Vices, and Immoralities, they then confess the Truth, and are pleased to become Flesh and Blood as well as other Men, and subject to the like Infirmities and Passions; if they said *greater*, we could readily believe them. But when a Point of Gain or Dominion is to be contended for, they grow all of sudden more than Men; they are then the [I-79] *Lord's Ambassadors, Successors to the Epostles, a sacred Society*; and the Lord knows how many more fine Things. Now this Management is very unlucky for them, and full of palpable Contradiction; for if they had a greater Share of God's Grace and Spirit than others, it would be especially evident in the superior Piety of their Lives, since Holiness is shewn in Practice: Whereas the Spirit of this World manifests itself in the Love of Power and Wealth; and hence those who pursue them are called *Worldly-minded*, in Opposition to God's *Elect*, who are the *Spiritually-minded*. I need not recommend it to such Clergy, which to chuse, *carnal Minds* with Riches and Authority, or *Heavenly-mindedness* without them. It is certain, that the Apostles were *as pious as poor*.

IF, by the Call of the Holy Ghost, on this Occasion, be meant no more than a serious and devout Bent of Mind to administer in the public Worship of God, as some Reverend Divines, Lovers of Truth, do, I think, confess; then is the Claim of a Divine Mission, and successive Right, utterly at an End; and the taking of Orders is no more, than taking a Licence to perform a religious Office; for which every religious intelligent Man is already qualified.

[I-80]

AND indeed such a Man is, without the Consent of any Bishop, intitled to be a Pastor, in the Scripture Sense of the Word, though not to receive the legal Wages of a Pastor. He may preach and pray, and deliver the Sacrament, when temporal Laws do not restrain him, but cannot take Tithes, which are annexed to certain Conditions and Opinions established by the State. As every State has its own Religion, so almost every Religion is directed and modelled by some State; and therefore they, who are Orthodox Conformists in one, are often Schismatical Dissenters in another. But such is the singular Modesty and Submission of the Clergy, that they, in most Countries, humbly acquiesce in the established Faith; and not only meekly accept of all the Ecclesiastical Powers and Revenues to themselves, but gratefully condescend to persecute all those Consciences that are not as complaisant and supple as their own. And indeed, it is but generous in them to be zealous for those Notions and Ceremonies, which bring them Reverence and Hire: But, methinks, it is a little unreasonable to expect, that others should, without *their* Motives, adopt *their* Zeal.

P. S. HAVING in my last Paper asserted, that *there is no particular Priesthood at all directed by the New Testament*; I am told, that [I-81] it is from thence surmised by some, through Malice, and by others, through Mistake, that I do by this insinuate, that there is therefore no Occasion for any Church-Ministry whatsoever, notwithstanding my former Declarations upon this Head. I particularly say, in my Third Paper, speaking of the Clergy:

“THEIR Office is evidently adapted to promote the Welfare of human Nature, and to propagate its Peace and Prosperity in this World, as well as its eternal Felicity in the next; so that it is the Interest of all Men to honour it: And none but a Madman will condemn and ridicule what has a manifest Tendency to the Security and Happiness of all Mankind.”

I SAY also in my Fourth Paper, that *I sincerely think their Office to be absolutely necessary to the Peace and Happiness of Society*. I could likewise refer to other Passages. But to give full Satisfaction, once for all, to such as will be satisfied, I declare, that I do only contend for the Right of every national and voluntary Society to appoint their own Pastors, and to judge of their Doctrines and Behaviour: Further than this I have no Aim. Nor do I desire to lessen the Respect due to the Clergy from their Merit and Usefulness; or the Dignities, Privileges, and Revenues, which they [I-82] derive from the Law, or from the Good-will and Contributions of the People. And I intend very soon to defend the Church of *England*, upon the Principles and Authority of the Scripture and the Law; as well as the Toleration granted to Dissenters, by the same Law, and the same Scripture.

G.

### NUMBER XI.

### *The Advantageous Situation of the Clergy, strangely inconsistent with their common Cry of Danger.* ↪

*Wednesday, March 30. 1720.*

VIRTUE and Innocence were created naked and undisguised; nor did our First Parents cover themselves till they had offended. Truth can never sin, and therefore need not, and ought not, ever to appear in Masquerade: She is most amiable, when most uncovered; and appears truly majestic, and in greatest Lustre, when disrobed of all gaudy and affected Ornaments: Her natural Features want no Varnish [I-83] or Colouring, nor has she any Need of Dressers and Tire-women.

KNAVERY and Deformity alone want Daubing and Disguise. Actors do not care, that any one should look into the Tiring-room, nor Jugglers or Sharpers into their Hands or Boxes; whereas Honesty and Sincerity appear always barefaced, and shew themselves most in open Day; they scorn all indirect Advantages, and borrowed Helps; but trust alone to their own native Beauty, and intrinsic Strength: The Lion is never known to use Cunning.

I CONFESS, that I am not Master enough of my Temper, to avoid Laughter, and Indignation, by Turns, at the noisy Clamours of the High Clergy, against the Freedom of the Age, and the Liberty of the Press; as if Virtue was inconsistent with good Sense, or Truth could suffer by Knowledge, or Religion by a free and thorough Examination. What Figure would a grave Lawyer make in *Westminster Hall*, if, after he had been tiring his Auditors for two Hours together, he should desire the Judges not to hear the Counsel of the other Side, lest they should perplex the Cause, and mislead the Court?

EVERY Stander-by would take it for granted, that he was conscious of the Weakness of his Client's Cause, and that it could no otherwise [I-84] be defended, than by being not understood. This is, in Point, the Case of those, who demand of all Mankind to be heard by the Clock, and will yet hear nobody; who talk and rail by Wholesale, whilst they cannot bear a single Jest, or ludicrous Expression; and who write Volumes by the Yard themselves, and are in an Uproar, and outrageous, at a single Half-sheet of other Peoples.

How absurd would it appear for an Army of an Hundred thousand Men, intrenched up to the Ears, to call aloud for the Assistance of the Constable and Watch to defend their Camp against the Assaults and Storms of Highwaymen and House-breakers! Just such a Request do

the *Popish* Clergy abroad make, when they cry out, Fire, Fire! Help, Help! when they demand the Assistance of the Secular Power; and insist, that no Sermons be preached, Books printed, or Harangues made, but their own. They have already more Advantages than Truth can desire, and indeed enough to offend her Modesty, and to make her ashamed and blush; they are too well armed for a fair Adversary, and yet are always complaining of the Shortness of their Weapons; and declaring themselves overcome by calling out for more Help.

BESIDES the Piety and Example of their Lives, they are vastly aumerous, and in Possession [I-85] of great and various Dignities, of immense Revenues and Dependencies; are all bred up to Letters; have the Prejudices of the People, the sole Education of Youth, the Fears as well as the Favours of the Fair Sex on their Side; and have the Weekly Opportunity of haranguing to the People upon their own Usefulness and Importance: And they tell us too, that they have a sole Right to the Scripture Prophecy, *That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against them.*

CROWNED Heads always have thought it their Interest to keep Measures with them; Ministers of State are not able to trick succesfully, and play the Knave, without their Leave and Assistance: They take Advantage, and make their Market, of all Factions and Disturbances in States, and apply them to their own Benefit: Knaves shelter themselves under their Protection; Hypocrites court and seem to admire them, and Bigots and Enthusiasts adore them. Every Event of Life contributes to their Interests: They Christen; they Educate; they Marry; they Church; they Bury; they Persuade; they Frighten; they Govern; and scarce any thing is done without them. Notwithstanding all this, they roar aloud, that they cannot keep their Ground, but that Contempt [I-86] and Infidelity pour upon them like an Inundation.

It is very remarkable, that the first Christians were not only destitute of all the before-mentioned Advantages, but their Enemies enjoyed them. They themselves were persecuted and contemned, buffeted, ridiculed and calumniated constantly in Books and Libels, published by the greatest Philosophers and Wits of the Heathen World. Yet Christianity every Day spread far and wide, and made a wonderful Progress; insomuch that, in an Age or two, Superstition and Idolatry were driven from a great Part of the Earth.

A SPECULATION upon this Head, and an Inquiry into the Causes of so prodigious a Change, would be worthy the Endeavours of the brightest Wits and Genius's of our Age and Country, who undoubtedly must be found amongst our own genuine Clergy. I have long wished to see a Dissertation upon this great and useful Subject; and with the greatest Humility propose to the Consideration of the Lower House of Convocation at their next (so much desired) Meeting, to give the World their Thoughts upon it, in a second Representation of the Causes of Vice and Infidelity. In Hopes to encourage them in so public an Undertaking, I intend before that happy Day to give them my [I-87] poor Assistance, and in some measure to alleviate their Labours, by endeavouring to prove, that no Part of this Misfortune ought to be laid at the Door of the Laity.

INDEED, it would be unbecoming the Respect and Reverence which I have always professed, and hope shall always pay, to these Reverend Gentlemen, even to hint at any thing so improbable as the contrary Conjecture: For since human Nature is always the same, who can entertain so indecent a Thought of their Designs, or have such a Contempt of their Performances, as to imagine, that Mankind can grow worse under the Light of the Gospel, in Defiance of their pious Lives and Examples; of the numerous Forms of public and private Prayer; of their constant Sermons, and godly Exhortations; of so many Creeds, Catechisms, Systems, Commentaries, and whole Cart-loads of other ghostly Geer, which the World is every Day blessed with from the laborious Endeavours of above a Million of Ecclesiastics, or more; who have always, and do still, cost the People more than their whole Civil and Military Expence put together? Since, therefore, we may be sure, that this great Change and

Degeneracy cannot be owing to any remaining Defect amongst the Laity, it may well be expected from Persons of their Penetration and Perpscuity, [I-88] to let us into the true Causes of so surprising a Phænomenon

In the mean time, (though with all the due Submission of an humble Votary) I shall for once presume to advise them, not to level so many Batteries against good Sense, and human Reason, which are impregnably fortified and secure against the fiercest Assaults. A great Philosopher tells us, *when Reason is against a Man, a Man will be against Reason*. I therefore much fear, if these my Friends and Patrons should continue to hold forth, and exert their Eloquence, against private Judgment, Freedom of Inquiry, and a daily and diligent Search after a religious Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, that the World may mistake their Endeavours, and imagine that all these good Things make against them; and yet unfortunately they are in such Repute, that there are little Hopes of depreciating or putting them out of Countenance.

BESIDES, I humbly conceive it to be impolitic upon other Accounts too. It appears to me to be very indiscreet in Persons *Militant*, to endeavour to put an End to a War, which, for the most part, puts an End to themselves, and their own Pay. A jovial Country Parson, once, in a merry Mood, passing by a Waggon which was overturned, told the Carter, That he [I-89] had killed the Devil; to which the profane Wretch replied, That he was glad of it with all his Heart, *because then, quoth Ralph, I have spoiled your Trade*. A Word to the Wise is sufficient.

METHINKS also, it should be doing too much Credit to his *Satanic Majesty*, to suppose him more than a Match for a Million of consecrated Persons, with all their Hierarchical Powers, and, as they say, Divine Assistances about them.

T.

[I-90]

## NUMBER XII.

### *The Enmity of the High Clergy to the Reformation, and their Arts to Defeat the End of it.* ↩

*Wednesday, April 6. 1720.*

*MACHIAVEL* advises any one, who would change the Constitution of a State, to keep as much as possible to the old Forms; for then the People, seeing the same Officers, the same Formalities, Courts of Justice, and other outward Appearances, are insensible of the Alteration, and believe themselves in Possession of their old Government.

THUS *Cæsar*, when he seized the *Roman Liberties*, caused himself to be chosen *Dictator*, (which was an antient Office) continued the Senate, the Consuls, the Tribunes, the Censors, and all other Powers of the Commonwealth; and yet changed *Rome* from the most free, to the most tyrannical Government in the World.

[I-91]

THIS Policy is yet more necessary to be observed in altering the Religion of a Country; for very few Persons, of any Sect or Party in Faith, are conversant with the Speculations or distinguishing Tenets of their own Church, or so much as know what they are.

WHILST they see the same broad-brimmed Hats, Bands, Cassocks, and long Gowns; and hear the same Psalms sung in the same Tone, and in the same fashioned Buildings; they think that they have the same Religion, and will be angry with any one who shall tell them the

contrary.

BUT if the Ceremonies or other Forms of Religious Worship are to be altered too, the Change must be made insensibly, and by Degrees, that the Difference may be unobserved, or thought of no Consequence; and all Advantages must be taken of Revolutions in Government, of public Calamities, and of Factions, when they beat high, and are ready to fall into any Measures to oppose and mortify each other.

THE Priesthood in all Ages have made these Arts, and a Thousand others, contribute to their Greatness; the High-Church Jacobite Clergy of *England* have put them all in Practice to regain every thing which they lost at the *Reformation*; and if they could but have prevailed upon their Flocks to have followed [I-92] them, they had long ago sold them again in the *Roman* Market: But since we of the Laity are so refractory, and hang backward, they now seem resolved to gallop away by themselves, and leave us to come our own Pace after; insomuch that a Clergyman of the Church of *England*, as by Law established, is, at present, become, I am far from saying an uncommon, I am sure I may say, a most agreeable Sight, and many of his Brethren treat him as a Monster.

It must be evident to any one, who has read our Ecclesiastical Story, that the *Reformation* in *England* was carried on, not only without, but against the Consent of the whole Body of the Clergy, (very few excepted) who always opposed every Step towards their own Amendment: It was, indeed, every-where, properly speaking, an Effort or Insurrection of the Laity, against the Pride and Oppression of the Priests, who had cheated them of their Estates, imposed upon their Consciences, debauched their Wives, and were ever insulting Persons.

THE poor injured People had long felt the Malady, but were so intimidated by their own Superstition, and the over-grown Power of their haughty Masters, that they durst not think of a Remedy, till a bold and disobliging [I-93] Frier or Two dissolved the Inchantment; and then the whole Christian World seemed to rise at once against this Fairy and Fantastical Empire.

BUT People long used to Servitude, knowing not what Freedom is, or how to preserve it when thrown into their Laps, have always recourse to some Leaders, of whose Honesty and greater Wisdom they have conceived an Opinion; and these for the most part abuse such Confidence, to advance their own Views of Wealth and Power.

So it happened in this Case; and consequently the *Reformation* went partially on, according to the Direction under which it fell. Where Priests were at the Head of it, they attempted only to make it a Reformation of Sounds and Distinctions: They took no Offence at the Riches and Grandeur of the Clergy, (which was the Source of all other Evils) but were angry, that they had not their Share of them; and so looked upon the Revolt only as a Means to aggrandize themselves: They condemned not the Tyranny, but the Tyrants; and attempted to usurp that Power in their own Persons, which they loudly exclaimed against in the *Romish* Priesthood: Most Sects of them wonderfully well agreed, that there was a Divine Right in the Clergy to dictate to the [I-94] Laity in Religious Matters; but every Sect claimed that Power to themselves, independent of all others.

THEY could not agree about sharing the Prey, but each would have had the Whole; which had this good Effect, however, that they were all obliged to abate much of their Pretensions, in order to engage Customers; and, I thank God, they have not yet been able to raise the Price again to the old Market; though, to do them Justice, they are no ways answerable to their Successors, for having let slip any Opportunity to that Purpose.

BUT whilst they were thus carrying on their Project for Dominion, they found it necessary to throw out a Barrel to the Whale, and keep the People's Minds busied, and their Passions afloat, with Metaphysical Subtilties and Distinctions, of no Use to true Religion and Morality,

though very conducive to their own ambitious tyrannical Designs.

I WOULD gladly know, from these Reverend Venders of Trifles, Whether it would have been worth the Thousandth Part of the Combustion which has been made, or the Blood which has been spilt, only to have settled a few Speculations, if they could have been settled? Pray where is the essential Difference between *Transubstantiation*, *Consubstantiation*, and the *Real [I-95] Presence*? What the Consequence, whether a Child be baptized by one sort of Priests, or by another? Or of what Use to Mankind are the abstruse Questions about *Predestination*, *Free-Will*, or *Free-Grace*? What is the Difference, as to the Duties or Ordinances of Christianity, if they be administred under the Direction of a single Person, a Bench of Bishops, or a Lower House of Convocation, or none of them all, so they be piously administred? Or whether the chimerical Line of Succession be broken, or ever had a Being?

SINCE 'tis agreed amongst all our present Sects of Christians, that the Saviour of the World is the Son of God, descended from Heaven to teach Virtue and Goodness to Men, and to die for our Redemption; how are we concerned in the Scholastic Notions of the *Trinity*? Will the Scripture be more regarded, or the Precepts of it be better observed, if the Three Persons are believed to be Three Divine distinct Spirits and Minds, who are so many real subsisting Persons? Whether the Son and Holy-Ghost are Omnipotent of themselves, or are subordinate, and dependent on the Father? Or, if they are independent, whether their Union consist in a mutual Consciousness of one another's Thoughts and Designs, or in any thing else? Whether they are Three Attributes [I-96] of God, *viz.* Goodness, Wisdom and Power? Or Three internal Acts, *viz.* Creation, Redemption and Sanctification? Or Two internal Acts of the One subsisting Person of the Father; that is to say, the Father understanding and willing himself and his own Perfections? Or Three internal Relations, namely, the Divine Substance and Godhead considered as Unbegotten, Begotten, and Proceeding? Or Three Names of God ascribed to him in Holy Scripture, as he is Father of all Things, as he did inhabit in an extraordinary Manner in the Man Jesus Christ, and as he effected every thing by his Spirit, or his Energy and Power? Or lastly, Whether the Three Persons are only Three Beings, but what sort of Beings we neither know, nor ought to pretend to know? which I take to be the Trinity of the Mob, as well as of some other wiser Heads.

As far as I can remember, these are the important Questions which have set Mankind together by the Ears, for so many Ages; and it seems are yet thought of Consequence enough to create new Feuds, and mortal Dudgeon, amongst all our Sects of Ecclesiastics. But why must we of the Laity quarrel about them too? What have Beaux and Belles, old Women, Coblers, and Milk-Maids, to do with *Homo-ousios*, *Consubstantiality*, *Personality*, *Hypostatical [I-97] Union*, *Infinite Satisfaction*, &c.? none of which hard Words, or any like them, are to be found in Scripture; and therefore, I think, we may even return them to *Rome*, that being the Place from whence they came, and be contented to be good Christians without them.

WE ought to shew our Faith and Obedience to God, by a chearful Submission to his Commands, and not affect a vain Curiosity of prying into his Secrets; pretend to philosophize upon his abstracted Nature and Essence; and, with our limited and corrupt Understandings, assume to comprehend infinite Wisdom and Power, and define the Modus of its Existence and Operations. Almighty God would not make himself farther known even to *Moses*, nor suffer himself to be otherwise described to the Children of *Israel*, (though to get them out of the Land of Bondage) than by the comprehensive Words, *I am that I am*; which methinks might baffle our officious Impertinence, and put us in mind of the Danger of peeping into the Ark.



THE above Disputes make us neither wiser nor better. Men are not intended for Speculation; exceeding few are capable of it. The Faculties of our Minds, as well as the Frame of our Bodies, are adapted to Labour, and to [I-98] supply the Exigencies of our Nature. We are formed for Society and mutual Help, and the Goodness of God has implanted in us Qualities suited to these Ends; he has, besides, given us Precepts for our Assistance, and annexed infinite Rewards to the Observance of them. We know how to be good Parents, good Children, good Neighbours, and good Subjects: But how small a Part of Mankind understand, or are capable of understanding, Metaphysical Questions! When they use the Terms, it is plain, that they have no Ideas annexed to them, but fight at Blind-man's-buff, and quarrel about what none of them understand. It is evident therefore, that the All-wise Providence could not intend to perplex and confound weak Minds with such Subtilties, for the Knowledge of which he has not given them suitable Qualifications.

T.

[I-99]

### NUMBER XIII.

*The Church proved a Creature of the Civil Power, by Acts of Parliament, and the Oaths of the Clergy.* ↩

*Wednesday, April 20. 1720.*

I HAVE observed, in my last Paper, that many of the Protestant Priests endeavoured to divert the growing Spirit in the Christian World for Reformation, to metaphysical and useless Speculations, of no Benefit to the present or eternal Happiness of Mankind, whilst they were seating themselves at leisure in the Chairs of their Predecessors.

BUT far otherwise was it, where it fell under the Direction of Laymen; who considered it as an Opportunity put by Heaven into their Hands, to free themselves from the Usurpations, and unjust Domination, of the Priesthood. They made no Scruple (notwithstanding [I-100] the loud Cry of Sacrilege) to seize, and apply to public Uses, a great Part of those Riches, which the Clergy had extorted from old Women, and superstitious and enchanted Bigots; the Compositions for Murders, for public and private Robberies; the Plunder of dying and despairing Sinners; and the Supports of their own Idleness, Pride, Ignorance, and Debauchery.

A BOLD and honest Physician (whose Name was *Erastus*) at this time started up, and told the World, that all these Squabbles of the Clergy about their own Power, were Disputes *de lana caprina*, (concerning a Non-Entity) and that none of them had any Right to what they almost all claimed: That the Quarrel amongst them was only which of them should oppress the Laity, who were independent of them all; for that their Ministers were their Servants, Creatures of their own making, and not of God Almighty's. He shewed them from Reason and Scripture, that every State had the same Authority of modelling their Ecclesiastical as Civil Government; that the Gospel gave no Pre-eminence or Authority to Christians over one another, but every Man alike (who had suitable Abilities) was qualified to execute all the Duties and Offices of their most holy Religion; and that it was only a Matter of Prudence and [I-101] Convenience to appoint particular Persons to officiate for the rest, with proper Rewards and Encouragements; which Persons would be intitled to no more Power than they themselves gave them.

THIS Doctrine, as little as it pleased the Clergy, yet prevailed so far with the Laity, that most Protestant States modelled their Ecclesiastical Polity according to their own Inclinations or Interests; and particularly, in *England*, the whole Reformation was built upon this Principle, which ever, till lately, was esteemed the great Characteristic of the Church of

*England*; and therefore 'tis the last Degree of Priestly Insolence for a Body of Men to call themselves the only true Churchmen, at the same time that they deny, and every-where exclaim against, the fundamental and essential Article which distinguishes it from most other Churches, and particularly from Presbytery; for as to the rest of the Articles, the *Calvinists* are more Orthodox than the Churchmen themselves.

At the very Beginning of the *Reformation*, the Clergy here in *England*, conscious of their own Enormities, and the just Vengeance which hung over their Heads, were contented to disgorge their ill-gotten, and as ill-used Power; and, in full Convocation, threw themselves [I-102] upon the King's Mercy, acknowledging his Supremacy in the fullest and most significant Words; and promised in *verbo sacerdotii*, that for the future they would never presume to attempt, alledge, claim, or put in Use, enact, or promulgate any Canons, Constitutions, or Ordinances, without the King's most Royal Licence and Assent had thereunto; and humbly besought his Majesty to appoint Thirty-two Persons, half Clergy and half Laity, to examine the Canons and Constitutions in being, and to abrogate and confirm them, as they should think good.

THIS Petition was changed into an Act of Parliament by the 25th of *Henry* the VIIIth, *Cap.* 19. But it is there declared, That the Crown and Convocation together shall not put in Execution any Canons, Constitutions, or Ordinances, which shall be contrariant or repugnant to the King's Prerogative, or the Laws of the Kingdom: The same Statute also gives an Appeal from the supreme Ecclesiastical Court, to the King's Commission.

In the same Session of Parliament, the Manner of Proceeding upon the *Congé d'Elire* is directed; *viz.* [\*]A Licence from the Crown is to be sent to the Chapter, to chuse or elect an Archbishop or Bishop, and a Letter missive [I-103] with it, to nominate the Person whom they are to chuse; which if they do not obey, nor signify the same, according to the Tenor of the Act, within twenty Days, they are subjected to a *Præmunire*; and if the Election be not made within Twelve Days, the King may nominate a Bishop by Letters Patents, without any Election at all, as is now done in *Ireland*, and formerly was so in *Scotland*, where their Bishops were *durante beneplacito*.

THE next Year the Parliament [\*], reciting, That the King justly and rightly is, and ought to be, supreme Head of the Church of *England*, enact the same; and that he shall have full Power to visit, redress, reform, correct, and restrain all Errors, Heresies, Abuses, Offences, Contempts, and Enormities, whatsoever they be, which, by any manner of spiritual Authority or Jurisdiction, ought or may be reformed, redressed, &c.

AFTERWARDS, in the 37th Year of the same Reign, the Parliament, reciting, That the Bishop of *Rome*, and his Adherents, minding utterly to abolish, obscure, and delete the Power given by God to the Princes of the Earth, whereby they might get and gather to themselves the Rule and Government of the World, had decreed, that no Layman might exercise [I-104] Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, lest their false and usurped Power, which they pretended to have in Christ's Church, might decay, wax vile, and be of no Reputation (which Power they affirm to be contrary to the Word of God, and to his Majesty's most high Prerogative); and reciteing also, That Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other Ecclesiastical Persons, have no manner of Jurisdiction Ecclesiastical, but by, from, and under the King's Majesty; enact, That Laymen qualified as the Law appoints, may exercise all Parts of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, and all Censures and Coercions appertaining, or in any wise belonging thereunto.

THE 2d and 3d of *Edward* the Sixth, *Cap.* 1. enacts the Common-Prayer Book, (which was before compiled and drawn up the King's Authority) and makes it a Law.

THE 3d and 4th of *Edward the Sixth, Cap. 12.* appoints such Form and Manner of making and consecrating Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and other Ministers of the Church, as by Six Prelates, and Six other Men of this Realm, by the King to be appointed and assigned, or by the greater Number of them, shall be devised, &c. and *none other.* These two Acts were confirmed with some Alterations, in the 5th and 6th Year of this Reign.

[I-105]

THE 1st of Queen *Elizabeth, Cap. 1.* establishes and enacts, That all Jurisdictions, Privileges, Superiorities, and Pre-eminences, Spiritual and Ecclesiastical, at any Time lawfully used or exercised, for the Visitation of the Ecclesiastical State or Persons, and for the Reformation, Order, and Correction of the same, and of all manner of Errors, Heresies, Schisms, Abuses, Contempts, Offences, and Enormities, shall be annexed to the Imperial Crown of this Realm; and gives Power and Authority to it to appoint any Persons, being natural-born Subjects, to exercise all forts of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; and declares at the same time *what, and what only,* shall be deemed *Heresy.*

THE Oath of Supremacy (which is an Assent to these Laws, and obliges those who take it, to assist and defend them) is appointed in this Act; which Oath all Ecclesiastical Persons, as well as any others, who shall be promoted and preferred to any Degree or Order in the University, are to take under severe Penalties.

THE 8th of Queen *Elizabeth,* reciting, That the Queen had in her Order and Disposition, all Jurisdiction, Power, and Authority, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil; and had caused divers Archbishops and Bishops to be *duly* elected and consecrated; does confirm all the said Elections and Consecrations; as also the Common-Prayer [I-106] Book, and the Orders and Forms for the making of Priests, Deacons, and Ministers, which were added to it in the Fifth and Sixth Years of *Edward the Sixth.*

ALL which before-mentioned Acts are now in being, in full Force, and sworn to by all the Clergy, who are subjected to a Præmunire, if they contradict them.

THUS our Parliaments, at or just after the *Reformation,* whilst the Memory of Sacerdotal Oppressions continued in their Minds, were resolved to pare their Claws, curb their Insolence, and not leave it in their Power to corrupt Religion any more; and therefore put it under the Care of the Civil Magistrate, who could seldom have any Interest in perverting it: Whereas there is not any Instance, where, when it has been left to the Conduct of any Set of Ecclesiastics whatsoever, they have not abused and sacrificed it to the Advancement of their own Wealth and Power.

EVEN *Aaron* himself, (though a High-Priest of God's own Appointment) when *Moses,* the *Civil Magistrate,* was but a little while absent, to receive the Almighty's Commands, cheated the *Israelites* of their Ear-rings, melted them into a Golden Calf, and encouraged the Dupes to say, *These were the Gods which brought them out of the Land of Egypt.* He built an Altar [I-107] before his Idol, proclaimed a Fast, and then made use of all this Deceit to extort from that stupid and superstitious People, Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings. This provoked Almighty God to that degree, *that his Wrath was kindled against the whole Nation, and he was inclined to consume all, till Moses, the Lay-Sovereign, turned his fierce Wrath by his Prayers, and by remembring him of the Oath he sware to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, namely, that he would multiply their Seed like the Stars in Heaven, &c.* And then it is true, that *the Lord repented of the Evil which he thought to do unto them:* But no Thanks to the Priest, who had drawn them into this Scrape. *Exod. Chap. xxxii.*

T.

[I-108]

NUMBER XIV.

*The Clergy proved to be Creatures of the Civil Power, by the Canons, and their own public Acts.* [↩](#)

Wednesday, April 20. 1720.

IN my last Discourse, I have shewn what is meant by the Supremacy of the Crown of *England*; by virtue of which, our Kings sometimes with, and sometimes without their Parliaments, have governed and modelled the Ecclesiastical State, ever since the *Reformation*. Bishops, as well as inferior Clergymen, have been often suspended and deprived by the *King's Authority*; and, in the Instance of Archbishop *Abbot*, for his Pleasure. The *Popish* Bishops were all deprived by *Queen Elizabeth*, and some Thousands of the Parochial Clergy were ejected by the *Act of Uniformity*; and many also of all Orders were deprived at the *Revolution*.

[I-109]

I SHALL now proceed to shew what have been the Opinions and Practice of the whole Body of Ecclesiastics, since the making of these Laws; in doing which, I shall take notice only of their public and authentic Acts: For as to the Whimsies of private Doctors, I think them of so little Weight, that I shall be ashamed to quote them on either side of the Question.

UPON the Clergy's owning the King Head of the Church at the *Reformation*, all the Bishops took out Commissions for the exercising their Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; which were renewed again upon his Son's coming to the Throne. In these Commissions, all Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction is owned to proceed from the Crown, as from a supreme Head, and Fountain, and Spring of all Magistracy in the Kingdom; and they acknowledge, that they executed it formerly only *ex precario*, and that now with grateful Minds they accepted the Favour from the King's Liberality and Indulgence; and would be always ready to yield it up again, when his Majesty pleased to require it.

THESE Commissions recited, amongst other Particulars of Spiritual Power, That of Ordaining Presbyters, and of Ecclesiastical Correction.

[I-110]

THE 2d Canon excommunicates every one who shall endeavour to hurt or extenuate the King's Authority in Ecclesiastical Cases, as it is settled by the Laws of the Kingdom; and declares he shall not be restored till he has publicly recanted such *impious Errors*.

THE 37th Canon obliges all Persons, to their utmost, to keep and observe all and every one of the Statutes and Laws made for restoring to the Crown, the antient Jurisdiction it had over the Ecclesiastical State.

THE 12th of King *James's* Canons declares, That whoever shall affirm, that it is lawful for the Order either of Ministers or Laics to make Canons, Decrees, or Constitutions in Ecclesiastical Matters, without the King's Authority, and submits himself to be governed by them, is, *ipso facto*, excommunicated, and is not to be absolved before he has publicly repented and renounced these *Anabaptistical Errors*.

ARCHBISHOP *Bancroft*, when, at the Head of all the Bishops in *England*, he delivered Articles to King *James* against the Secular Courts, for encroaching upon the Ecclesiastical, owns, that all Jurisdictions, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil, are annexed to the Imperial Crown of this Realm, as may be read more at large in the Lord *Coke's Third Institute*; which I would

[I-111] recommend to the Perusal of every one, as a Specimen of the Difference between Ecclesiastics and Laymen.

I SHALL think it necessary only here to add, that the Clergy have never presumed, by any public Act, directly to controvert this Prerogative, or indeed even to nibble at it, unless in one Instance during the last Reign; which the Queen resented highly, and let the Convocation know, by a Letter to the Archbishop, that *she was resolved to maintain her Supremacy, as a Fundamental Part of the Constitution of the Church of England.*

THIS is the Supremacy of the Crown; these are the genuine Principles of the Church of *England*; which whoever denies, may be a *Papist*, a *Presbyterian*, a *Muggletonian*, a *Fifth-Monarchy Man*, or any thing else, besides a Member of our Communion. This Doctrine, and these Opinions, have been acknowledged and sworn to by every Ecclesiastic since the *Reformation*; and we daily see they are All ready to swear them over again upon any fresh Motives of Advantage; and sure no one will suggest, that the Whole Clergy of *England* have lived in the State of Perjury for near Two hundred Years: I am sure, if this be the Case, it is not their Interest to let us know it, [I-112] since their Authority must be of very little Weight in any thing else.

WE have it here upon Oath, that all Jurisdiction, Power and Authority, Spiritual or Ecclesiastical, of what Kind or Sort soever it be, does flow from, and is derived from, the King's Majesty; and I readily allow them to have all the rest by Divine Right. They have been always very happy at Distinctions and Discoveries; and therefore if they can find out any Power or Authority, which is of *no Kind or Sort whatsoever*, I think they ought to have it for their Pains; I wish them much Joy with it; and shall own it always to be Sacrilege in any one who shall attempt to take it from them: but, if there be any such Thing, it is plain, that it belongs to them as Governors of the Invisible Church, and is of a Nature which we know nothing of.

FOR it is certain, that Archbishops and Bishops are Creatures of the Civil Power, and derive their Being and Existence from it. They are chosen by the Direction of one Act of Parliament, and ordained and consecrated according to a Model prescribed by another; in which those who officiate, act only ministerially; and all other Methods of chusing them which the Clergy can devise, are declared void and ineffectual, and will not convey [I-113] any Spiritual Power at all: Nor, I dare say, will any Clergyman in *England* pay Submission to such a Choice, if he do not like the Man; nor if he do, provided he thinks, that he shall lose any thing by it. If the Bishops have no Power but what they derive from the Crown, they can convey none but of the same sort to the Inferior Clergy.

I DURST not have stood the Imputation of Calumny, in charging any of the present Clergy with Principles or Practices so directly in Defiance of these glaring and notorious Declarations of the whole Body, as well as their own repeated Oaths and Subscriptions, if I had not the Authority of the brightest Luminary of the present Church and Age (our great Metropolitan) to bear me out, who assures us in his *Appeal*,

“That a new Sort of Disciplinarians are arisen up from amongst ourselves, who seem to comply with the Government of the Church, much upon the same Account as others do with that of the State; not out of Conscience to their Duty, or any Love they have for it, but because it is the Established Church, and they cannot keep their Preferments without it: They hate our Constitution, and All who stand up in good earnest for it; but for all that, they hold fast to it; and so go on to subscribe and rail..”

[I-114]

To these wild and enthusiastic Notions we owe the present Disaffection; and most, if not all the Calamities and public Disturbances that have happened since the *Revolution*; and yet (which is amazing to think of) they have prevailed so far amongst the corrupt Part of the Ecclesiastics, that I wish we could find more even of the Low-Church Clergymen, who dare thoroughly to renounce these *Impious and Anabaptistical Errors*, as their own Canons call them.

*DOMINION!* Dominion is the loud Cry; which, as it has already produced all the Cruelties and Absurdities of Popery, so it is still teeming with, or bringing forth, new Monsters; and what other Issue can be expected from so unnatural a Copulation as that of the Christian Priesthood with worldly Power?

To this we are beholden for all the Corruptions and Fopperies brought into religious Worship, as well as the ill-shapen and ungainly Brats of Passive Obedience; the Divine Right of Kings and Bishops; the uninterrupted Succession; the Priests Power of the Keys; of Binding and Loosing; Remitting and Retaining Sins; the Real Presence in the Sacrament; the Altar and Unbloody Sacrifice upon it; the giving the Holy Ghost; of Excommunication, as laid Claim to; and Consecration of Churches, [I-115] and Church-yards; the Reconciliation of God's knowing what we shall do, with a Power in us not to do it; of Persecution for Opinions, and the Tritheistical Charity; with a long Train of Monkish Fooleries besides: All, or any Part of which, could never have entered into the Heart of one Layman, or Clergyman either, if nothing had been to be got by them.

T.

#### NUMBER XV.

### *The Absurdity and Impossibility of Church-Power, as independent on the State.* ↩

*Wednesday, April 27. 1720.*

I HAVE shewn, in my last Two Discourses, that the Clergy of *England* have no Jurisdiction, Power, or Authority whatsoever, which is not derived mediately or immediately from the Legislature; and that they have all sworn [I-116] to this Principle: I now own myself so much concerned for their Reputation, that I will even run the Hazard of incurring the Displeasure of some of them, by proving, that they have taken true Oaths, and that it is impossible to constitute a Protestant National Church upon any other Foundation.

I INTEND to shew, in the Course of these Papers, that there is not the least Colour or Pretence for the chimerical Distinction of Ecclesiastical and Civil, in any other Sense than as the Words *Maritime* and *Military* are used to denote different Branches of the executive Power: For, take away the legal Establishment, and the Clergy can have no Power at all, but what flows from the Consent of voluntary Societies; a Proposition which I undertake hereafter demonstratively to make out; and I defy all the Ecclesiastics in the World, united together, to take one Step towards proving the contrary, without plunging themselves in everlasting Nonsense and Absurdity.

BUT to keep them a little in good Humour, I will suppose, for the present, that their wild Hypothesis is true; and that our Saviour, whilst upon Earth, (even against his own Declarations) had Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction over the whole Earth: That he gave it the Apostles; that they conveyed it on to their Successors; [I-117] and that the Church of *Rome*, and the present Clergy of the Church of *England*, as by *Law established*, are their undoubted Successors: Nay, I will be so civil as not to ask one Question, what sort of Power that was; but take it for granted, that it was worldly Authority, and ought to be rewarded and supported by worldly Equipage, Wealth, and Titles; and if they have any thing more to ask of me, I will

grant that too, and then examine what Use can be made of these Concessions to the present Purpose.

I DESIRE first to be informed, from whence they will fetch their Ecclesiastical Heraldry of Archbishops, Diocesan Bishops, Deans, Chapters, Arch-deacons, the new Office of Deacons, Officials, Commissaries, the Two Houses of Convocation with co-ordinate Powers, Ecclesiastical Courts, Parish Priests, and Curates, with the whole Train of inferior Machines, and Spiritual Under-strappers. Here I doubt all their Texts, all their Schemes, will fail them; for very few of these hard Names will be found even in their own Translations of the Bible, and they must have recourse to Human Authority at last.

If they say, (as I suspect they will) that the Government of the Church being conveyed down to the Bishops from the Apostles, they [I-118] must have all Power which is necessary to it; and consequently have a Right to appoint Courts of Judicature, and Ecclesiastical Officers, as also to give them proper Powers to answer the Ends of their Trust:

I WOULD then ask them, whether this great Episcopal Authority is given to every Bishop, independent of all the rest; to all the Bishops of the whole Church every-where dispersed, agreeing together; to the Majority of this Whole; or to the Majority of any Number of them meeting in one Place, either by Consent, Accident, or the Appointment of Princes or States? For, I think, it must be agreed by all the World, that if the Bishops had any Power from God, which is independent of the Civil Sovereign, he cannot restrain, model, or limit it; and that any accidental Alterations of the Bounds of Dominions, either from Conquest, Chance or Consent, can no way affect the Divine Authority, or hinder its Operation.

If every Bishop has this whole Power delegated to him from God; then by what Authority can the Exercise of it be afterwards restrained to a particular District or Diocese, so as to make his Actions out of it, not only *invalid*, but *schismatical* and criminal? Who can limit a Power given by the Almighty? Not the Civil Sovereign, who has nothing to do [I-119] in another Jurisdiction; nor the Bishop himself, who must accept it upon the Terms which God has given it.

It cannot be supposed, that he receives it for his own Sake, but as a Trust for the Benefit of Christianity; and it must be the highest Breach of this great Trust, not to discharge it personally, but to divide it with others, of whose Honesty he can have no sufficient Knowledge.

BESIDES, when these Bishops differ with one another, (which will happen as often as they have different Complexions, Interests, or Understandings) what must the Christian World then do? Must they follow the Bishop of *Bangor* [\*] , or the Abbot of *Westminster* [†] ? Or suspend their Christianity till they are all agreed? A solid Rock truly to build God's Church upon!

So great a Body of Men as the whole Christian Church, or the Majority of them, never did or could meet together; and if such a thing were possible, they would only scold or fight; and therefore any one may with great Modesty affirm, that no Ecclesiastical Establishment now in the World did or could take its Rise from such an Assembly.

[I-120]

NOTHING therefore remains, but that, once upon a Time, a certain Number of Bishops met together, and settled such Constitutions, from which the rest are derived; otherwise we must fetch them from the Civil Magistrate, or confess them all to be Usurpations.

THOSE who suppose the first, are obliged to tell us, What Number are necessary to this Purpose; and if another equal Number should settle a different Establishment in the same District or Province, who will be the Schismatics? I think it is agreed by all High-Churchmen, That every one of these can make as many other Bishops, and Governors of the whole Church, as he pleases; and therefore, if one of them in a frolicksome Humour should create Two or Three Hundred of these *Ecclesiastical Princes*, are they all to have Votes in the *Episcopal College*? And I ask this Question the rather, because I myself once knew a drunken Popish Bishop in *Ireland*, who would have made these Spiritual Sovereigns from Morning to Night, for a Pot of Ale apiece.

If it should be said, (as indeed what is not or may not be said by Persons of their Perspicuity?) that the Power itself comes from God, but the Exercise of it is to be limited and directed by the Civil Sovereign; I answer, [I-121] that, besides the egregious Blunder of distinguishing between Power and the Exercise of Power, the first being only a Right to do certain Actions, in which the other consists: This gives up the whole Question; for there can be no greater Power necessary to give an Authority, than to take it away; and every Restriction and Limitation is taking it away in Part: No one can have a Right to depose a Temporal Prince from any Part of his just Dominions, without having also the same Right to deprive him of the Whole; and in this respect there can be no Difference between Temporal and Ecclesiastical Sovereignties.

If these Gentlemen were not in Possession of sanctifying Nonsense, they could not venture to tell us, that our Saviour has given Power to Bishops to execute Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction through the whole Earth; and consequently all Mankind must be their Spiritual Subjects: But that this great Power may here, below, be limited and restrained to Cities or Provinces, and parcelled out and divided in such a manner, that some may have large Districts, others small ones, in which no one else must officiate; nay, that many more may have none at all, and yet every one have universal Jurisdiction, and be a Bishop of the whole Earth.

[I-122]

THESE, with a huge Heap besides of glaring Absurdities and Contradictions, must be maintained by those, who would reconcile the Divine Right of Bishops with any Protestant Establishment now in the World. I have so amply shewn how inconsistent it is with our own, from the whole Tenor of our Laws and Canons, as well as the repeated Acknowledgments of the Clergy themselves, that I should think it not only needless, but impertinent, to say any thing further of it, did we not daily hear of such Numbers of our Spiritual Guides, who rail against these Laws at the time they swear and subscribe to them, and complain aloud of them as Violations of their own Divine Rights, and denounce Judgments upon the Nation for such Usurpations.

I SHALL therefore, in my next Paper, descant a little upon the voluntary and most applauded Actions of the highest, even of these High Gentlemen; and shew that they cannot help acknowledging the Principles which I maintain, even in the Instances where they would oppose it, and amidst their greatest Demands for Power. This I intend to do, not with the least Expectation, or vain Hope, of inducing them to alter their Measures, (there being a Prescription among the Ecclesiastics against such Lay Follies) but (if possible) to open the [I-123] Eyes of their blind and stupid Adorers, and to let them see what wretched Idols they are worshipping.

T.



NUMBER XVI.

*The Inconsistency of the Principles and Practices of High-Church; with some Advice to the Clergy.* ↩

Wednesday, May 4. 1720.

IF the Ecclesiastics have any Divine Right which is neither derived from the Civil Magistrate, nor the Consent of voluntary Societies, it must be vested in a single Person; in a certain Number of Persons, which we all call Bishops; or in common to them all: The First is *Popery*, and the Last *Presbytery*. But I think, that there is no Establishment which now subsists, or ever did subsist in the World, which does, or did, assert the Divine Right of Bishops, independent of the Pope; and consequently [I-124] it is the *Proprium* or peculiar Whimsy of our own perjured High-Churchmen, not only in Opposition to their Oaths and Subscriptions, (as I have shewed already) but to the most applauded Actions of their greatest Champions; which 'tis the Business of this Paper to make out.

If there be a Divine Right in the Bishops to govern the Church, it is spiritual Rebellion, and the highest Sacrilege, to usurp upon this great Authority; but then, what will become of all the daily Daubing, and fulsome Panegyric, upon the best established Church in the World? Since I think it is agreed by all the Clergy, that the Power of Legislation, as far as they have any thing to do with it, is vested in the Convocation, which consists of two Houses, one of Bishops, the other of Presbyters; a Constitution utterly inconsistent with this Divine Right; which the High-Clergy have been so far from regretting, or complaining of, that it is one of their most essential Characteristics, to maintain the Power of the Lower House against the Upper; that is, of Presbyters against their own Diocesans.

THEY claim a co-ordinate Power with them in the supremest Acts of Church-Government; an Authority of acting by themselves, to chuse their own Time of meeting, to sit as often and as long as they please, to adjourn by their own [I-125] Authority, to begin what Business they think sit, to chuse their own Committees, excuse Absence, receive Proxies, judge of Elections, censure their own Members, and do all other Acts, which ought to be done by the sole Authority of a House which is its own Master and Judge: All which, though they are rank Presbytery, yet are also become the genuine Principles of modern High-Churchmen: At the same time that they assert a sole, divine, apostolic, and independent Power in the Bishops to govern the Church.

THE asserting of these Rights of the Lower House, is the Merit of their present Champion [\*], supplies the Want of Charity in him, and covers a Thousand Faults; and 'tis much to be feared and lamented, that all the late Zeal of a much greater Man [†], and the present Services which he is doing, will scarcely atone for his having acted formerly upon Low-Church Principles, in defending the Prerogative of the Crown, and maintaining the Power of the Upper House over the Lower.

WHAT Persons or Party have supported the Bishops, and their Authority, ever since the Revolution, against their own Presbyters? All Low-Churchmen. Who were those who have [I-126] been always aspersing, calumniating and libelling the Two last Archbishops, our present Metropolitan, till very lately, the last Bishop of *Salisbury*, and indeed every worthy Prelate, but the High-Church Priests, and their Followers? And who have honoured and defended their Persons and Characters, but Low-Churchmen?

WHO exhibited Articles against a present Bishop, for having preached the King's Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs, (wholly inconsistent with the Divine Right of Bishops) but the High-Church Clergy? Who supported the late Dean of *Carlisle* against his own Diocesan? All High-Churchmen. And who defended both these Bishops? All Low-Churchmen. Who burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman, a Book written by a Right

Reverend Bishop, which asserted King *William's* Title upon the once genuine Principles of Conquest, and passed a scandalous and groundless Vote upon the late learned Bishop of *Worcester*, but High-Churchmen? And who voted for these Bishops? All Low-Churchmen.

SUCH open Blunders, and glaring Inconsistencies, must these Men be reduced to, who measure all Opinions by their present Interest and Passions; and who have no other Standard of Right and Wrong, but what most gratifies [I-127] their Ambition, Pride, Covetousness, or Revenge.

I CAN safely say, that, as I had no Interest in entering upon this Design, nor can have any in continuing it, but to promote the Cause of Virtue and Truth, and to support our present legal Establishment; by shewing the Laity, that they are free, both by the Laws of God and their Country, from all the wild and enthusiastic Pretensions of the high-flown Ecclesiastics: As I was willing also, not wholly to despair of being able to restore again the Apostate Clergymen to the Church of *England*, and to make them really of the Principles which they swear to, pretend to monopolize, and yet constantly oppose; so I shall have the utmost Pleasure, if I can contribute to these great Ends, and shall rejoice over such an Occasion, to drop this Paper.

As the High Clergy can have no other Motive to pursue these Principles, but the temporal Interest of their Order, in Opposition to Christianity, and the apparent Laws of their Country; so I shall endeavour to convince them, that they are grasping at what they can never reach; and, with the Dog in the Fable, losing a Substance to catch at a Shadow.

It was a Saying of the wise Lord *Halifax*, that Dr. *Echard*, in his Treatise of the *Contempt* [I-128] of the Clergy, had omitted the *chief Cause* of it, namely, (not their Ignorance, but) *the Knowledge of the Laity*; and it is very true, that the Mists of Superstition and Fear, which have been so long raising before our Eyes, are pretty well dissipated and dispersed; nor will an horizontal Hat, a starched Band, and long Petticoats, pass in this Age for essential Marks of Wisdom and Virtue.

THE *Rehearsal* has long since told us, that the gravest of all Beasts is an *Ass*, and the gravest of all Birds is an *Owl*; and indeed the World seems generally of Opinion now, that sound Sense, polite Learning, good Breeding, and an easy and affable Conversation, are not only consistent with true Religion, but are most productive of it; and sure it cannot be denied, that the Laity, for the most part, exceed in these Qualities.

THEY are resolved, at last, to see with their own Eyes, hear with their own Ears, and feel with their own Hands: *Ipse dixit* will pass no longer. It is a ridiculous Attempt to endeavour to deceive any one, who will not consent to be hood-winked: A Jade will not be put into an Horse-Mill, till she is blinded; nor could *Samson* be led about by the *Philistines*, till they had put out his Eyes. I would therefore give my old Friends a Hint, though, I doubt, [I-129] to little Purpose, namely, to change the Course of their Sailing, according to the Shifting of the Winds and the Tides, and not run the Danger of Shipwreck upon those Coasts, where their Predecessors formerly found deep Water, and safe Riding.

I AM sensible, that many of the High-Church *Popish* Clergy will laugh in their Sleeves at this Advice, and think there is Folly enough yet left among the Laity, to support their Authority; and will hug themselves, and rejoice over the Ignorance of the Universities, the Stupidity of the drunken 'Squires, the Panic of the tender Sex, and the never to be shaken Constancy of the Multitude; but I would put them in mind, that all these fine Visions have once already misled and deceived them, and therefore may again.

I DESIRE that they will count their Gains, and recollect what Addition of Power they got, or were like to have got, by the late great Revolution of temporal Politics, which they were so instrumental to bring about: Indeed they were called together, and had a Liberty given them to scold and quarrel with one another; but they were not suffered to hurt so much as a Mouse; and even Mr. *Whiston* laughed at them. Whilst their Patrons were making their Court to *France* and the *Pretender*, for Preferments; [I-130] the Lower House of *Convocation* was very usefully employed and diverted, in compiling Forms of Prayer for consecrating Churchyards, and for Criminals who were to be hanged; which, 'tis said, a certain great Person then called, *Throwing out a Barrel to the Whale*.

I AM afraid, that they are not well informed of what it much concerns them to know, namely, that even the *Tories* themselves will not be Priest-ridden; and that those amongst them, who have any Sense, laugh at High-Church Principles in private, though they bow to the Broachers of them, and seem to admire them, in public; of the Truth of which I myself have been frequently a Witness: So that of whatever Importance they may seem to themselves, they are, in Truth, but Tools to factious Men; are only employed to do their Drudgery, and run down their Game; and will scarce have for their Pains even the picking of the Bones, when (like Jackals) they have hunted down the Lion's Prey.

I SHOULD not have thought myself at Liberty to have unburdened my Mind thus freely, if it had not been to have served some of my Friends among these High-Church Clergy, by helping them to a little of that Understanding, which is not to be learnt in Universities, and in [I-131] Conversation with one another; and I wish, (tho' I cannot hope, much less persuade myself to believe) that when they have duly considered what I have said, they will change their Style, and endeavour to atone for all the Mischiefs which they have hitherto done, by being hereafter Advocates for Civil and Ecclesiastical Liberty; will make use of the Influence they have over the poor deluded Multitude to promote true Religion, as well as Peace and Happiness, amongst Mankind; and be no longer the Boutefeus or Incendiaries of every popular Faction and Tumult. *Which God, of his infinite Mercy, grant, &c.*

[I-132]

## NUMBER XVII.

### **Reasons why the High-Church Priests are the most Wicked of all Men.** ↩

*Wednesday, May 11. 1720.*

IT seems natural and reasonable to suppose, that Clergymen, who have a learned, ingenuous and Christian Education; who are bred up in strict Discipline; who, in their Youth, study the Works of *PLATO*, *ARISTOTLE*, *CICERO*, and other Heathen Moralists; as also the Books of the Old and New Testament, which they believe to be divinely inspired; who attend daily Prayers, and frequent Sacraments; who pretend to have a Call from the *Holy Ghost*, to teach the World; who spend a great Part of their Time in composing divine Discourses or Sermons; who are obliged to pray and converse daily with weak, sick, and scrupulous Parishioners, about heavenly Matters; who, by Conversation and close Union with one another [I-133] at Visitations, and other holy Meetings, and (I presume) by Prayers together, have great Opportunities of improving themselves in Virtue and Godliness; and who are under a particular Obligation to set good Examples, and under a sort of Necessity to observe some Decorum; should be *better*, than other Men. But yet, it is a Matter of common Observation, that they are not so; almost all in the *Roman Church*, and too many in other Churches, being in an eminent Degree notoriously guilty of those Vices, which are of most pernicious, or most extensive ill Consequences, and most Antichristian; such as Ambition, Pride, Anger, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Litigiousness, Uncharitableness, Hypocrisy, Persecution, Sedition, Treason, Equivocation, and Perjury (whereof Multitudes of the Laity

are not only wholly innocent, but remarkable for the Virtues opposite to them); to say nothing of their equal Guilt with other Men in respect to the inferior Vices of Swearing, Drunkenness, and such-like. And this Fact is honestly confessed by the late Bishop of *Sarum*, who in his *Memoirs* (which we expect with the utmost Impatience soon to see published) tells us,

“That he always believes well of Laymen, till he sees Cause to change *his Mind*; though as to Churchmen, it is otherwise with *him*; [I-134] for *he* has seen so much amiss in that Profession, that *he* is inclined always to think ill of them, till *he* sees Cause to think otherwise.”

WHEREUPON it is a frequent Subject of Inquiry, how it comes to pass, or what are the Causes of this Fact, which would never be credited, if it was not very manifest. Some are at a Loss about this Matter; but, for my part, I am not. And the Fact is no more surprising to me, than are other *common Facts* concerning Men; which, by being *common*, must have plain and manifest Causes. The *Causes* of this *Fact*, in particular, are so plain to me, that from the mere *Consideration* of *them*, I should wonder if I found the Clergy better than they are; and I esteem those Causes to be so necessarily productive of their Effect, that I do not think it Presumption to pretend to know the Doings of the *High Clergy*, in all Ages, to have been wicked, even without *History* or *Testimony*, which are requisite to give us the Knowledge of other Mens Crimes. GROTIUS’S Observation, [\*] *Qui legit Historiam Ecclesiasticam, quid legit nisi Vitia Episcoporum?* must be true, and justly applied to all other Clergy as well as the Christian.

[I-135]

It is not the Design of this Paper, to assign the general Causes of this Fact, or all the particular Causes, which render so *many* of our Clergy so bad as they are. That Subject I reserve for a Treatise by itself. I shall at present only assign some of those Causes, which I conceive to have the most direct Influence on the Morals of so many of our Clergy.

YOUTH is the great Opportunity of Life, which settleth and fixeth most Men either in a good or bad Course; and the Impressions, especially bad Impressions, then made, are usually lasting. Youth is also a Time of Innocence, when Men have Horror for Vice, which they never commit at first without offering Violence to themselves. The first and most natural Thoughts of Man are to be honest, and just, and reasonable, as the best Things which he can do for his own Sake; and it is the Influence of ill Example, and of the common Practice of the World, which, for the most part, changes his Sentiments, and puts him upon ill Actions. But the natural Innocence of Youth being once broken in upon, Man, by Degrees, grows hardened and impudent in Wickedness, and commits it without Shame or Remorse.

NOTHING therefore has so direct a Tendency to debauch the World, as to debauch [I-136] the Youth: And the earlier, the more effectual; for thereby Innocence and Virtue may be so effaced, as in a little time to leave no Memory or Trace of them, no more than *QUARTILLA* in *PETRONIUS ARBITER* had, who, though a young Woman, *did not remember, that she had ever been a Maid*.

Now it seems to me peculiar to the Clergy, in most Parts of *Christendom*, to begin the World with the greatest Breach upon the natural Honesty and Integrity of Youth, and with the greatest Violence upon their own Consciences, that can be imagined; as will be evident from the following Particulars.

1. FIRST, the Youth who are sent to Universities, are early initiated into Perjury, by being obliged to take College-Oaths, in some respects impertinent or ridiculous, in others wicked, or impossible to be kept; by which means, false Swearing becomes familiar to them, and they esteem Oaths only as Matters of Form, and their Breach to be but common Qualifications for

Preferment.

2. SECONDLY, When they go into *Holy Orders*, they profess, that they *are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them their Office*: though nothing is more notorious, than that many are *inwardly moved* by the Prospect [I-137] of Power and Wealth, and by Necessity of a Maintenance; and that many use all the Arts and Means, to no purpose, to procure to themselves Law and Physic Fellowships in Colleges, in other Lay-preferments, (where no Engagements contrary to their Judgments and Consciences are requisite) in order to avoid the Burden of going into Orders: And by Consequence, that they feel no *inward Motions of the Holy Ghost*; unless the Holy Spirit can be supposed constantly to concur, just as serves the Purposes of Men engaged in the Pursuit of their temporal Interests. Here then is a solemn Lye, and Prostitution of the Conscience, in all those who do not feel themselves moved by the Holy Ghost.

3. THIRDLY, Many of the Clergy abroad subscribe *Articles of Religion*, which they do not believe. Mr. WHISTON (*Essays, &c. p. 237.*) says,

“he believes there is scarce one Clergyman, even of our reformed Church, that has considered and examined Things with any Care, who believes all the 39 Articles in their proper and original Meaning.”

This implies, that the Unbelievers, among the Clergy, of the *Articles*, are very numerous; unless it be supposed, that few of the Clergy *consider and examine Things with any Care*. But the Thing is manifest, from the *Sophistry and Knavery* [I-138] used by many of them to palliate their Subscription to the *Articles*; which imply, that they do not believe those *Articles*. (1.) Some pretend to subscribe them as *Articles*, which, though in Part erroneous, they oblige themselves not to contradict. (2.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any Sense, wherein they can understand them according to the Rules of Grammar. (3.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any Sense, wherein they can reconcile them to Scripture. (4.) And others chuse the Sense, which they pretend to subscribe them in, out of the several Senses which they suppose intended to be held forth by the same *Articles*. And I wish more of them pretended to subscribe them honestly and fairly, namely, in the Sense really intended by the Imposers, who, *to prevent Diversity of Opinions*, impose their own Sense, as *agreeable to Scripture*; and therefore cannot be supposed to have intended, that the *Articles* should differ from all other Writings, which all Readers endeavour to understand in the one Meaning intended by the Authors. Nay, to subscribe the *Articles* without believing them, is so reputable among the High-Church Priests, that a fair Subscriber, that is, one who subscribes in the one Sense, which he supposes originally intended, passes [I-139] among them for the worst of Men, namely, a *Presbyterian*, and an Enemy to the Church.

4. FOURTHLY, Every Clergyman instituted into any Benefice, *swears, That he has made no Simoniackal Payment, Contract, or Promise, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other, to his Knowledge, or with his Consent, to any Person or Persons whatsoever, for or concerning the procuring and obtaining of his Ecclesiastical Dignity, Place, Preferment, Office, or Living*, (respectively and particularly naming the same whereunto he is to be admitted, instituted, collated, installed, or confirmed) *nor will at any Time hereafter perform or satisfy any such kind of Payment, Contract or Promise, made by any other, without his Knowledge or Consent: So help him God, through JESUS CHRIST*. Now, whether any of them break this Oath, I leave to the Consideration of the Reader, who ought to esteem all Clergymen taking it guilty, that either make Presents to any body, or marry, or compound with the Patron about Tythes, in order to get the Benefice; no less than those who, by Bargain, pay Money before or after the Benefice is procured, are guilty.

5. FIFTHLY, An Oath of Allegiance to his Majesty King *GEORGE* is taken by all Beneficed Clergymen; who may be justly deemed perjured, if they do not pay the same Regard [I-140] to his Majesty, which they pretend to have been due to King *CHARLES* the First or Second, or to Queen *ANNE*, at the Beginning and latter End of her Reign. The Popularity and Credit to which this Perjury intitles the High-Church Clergy among one another, and the Disgrace attending those who are faithful to the Oaths which they have taken, (the former being dubbed by them *honest Men*, and good Churchmen, for breaking their Oaths; and the latter *Rogues*, and Betrayers of the Church, for keeping them) leaves us no room to doubt, that the Perjured of this Kind are but too numerous. However, I am willing to think, it would be Injustice to say, that many Laymen need not go out of their own Parishes, to find one at least, and often more, where there are Lecturers and Curates.

THE Difficulty therefore mentioned in the Beginning of this Paper, admits of a plain Solution; and it is as easy to conceive, that Men, who begin the World in this manner, should exceed others in Wickedness, who either begin the World innocently, or are under no Necessity to begin it wickedly; as it is to conceive, that Butchers and Soldiers should be less humane than others; or that young Women, once prostituted, should lose all Modesty.

C.

[I-141]

**NUMBER XVIII.**  
***A general Idea of Priestcraft.*** ↪

*Wednesday, May 18. 1720.*

I Have, in my Eighth and other Papers, vindicated the Almighty from the Imputation of Obscurity in revealing his Will to Mankind; and shewn, that he is plain, exact, and even circumstantial, when he delivers his Precepts to them. I shall now expose the contrary Proceedings of weak and corrupt Men; by giving a general Idea of the principal Arts, by which the designing Priests of all Religions have kept their Craft and Impostures from a Discovery, and made the Truth, as far as they could, inaccessible.

EVERY mad Action, or Principle, in Religion and Government, must have some appearing Cause assigned for it, proper to make the People stare, and to hide the true one. [I-142] Mankind, as tame as Priests and Tyrants have made them, will not be content to be deceived or butchered without having a Reason for it. The Pope, who assumes a Power to judge for all Men, and devotes whole Nations to Damnation and Massacre, and sends People to Heaven or Hell in Colonies, just as their Money or Disobedience determines him, acts a very consistent Part in tying the Keys of both Worlds to his Girdle, and in styling himself God's absolute *Vicar General*. These are *his* Reasons; and the Catholic and more Orthodox Parts of *Europe* are well content with them.

In former Reigns, when many of our *English* Clergy thought fit to tye us Hand and Foot, and deliver us over to our Kings, as their proper Goods and Chattels, to be fed or flayed according to their *sacred* Will and Pleasure, they told us, it was the Ordinance of God, that one Man might glut his Lust, or his Cruelty, with the Destruction of Millions; and if we kept out of Harm's way, we were assuredly damned. And these were *their* Reasons then. Of late, it is true, many of them have changed their Doctrine, and their Behaviour. We are, it seems, *at present*, living in the Guilt of Rebellion, which is a damnable Sin; and so we are to rebel upon Pain of Damnation, to free ourselves from the Damnation [I-143] which follows Rebellion. These are their Reasonings *now*.

FORMERLY, when some certain Persons were content to be Protestants, the Church of Rome was the *Spiritual Babylon*, and the *Scarlet Whore*, and *Sodom*; and the *Pope* was *Antichrist*; for he sat in the Temple of God, and exalted himself above all that is called God. But this was Truth, and could not hold long, considering into whose Hands it was fallen; and therefore in a little time, when they had a Mind to get into the Pope's Place, and to do and say as he did, the Church of Rome became all of a sudden a *true Church*, and an *old Church*, and *our Mother Church*. In short, the *old withered Harlot*, and *Mother of Whoredoms*, grew a great Beauty, and *her Daughter* here in *England* resembled her *Mamma* more and more every Day she lived, and gave the foregoing Reasons for it.

FROM hence it is plain, that though for every Imposture some Cause must be assigned, yet a very indifferent one will serve the Turn. The Gross of the World are dull and credulous: Few make any Inquiries at all, and sewer make successful ones. It is, however, still best, if the Cheat stands upon such a Foundation, that it cannot be searched nor examined by any *human Eye*.

[I-144]

WHEN *Numa Pompilius* told the *Romans*, that he conversed familiarly with the Nymph *Egeria*; which of them could pay her a Visit, and ask her, whether the Prince and she were in earnest such very good Neighbours? And when *Mahomes* took such a wide Range [Editor: illegible word]' the other World upon his Nag *Elborach*, and told Wonders at his Return; there was neither Man nor Horse in all *Arabia*, that could take the same Journey to disprove him; or, when he was pleased to be thought conversant with the Angel *Gabriel*, I do not hear, that ever the Angel signed a Certificate, that they were no-wise acquainted. The Quack, who had found out the true *Fern-Seeds* [Editor: ?] and the *Green Dragon*, thought it, no doubt, a hard Matter to prove him a Lyar.

IN the Heathen Temples of old, neither the *Sibyls*, nor any other Priests or Belchers of Prophecy, Male or Female, were answerable for the Oracles, and dark Sayings, which they uttered. They had what they said from God, who never once contradicted them. It was impossible to come at him for personal Information; and a very profane Crime not to believe his Priest; and to distract the Deity himself, was *almost* as bad: You had nothing to do, but to *captivate your Reason to your Faith*, and swallow the *Verdum Sacerdotis*. If you did [I-145] not, the Judgment of the God, that is, the Anger of his Priest, was sure to pursue you.

THE same Policy has been ever practised by the Deluders of Mankind in all Names and Shapes. They have always entrenched themselves behind the Ramparts of Mystery, Uncertainties and Terrors. The *Romish* Clergy maintain all their Pretensions and Power by Doctrines which are calculated to make the People either wonder or tremble. And when a Man has lost his Courage, and his Understanding, you may easily cheat or terrify him into as tractable an Animal as the Creation affords. The Doctrines of Purgatory, and of the Priests Power to forgive or damn, are alone strong enough to frighten most Folks into what Liberality and Submission the Church thinks fit to demand of them. And we all know, that she is not over-modest upon such Occasions: *Bring me all thou hast, and follow me*, is her Style.

I WISH I could keep these Impostures, and wild Claims, altogether out of *England*, and confine them to Popish and Infidel Countries only. But that which is obvious and avowed, cannot be hid. Very many of our high Jacobite Clergy aim at Dominion by the same wicked Means, and hood-wink and alarm us all they can. They lead us out of the Road of [I-146] Reason, and play their Engines in the Dark; and all the Illumination we can get from them is, that we are all in a Mist. Without their Guidance we go astray, and with it we go blindsold. All their Arguments are fetched from their own Authority. Their Assertions are no less than

Rules and Laws to us; and where they lead, we must follow, though into Darkness and Servitude. If we grow wilful, and break loose from our Orthodox Ignorance, we are pursued with hard Names and Curses. Doubting is Infidelity, Reason is Atheism. What can we do in this Case? There is no Medium between a Blockhead and a Schismatic: If we follow them blindly, we are the First; the Second, if we leave them. We want Faith, if we will not take their Word; we want Eyes, if we do.

THEY indeed give a Sugar-plum, and refer us to the Bible for Proof of all that they say. But, in Truth, this Privilege, if we examine it, will appear none at all; but, on the contrary, an arrant Trick, and gross Mockery. For when they have sent us to a Text, will they allow to construe it our own way? No such Matter: They have nailed a Meaning to it, and will permit it to bear no other. You may read, provided you read with *their Spectacles*; and examine their Propositions *freely*, provided you take them every one for granted. [I-147] You may exert your Reason freely, but be sure let it be to no Purpose; and use your Understanding independently, under their absolute Direction and Controul. I wonder how these Men could ever have the Front to accuse the Church of *Rome* for locking up the Bible in an unknown Tongue!

THE eternal War that they wage against Reason, which they use just as they do Scripture, is founded upon good Policy; but it is pleasant to observe their Manner of attacking it. They reason against Reason, use Reason against the Use of Reason, and shew, from very good Reason, that Reason is good for nothing. When they think it on their own Side, then they apply all its Aids to convince or confound those who dare to think without their Concurrence: Therefore, in their Controversies about Religion, they frequently appeal to Reason; but we must not accept the Appeal, for if our Reason be not their Reason, it is no Reason. They use it, or the Appearance of it, against all Men; but no Man must use it against them. As there is no such thing as arguing and persuading without the Assistance of Reason, it is a little absurd, if not ungrateful, in these Gentlemen, to decry it at the same time that they are employing it; to turn the Batteries of Reason against Reason, and make itself destroy itself.

[I-148]

NEITHER Scripture, therefore, nor Reason, by these Rules, signify any thing till the Priests have explained them, and made them signify something; and the Word of God is not the Word of God, till they have declared its Sense, and made it so. Thus, by the time that Scripture and Reason have been modelled, and qualified, and cooked up by the High-Church Jacobite Clergy, they are neither Scripture nor Reason, but a perfect *French Dish*, or what the Spiritual Cooks please; an Oleo or Hodge-podge of Nonsense, Jargon and Authority.

FROM all that has been said, the following Conclusions may be drawn: Such Clergymen as I have been above describing, prove every thing by asserting it, and make any Pretence support any Claim. They build Systems upon pretended Facts, and argue from Propositions which are either highly improbable, or certainly false. When they cannot convince, they confound us; when they cannot persuade, they terrify. We have but two Ways to try the Truth of their Doctrines, and the Validity of their Demands, namely, *Reason* and *Revelation*; and they deprive us of both, by making the one dark, the other dangerous.

*WHAT a Contempt must this Tribe have for Mankind!*

G.

[I-149]

**NUMBER XIX.**  
**Ecclesiastical Authority, as claimed by the High Clergy, an Enemy to Religion.**↩



SINCE there are so many different Opinions and Apprehensions in the World about Matters of Religion, and every Sect and Party does with so much Confidence pretend, that they, and they only, are in the Truth; the great Difficulty and Question is, By what Means Men may be secured from dangerous Errors and Mistakes in Religion. For this End some have thought it necessary, that there should be an infallible Church, in the Communion whereof every Man may be secured from the Dangers of a wrong Belief: And others have thought it necessary, that their several fallible Churches should have Authority in Matters of Faith, in order to keep up a right Faith in the People of the Fundamentals of Religion.

[I-150]

BUT it seems God has not thought either necessary: If he had, he would have revealed himself more plainly in this Matter than in any particular Point of Faith whatsoever. He would have told us expressly, and in the plainest Words, that he had appointed an infallible Guide and Judge in Matters of Religion, or Men who should have Authority in Matters of Faith; and would likewise have plainly marked out him or them, for Men to have had recourse to on all Occasions; because our Belief depending on this infallible Judge, or on these Men who had Authority, we could not be safe from Mistake in particular Points, without so plain and clear a Revelation of this infallible Judge, or of these Men who had Authority, that there could be no Mistake about him or them; nor could there be an End of any other Controversies in Religion, unless this Matter of an infallible Judge, or of Men who had Authority, were out of our Controversy.

It is not pretended by any Advocates of Infallibility or Authority, that God has delivered the Matter expressly and plainly in the Scriptures. They proceed, and build only on Inferences and Deductions from thence. And the Papists are divided among themselves as to the Seat and Extent of Infallibility; as the Protestant-Papists are, in respect to the Seat and Extent [I-151] of Authority. And both Infallibility and Authority are manifestly absurd Pretences in point of Reason; though Infallibility seems less absurd than Authority. The Pretence of Infallibility is plainly absurd; because the Infallible Church gives constant and daily Proofs of its Fallibility: And the Pretence of Authority is absurd; because that may lead Men into any Mistakes whatsoever. But, as I observed, Infallibility is less absurd; because that is of a Piece, and consistent with, and necessarily follows from Authority: Whereas Authority without Infallibility, supposes a Power given Men by God to lead the World into any Mistakes, and to subvert Christianity itself. But however this be, they are both sufficiently ridiculous; and it is ridiculous to send Men, in order to their Salvation, to believe either in the *Pope*, or *Dr. Swift*, or *Dr. Burgess*, on whose Authority if Men depend, they can only be *Papists*, or *Swiftites*, or *Burgesites*, and not Christians.

If then God has not provided an infallible Judge, nor any Men with Authority in Matters of Religion; there is some other Way, whereby Men may be secured against all dangerous Errors and Mistakes in Religion, and whereby they may discern all such Truths as are necessary to their Salvation. Now that Way our Saviour [I-152] has declared to us in these Words, *If any Man desire to do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*: That is, if a Man has an honest and sincere Mind, and a hearty Desire to do the Will of God, he has the best Preservative against dangerous Mistakes in Matters of Religion; and God, or his Understanding, will enable him to distinguish sufficiently, whether Doctrines be of God or of Men, and will conduct him into all necessary Truths.

THIS is a true and plain Answer to the Question proposed; and also true and plain Religion, or Christianity, if Men will be governed by CHRIST, the *Author and Finisher* thereof. This is easy to be known, and requires little Time to learn. This frees Men from all Concern about the intricate and endless Squabbles of Divines, disputing which of them are to have Authority, and wherein their own Authority consists; and ought to set them at Ease; for, as Christians, or Followers of CHRIST, they have nothing to do to inquire, what Priests are to have an Antichristian Authority over one another, and the Laity.

BUT notwithstanding the Plainness of the Case, it is no wonder, that weak People now-a-days should believe in Priests, and not in Christ; should be Priestlings, and not Christians; [I-153] when, in our Blessed Saviour's own Time, the *Jews* were ready to believe in any Impostors, and averse to believing in him, as he himself tells us. *I am come, says he, in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not: If an other shall come in his own Name; him ye will receive: How can you believe, which receive Honour one of another?* That is, (to make a sort of Application to our present Times)

“You have the Bible among you, wherein I teach you in my Father's Name, wherein I bid you search, examine, and try all things for yourselves, and to call no Man *Master* in Religion upon Earth: That Bible you reject, in not understanding it for yourselves; but if any Man set up for an authoritative Interpreter of it, him you will receive for your *Master*, and call yourselves after his Name. How can you be Believers in, and Followers of me, who believe upon the Authority of Men, and reject the Authority of God?”

CHRISTIANITY, or Religion, thus truly understood, has too many Enemies to make it lost Labour to prove it true by Arguments. And therefore I observe, in Proof of our Saviour's Doctrine, “That a hearty Desire and Endeavour to do the Will of God, is the Preservative against dangerous Mistakes.” [I-154] First, That therein our Saviour recommends the best and most proper Disposition of Mind to qualify a Man to receive Truths from God, to enable him to make a right Judgment as to what proceeds from God, and what from Men. For a good Man is most likely to have right Apprehensions of God and Divine Things. Secondly, Such a Disposition in a Man supposes his Impartiality in the Search of Truth; that he has no Partiality to any particular Doctrine; and that he is superior to the Temptations of any Passions, (which blind the Mind) and has no Reason to deceive himself by receiving Things without Evidence, nor Inclination to reject what has Evidence. Thirdly, God will not suffer the best disposed Minds to fall into dangerous Mistakes; but will, as he says himself, *Guide them in Judgment, and shew them his Way.* Again, God says by SOLOMON, *If thou incline thine Ear unto Wisdom, and apply thy Heart to Understanding; yea, if thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding, if thou seekest her as Silver, and fearest for her as for hid Treasure; then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.* Indeed, the Bible is so plain, as to all necessary Truths, that he that runs may read; and a Day-labourer cannot fail of finding [I-155] Truth, that searches it there; and is in no Danger of failing, unless he delivers himself up absolutely to some Guide to interpret the Bible for him. Fourthly and Lastly, Living honestly, and seeking after Truth, are the best Things which a Man can do, and the very Perfection of his Nature; by consequence all that God, who is a good and reasonable Being, can require of him.

I SHALL conclude this Paper, which I have written in behalf of Christianity, and against Antichristianism, with another Divine Saying of our Blessed Saviour: *He that speaketh of himself, seeks his own Glory; but he that seeks his Glory that sent him, the same is true, and no Unrighteousness is in him.* As if he had said,

“Hereby you may distinguish one that comes from God, from an Impostor: If any Man seek his own Glory and Authority, you may conclude, that God has not sent him; but whatever he pretends, that he speaks of himself, preaches himself,

and from himself: But he that seeks the Honour of God, and not his own Interest, Advantage and Authority, by directing Men to the Authority of God alone; that Man has no Falshood, no Design to deceive; you may conclude him to be no Deceiver or Impostor.”

C.

[I-156]

***The following QUERIES, and LETTERS to a Clergyman, written by the Author of the foregoing Paper, and never before printed, are thought proper to be here inserted.***[↩](#)

QUERIES concerning *Authority in Matters of Faith.*

1. IS there any Authority among Men *in Matters of Faith*?
2. WHEREIN does that *Authority* consist?
3. WHO are the Men that have that *Authority*? and particularly, Who are the Men that have that *Authority* in *China, Turkey, France, Scotland, England, Hanover, Holland, and Sweden*?
4. HAVE Men in one Country *Authority* over others in another Country *in Matters of Faith*? And who are those Men that have that *Authority*?
5. ARE there any Persons in the *Roman* Communion, who have *Authority, in Matters of Faith*, over the other Members of that Communion? And who are they?
6. ARE there any Persons in the Communion of the Church of *England*, who have *Authority, in Matters of Faith*, over the other Members of that Communion? And who are they?

[I-157]

7. HAVE any Persons in the *Roman* Church *Authority, in Matters of Faith*, over the Members of the Church of *England*?
8. IF some Persons of the Church of *England* have an *Authority, in Matters of Faith*, over the other Members of the Church of *England*; and if no Person of the *Roman* Church have such an *Authority* over the other Members of the *Roman* Church; what Reason can be assigned, for giving such *Authority* to some Persons of the Church of *England*, over the other Members of the Church of *England*, that will not equally hold for giving such *Authority* to some Persons in the Church of *Rome*, over the other Members of the Church of *Rome*?
9. IF any Person in the *Roman* Church have now *Authority, in Matters of Faith*, over the other Members of the *Roman* Church; were there not Persons in the *Roman* Church, who had such *Authority*, before the *Reformation*?
10. HAVE private People in the *Roman* Church (that is, all but those who have an *Authority* in *Matters of Faith*) any Right to oppose those Persons in the Exercise of their *Authority*, who have an *Authority, in Matters of Faith* in that Church? Are not private People obliged to submit to such, exercising their *Authority*?

[I-158]

11. HAVE private People in the Church of *England* any Right to oppose those Persons in the Exercise of their *Authority*, who have an *Authority in Matters of Faith*, in that Church? Are not private People obliged to submit to such, exercising their *Authority*?

12. HAVE private Men in all Churches a Right to judge, whether the *Matters of Faith* of their Church be erroneous or no?

13. HAVE private Men a Right to separate from the Communion of a Church, whose *Matters of Faith* they judge to be erroneous?

14. HAVE private Men a Right to separate from the Communion of all Churches, if they deem them all erroneous in *Matters of Faith*?

15. HAVE private People, separating from the Communion of all Churches, as deeming them erroneous in Matters of Faith, a Right to form a new Church among themselves? Or ought they to live without public Worship, and without being Members of any particular Church?

16. IF private Men have a Right to judge, whether the Matters of Faith received in their Church be erroneous or no; if they have a Right to separate from the Communion of a Church, whose Matters of Faith they judge to be erroneous; and from all Churches, if they deem them erroneous in Matters of Faith: [I-159] And if private People have a Right to form a new Church upon such Separation from all Churches: *What Authority in Matters of Faith* can there be in any Persons of any Church?

17. WILL it not follow, from the Answers that shall be given to the foregoing Queries, either, that there can be *no Authority at all* among Men in *Matters of Faith*; or, that *all Authority in Matters of Faith* rests in some Person or Persons in the *Roman Church*?

18. IF there be an *Authority in Matters of Faith* in some Person or Persons of the *Roman Church*; must not that Person, or those Persons, be *infallible* in the Exercise of it; that is, Is not *Infallibility* a Consequence of *Authority*? Or, at least, must not the said Authority have the same Effect as *Infallibility*, namely, produce an intire Submission of Mind and Actions in the People subject to the said Authority?

19. IF there be *no Authority* among Men in *Matters of Faith*; and if every Man has a Right to judge for himself in Matters of Faith; Can the Civil Magistrate have a Right to enact by Law any *Articles* (meaning such Articles as have no Relation to the Peace of Civil Society) as *Matters of Faith*, by rewarding Men to maintain them, and by punishing those who oppose them, or any way putting them upon a [I-160] worse Foot for their Opposition, than other Subjects? Does he not hereby set up for an *Authority in Matters of Faith*, and invade the Right of *private Judgment*?

20. IF Men have a Right of *private Judgment in Matters of Faith*, Ought the Civil Magistrate to hinder them from being free and impartial in the Use of their private Judgment?

21. Is being rewarded for maintaining certain *Articles as Matters of Faith*, and being punished, or suffering for opposing them, proper to produce a free and impartial Use of our Judgments, in relation to the Truth or Falshood of those *Matters of Faith*?

C.

**A LETTER to a Clergyman, shewing the Impossibility of assenting to what we do not understand.** ↩

REVEREND SIR,

LAST Night I was surprised with yours of the 24th, relating to a Conversation between us at Mr. B—'s, (above a Year since) wherein you say, That *I maintained several Paradoxes*, the *main* whereof was, *That a Man [I-161] cannot possibly give his Assent to what he does not understand*: But that you might possibly fall short in the Defence of what you espoused; and besides, was not solicitous what Answers you gave me; and therefore now write to me to prove the Falshood of the *Paradox* before-mentioned, and (if I think you fail in it) to desire me to lay your *Mistakes* before you.

I HAVE read over your Letter four or five times, in order to comply with you; but not understanding what it is you say with respect to the Point in question, I cannot possibly do it: For while I understand not, I can neither submit to the Force of what you say, nor can I give you any Answer to it. Understanding is with me not only a necessary Part of religious Belief, but ought to be an Ingredient in all Reasoning, and common Discourse; and I can no more propose to talk about what I do not understand, than I can believe what I do not understand.

HOWEVER, determining to write to you, I will endeavour to put you in the best Method of Conviction I am able, though without any manner of Design to convince you. For I desire you only to understand this Letter, as *a Letter for a Letter*.

SINCE you proposed to convince me of the Falshood of a Proposition which I advanced [I-162] and explained at large to you, your Business was to refute it in the Sense which I explained it. But, as far as I can understand your Letter, you seem not to me to enter at all into the Question.

FOR, *First*, If you did, How could you make my Assent to *Relations of Matters of Fact done before I was born, and Relations of foreign Countries which I never saw*, to be proper Instances to convince me, that *I can't assent to what I do not understand*; and appeal to my *Experience* in the Case? which I must tell you is against you: And I assure you, That I know not, that I assent to any Proposition about Facts, whether they be past or present, or about Things done at *Rome* or in *England*, but what I understand.

2dly, If you did enter into the Question, How could you imagine it incumbent on me to shew, *That whatever bears no Relation to my Understanding, can bear none to any other*? What has *that* to do with the Question in Dispute? The Question in Dispute is as consistent with our Ignorance of Ten thousand Things that exist, and with the Supposition of other Beings knowing more than we do, as any Proposition that can be advanced, and by no means supposes our Knowledge to reach the Extent of Things. What I affirm is,

“That what [I-163] cannot be understood by me, cannot be expressed to me in a Proposition; and what cannot be expressed to me in a Proposition, cannot be assented to by me.”

3dly, If you entered into the Question, How could you imagine these Words of St. *Paul*, *We know in part, and we prophesy in part*, to be *decisive against me*? Where is the Connection, *We know in part, and we prophesy in part*; Ergo, We can assent to what we do not understand? For my part, I am so much a Stranger to this way of arguing, that the Connection is to me as remote, as if you had argued; *I am a Divine of the Church of England, as by Law established*: Ergo, The Laity must assent to what they cannot understand.

BUT to proceed to what I principally intend: The Proposition which you call a *Paradox*, is, in my Opinion, self-evident to those who are capable of Thinking, and understanding the Terms; is the Foundation of all Discourse and Reasoning; and unless Two Men agree in it, they want a common Principle whereby to discourse and reason with one another, unless Discourse among Men be like Discourse among Jack-daws and Parrots, mere Sounds without Sense or Meaning (which I own is an Opinion I am not very remote from). And therefore I

can think of no better way [I-164] than to explain the Proposition in such a manner as you may understand it: And if what I say supposes the Thing in Dispute; viz. *That you must understand what I say, before you can assent to it*; I cannot help it, till I can find out a way to inform you without making you understand.

1. ALL Assent, whatever, is to some Proposition.

2. ALL Propositions whatever, whether they relate to Speculations or Matters of Fact, consist of Words or Terms that have each of them a distinct Meaning; and every Proposition must at least have Three Words or Terms, the Extremes whereof are either denied or affirmed to have some Agreement with one another.

3. ASSENT to a Proposition is an Assent to the Meaning, or the Thing signified by the Terms of a Proposition, and to no more than is signified by the Terms.

4. KNOWING the Meaning of the Terms of a Proposition, is what I call understanding a Proposition.

ALL this I take to be self-evident with relation to all Propositions, whether they proceed from God or Man, whether they teach us Matter of Fact or Speculation; and to put you in a way of apprehending it, I will put Three [I-165] Cases, which will comprehend the whose Dispute about Mysteries.

*First*, SUPPOSE God, for the Information of all Mankind, causes a Book to be published in *Welsh*, which, among others, contains the following Proposition, *Three distinct Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (each of which is perfect God by himself) constitute one God*. Now the State of my Mind, with respect to this Case, while I understand not the Sense of the Words in *Welsh*, is, that I am ignorant of the *Meaning* of God's Words, and consequently, do not assent to that Meaning, which is signified by them; but knowing God to be Truth itself, as soon as I do understand what God says, I am ready to give my Assent to it.

*2dly*, LET the Proposition be in *English*, the Case is just the same. If the Terms are used in Ten thousand Senses, and no Two *English* Authors agree in putting the same Sense or Meaning on them, and God does not any-where declare what he means by those Terms, I am as much at a loss as if he spoke in *Welsh*, and must only say, that I am ready to assent as soon as I know to what.

*Thirdly* and *Lastly*, LET us suppose, that God publishes the foregoing Proposition, and does at the same time only give us a partial and inadequate Conception of the Meaning of the [I-166] Terms, in respect of what they signify in the Minds of Angels, and other Beings more enlightened than ourselves: It is evident, that our Assent can only be to what God thinks fit us reveal; what he with-holds from us, is not signified to us by those Terms; and as to that dark Part, we can only profess our Ignorance, and be ready to assent to more whenever he reveals more. And here I think it proper to answer a Question you put to me, *Whether I admit or assent to any thing as true or probable, which is not in all its Parts the Object of my Understanding?* To which I answer, That so much Sense and Meaning as is conveyed to me about any thing by the Terms of a Proposition, I may admit or assent to as true or probable: But that Part of any thing which is not conveyed to me by the Terms of a Proposition, is not a Part of a Proposition to me, and by consequence not the Subject of Assent.

So that, upon the Whole, I take it to be clear, self-evident Matter of Fact, that *a Man cannot possibly assent to what he does not understand*; and by consequence, all perfectly *mysterious Propositions*, and so much of any Proposition as is *mysterious*, are Matters about which we can exercise no other Act of our Minds but of Humility, in professing our Ignorance, and a Readiness to be informed about them.

[I-167]

PURSUANT to these Notions, I readily profess to you, (and I think I may do it without Vanity, since it is all Mens Duty to be Christians) That I think I understand all the fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith; and that hereby I am *ready to give a Reason of the Hope that is in me*, and defend it against all Objections; which I think every Man is the more able to do, with respect to any Cause, the better he understands it: But how any Man can think himself a Christian, who owns that he understands not some of the Articles necessary to be believed to make him *one*; how he can preach a Religion to others, which he professes not to understand; that is, how he can make others understand what he does not understand himself; and how others can be persuaded to think themselves either the wiser or the better for hearing what they don't understand, (one of which you must allow to be the End of Preaching) would be great Mysteries to me, did I not, by conversing with Mankind, see, that they generally consist of Two Sorts, learned Parrots, and unlearned Parrots: To the first whereof, *Absurdity* is the peculiar Privilege; and to the latter, *Ignorance*: For they have few or no Notions, and no Opportunity of taking those *Academical Pains*, which are absolutely necessary to make Men absurd to any Degree.

[I-168]

ANOTHER Paradox that you fancy I advanced was, *That the Distinction of Things above and contrary to Reason, is a Distinction without a Difference*. Whether I said so or no, I remember not: But as to the *Distinction*, I answer briefly, That tell me clearly and distinctly what you mean by the Words, (for I understand not your Explication of them) and then I will tell you whether it be a Distinction without a Difference. Till you define the Terms, so that I can know what you mean, I can understand nothing by them, and by consequence neither affirm nor deny any thing about that Distinction.

THOUGH your Letter contains so much which I do not understand, yet, for your Satisfaction, I will point out some Questions started by you, which I do understand: As,

*First*, WHETHER I am sincere or no (implied in these Words, that *You hope I am sincere*).

*2dly*, WHETHER I was in Jest, or in Earnest (implied in your doubting whether I was *serious* with you).

*3dly*, WHETHER I believe the Scriptures or no (implied in your saying, *If the Authority of St. Paul might decide the Controversy, I must be silenced for ever, &c.*).

[I-169]

BUT these Matters being purely personal, and no ways relating to the Question, I give you no Trouble about them. Besides, they are of no Use in a private Letter, how good Arguments soever they may be thought to clear a Point in Divinity, either from the Pulpit or the Press.

*I am, SIR,*

*Your humble Servant,*

C.

NUMBER XX.  
*Of Chaplains.* ↩

*Wednesday, June 1. 1720.*

AS between the several Acts of the most grave and solemn Tragedies, it is allowed to divert the Company with a Dance, or a Song, so in this Paper, I shall descend to entertain [I-170] my Readers with a Dissertation upon *Chaplains*, who are a Sort of expensive Domestics, which none but great Families can entertain. How or when this venerable Piece of Household-stuff became first in Use, is not certainly determined, that I know of; but it is certain, that he is left intirely out of the Roll of Ecclesiastical Officers mentioned in the *New Testament*; his Use and Importance being not thought of, or forgot to be mentioned, by St. *Paul*, though not by Mr. *Collier*, who has supplied the Omission of the Apostle, and discovered the same.

It is likely, That *Chaplains* were first invented and brought into Fashion, in the dark and barbarous Ages; and so Custom has continued what Ignorance began. To these Days of Darkness is owing the marvellous Increase of lazy Monks, and cheating Friars; in which black Swarm of Reverend Idlers, probably, first crept in this *supernumerary Levite*. It is well known, that worthless and designing Priests have always advanced and nourished Superstition, being very sensible, that it would in Return nourish and multiply Them. Thus Priestcraft and Bigotry beget each other; and being so near a-kin, perpetually maintain the mutual Relation.

[I-171]

THE Office of a *Chaplain* is, according to Mr. *Collier*, to Pray for, Bless, and give Absolution to those he is concerned for ----- “All which, says *he*, are Acts of Authority and Jurisdiction.” If this last Assertion be true, it is enough to destroy all Charity; since at this rate of Reasoning, I ought to be afraid of throwing a Farthing to an Alms-woman, lest she should be thereby provoked to Pray for and Bless me, and by that means acquire Jurisdiction over me. And who would not rather deny his Charity, than give away his Liberty?

To shew that Mr. *Collier* is very much in Earnest in bestowing this same Authority upon this his *Domestic Parson*, he puts a Rod in his Hand against the Master of the Family himself, whom, it seems, it is his Right to counsel, exhort and reprove; which Offices, he says, are “inconsistent with the Condition of a Servant.” The Chaplain therefore is, in the first Place, a much Wiser Man, as well as a more Holy, than my Lord is; and in the second Place, it is his Duty to owe my Lord no Duty at all in the Capacity of a Servant to a Superior.

AFTER he has put the Clergy in “joint Commission with the Angels themselves,” as he says God has done; it is no wonder that [I-172] he will not allow the meanest of them to be any Man’s Servant, how great soever. He therefore reasons against the 13th of *Henry VIII*. because it calls the *Patrons of Chaplains their Masters*. If some of them “formerly were Stewards and Clerks of the Kitchen to People of Distinction,” as he says Bishop *Latimer* complains some of them were forced to be in his Time; I cannot see for all that how they could, according to Mr. *Collier*, suffer by it in their Dignity and Reputations; because, for as good Reasons as before, their gathering the Rent, and going to Market for Provision, might give them Jurisdiction over the Person who employed them. I cannot therefore join with some of the Critics in censuring the Author of the *Scornful Lady*, for dispatching *Parson Roger* in a Morning, with his Basket under his Arm, to scour the Roosts, and gather Eggs; the same being a primitive Branch of his Office, if we may believe the aforesaid Bishop.

BUT though

“People, misapprehending the Priest’s Office, entertain a *Chaplain* upon the same Account they do their Footmen, only to garnish the Table, and stuff out the Figure of the Family” (*Collier’s Essays, Part I. p. 204, 205.*); yet “for a Patron to account such a *Consecrated Person his Priest*, as if he [I-173] belonged to him as a Servant, is, in effect, to challenge Divine Honours, and to set himself up for



a God” (p. 207.).

Mr. *Lesley* puts the same Thing stronger, in fewer Words, and will not suffer any Man (Prince or Subject) to say, *my Parson*, or *my Chaplain*, in any other Sense than we say, *my King*, or *my God*.

So that, in the Sentiments of these Reverend Gentlemen, every one who hires a Chaplain, hires a Master. Take Warning then, O ye rich Men, Nobles, and Princes of the Earth; and due Submission and Allegiance pay unto these your *Spiritual Sovereigns*, whom you have taken into your Service to be your *Superiors*; and to whom you give *Bread* and *Wages* to exercise DOMINION over you.

AFTER all, Mr. *Collier* is so good as to allow “the Master of the Family, in the Absence of the Priest, to supply his Place, as far as *lawfully he may*, that is, in Praying and giving Thanks at Meat” (p. 200). But he must not Pray to God to Bless his Family, and to forgive them their Sins; for this would be to *Usurp* the Authority of *his Lord*, the *Chaplain*.

BEFORE I have done with Mr. *Collier*, I would ask him one Question, and that is, Whether the Chaplains of Bishops are of the same superior Importance and Authority with the [I-174] Chaplains of Laymen; because the Bishops themselves are qualified to be their own Chaplains; if the saying of Domestic Prayers, and Blessing their own Table, is allowed by him to be consistent with their Ecclesiastical Dignity?

MILTON, though otherwise a Man of great Parts and Merit, yet wanting either the Sense or the Grace to see the Usefulness and Excellency of these adopted Sovereigns, speaks of them with too much Contempt. He says that

“In State perhaps they may be listed among the upper Serving-men of some great Houshold, and be admitted to some such Place as may style them the Sewers or the Yeomen-Ushers of Devotion, where the Master is too resty, or too rich, to say his own Prayers, or to bless his own Table.” (*Vol. ii. of his Works in Folio*, p. 509.)

BUT this was the Case only in his Time; for a *Chaplain* now-a-days is looked upon as a more honourable Piece of Furniture. After a Coach and Six, the next Trappings of Domestic Grandeur are a Page, Plate, and a Parson. He swells the Houshold Pomp and Luxury, and is often taken for Pride more than Prayers. Formerly, his Appetite was uncourteously restrained; he was only permitted to riot in Roast Beef; and Sir *Crape* and the first Course were removed together. But now [I-175] he has better Luck, having, for the most part, obtained a general Toleration for Custard.

NOR are the Times mended with Mr. *Chaplain* in one Instance only: In Days of Yore he was humbly content with *Abigail*, and my Lady’s Woman was thought a suitable Match for the *Houshold Priest* (as Mr. *Collier* Christens him); but now he does not make that Use of her, but leaves her, and flies at higher Game. If my Lady be single, the Doctor has a Chance for making his Fortune; and when he cannot marry her, he can sometimes sell her: of which I could give Instances, but for the Regard which I bear to the Quality and the Priesthood. If my Lady be already married, he has still Happiness and good Fortune in his Eye, provided she be but Young; and even though she be Old, provided but Superstitious and Bigotted: so that whether her Person be agreeable, or her Understanding crazy, he has his Ends; for he has a *Parson’s Barn*, and nothing comes amiss.

It must be owned farther, that a *Chaplain* in a Great Family is a useful Body for most Purposes, except that of his Function: He is often a facetious Person, and his Jokes and Puns keep the upper Part of the Family in a good Mood; for, as to the *Inferior*, he deigns not to

speak to them; unless to insult them, and thereby teach them the great Respect which [I-176] they owe him. He moreover graciously condescends to pay into all the Actions and Behaviour of the Servants, by which he keeps them in Obedience and Fear, at least of himself.

*Scire volunt secreta domus, atque inde timeri.*

BESIDES, he is so courteous, that he meddles with all Family-Affairs, unasked; and interposes with his Counsel and Authority, unthanked. From hence it comes, that he and the Steward can never agree: For the Steward (like a saucy Layman, as he is) will be pretending to know his own Business as well as Mr. *Chaplain*, who is a *Consecrated Person*. The Family therefore is eternally divided into Two Factions between them, but the *Doctor* has the Secret of securing the Women on his Side, and so always gets the Better.

THE Doctor is likewise a considerable Person for divers other Arts and Accomplishments. He throws a Bowl with more Skill, and follows it with more Activity, than any Man (not in Orders) upon the Green. He is also a trusty Toper in the Family: He has an uncommon Palate in the Discernment of Liquors, and an uncommon Zeal for their Consumption. Nor is his great Dexterity at Whisk of trivial Moment: His Talent in this Branch of his Duty is so signal, that my Lady seldom fails chusing, or [I-177] rather requiring him for her own Partner, if he be not altogether snapped up by the Daughter for hers.

AFTER all this, who can wonder that our *Houshold Priest* holds up his Head, and adores himself? He is an hourly Witness of his own Importance and Figure; and finding himself an extraordinary Body, it is nothing strange, that he demands extraordinary Treatment. As little to be admired is the Erectness of his Mien, and the dignified Primness of his Manner; how else should he be himself, and differ from all other Men? His Authority, and the Custom of the Cloth, give him a Right to Contradiction; and if he love State and courtly Pomp, What Layman does not? If he hate to see a Brother peeping through Timber, or wriggling in a String, who can blame the Workings of Self-love? If the *German Princes* are under his Displeasure for sacrilegiously admitting their Pages to say Grace; so are all they who make bold to cut their own Corns, under the Frowns of that famous Artist *Don Saltero of Chelsea*.

To conclude with a grave Paragraph; I am afraid it too often happens, that this same *Houshold Priest*, who is taken into a Family to sanctify it, proves a Disturber of its Repose, and a Foe to its Welfare. He is a Spy upon the Wealthy and the Great, for the ill Ends of his Order. If he [I-178] has the Ear of his Patron, he can, by alarming, his Conscience, or stroaking his Vanity, influence him to turn the Patrimony of his Children into a Gift to the Altar: And so a Family of Innocents are streightened, or ruined, to inlarge the Pride and Income of a worthless Vicar, or to rear up a graceless Mob, for the Interest and Support of Priestcraft and Slavery. So that the Public itself suffers in no small Degree from the malignant Influence which designing *Chaplains* have in Great Houses. How many Noble Families are by them inflamed with an unsocial Bitterness of Spirit, against all those who inoffensively think for themselves; and are tainted with the vile Principles of Vassalage to any Authority, civil or sacred, which these their Spiritual Governors shall plead for!

*P. S.* THIS Paper being intended to expose the ridiculous Privileges claimed in Behalf of Chaplains, as if they were of Divine Institution; and the ill Use which they make of their Influence over weak Minds: Nothing here said is meant against any Gentleman's taking into his Family a pious and agreeable Clergyman, under the Title of a Chaplain; who, if he possesses an honest and beneficent Heart, with Affability and good Breeding, is, no doubt, an amiable Character. But as to those little, sour, unbred Bigots, whom I have frequently seen in [I-179] that Station, I do not think, that they ought to be admitted into the Conversation of Gentlemen, or suffered to have any Concern, either with their Children or Servants.

## NUMBER XXI.

**A Comparison *between the High-Church and the Quakers.****Wednesday, June 8. 1720.*

THE Clergy of our National Church are Spiritual Officers, appointed by Order of the Civil Magistrate (like Churchwardens, Overseers of the Poor, Constables, and other Parish-Officers) to act according to his Law; which is their Rule, and which has interpreted the Bible for them in the Thirty-nine Articles, Homilies, Liturgy, Canons, Injunctions, and other Institutions. The chief Design of their Appointment is to instruct Men in Religion and Morality, or to make Men wiser and better than they would be without their Assistance. [I-180] To that End they are hired, and paid a great Revenue; which, by the means of Lands, Tythes, Rents, Salaries, Fees, and Perquisites, is supposed to amount to Two Millions *per Annum*; wherein they greatly differ from the aforesaid Parish-Officers, who perform many real Services to Society without any particular Reward, as is, in many Cases, the certain Duty, which Men of the same Society owe to one another. But as making Men wise and good, are the very best Things which can be done for them, both in relation to their Condition in this World, and the next: So every Man ought to think this Revenue *well bestowed*, if Men are made more *wise* and *good* in any Proportion to the Charge; and on the other Side *ill bestowed*, if Men are not in the least improved in Knowledge and Virtue; much more, if they are rendered *more ignorant*, and *worse*, by the Teaching and Influence of their Guides.

WE are justly concerned how we part with our Money in other Cases, how it is laid out and managed, and whether what we receive in lieu of it be worth our Money, especially when the Sum is considerable. It is therefore of great Importance to us to consider the State of this Affair, wherein so much is expended; that, in case the Clergy do not answer the Ends of their Calling, and not deserve their Revenues, [I-181] we may take proper Measures to make them do so: for it is in the Power of us of the Laity, who almost wholly chuse and constitute the Legislature, to make the Clergy useful; and it is either through our Ignorance, or Knavery, or both, if we do not make them useful.

Now it seems to me, that the Toleration or Liberty of Conscience granted by Law in *England*, gives us an Opportunity of examining this Matter, beyond what can be done in *Popish* or other Countries, where no such Toleration is allowed. We have a numerous Sect, or People among us, distinguished by the Name of *Quakers*, who have no Spiritual Officers, with any Wages, Hire, or Salary, whose peculiar Business it is to Teach; but every Man among them does freely of himself, and *gratis*, communicate his Knowledge, both publicly and privately, according to his Ability, whenever he judges it proper so to do: And therefore we may easily make a Comparison in the Case, between the Wisdom and Virtue of the common People of the National Church, and the Wisdom and Virtue of the *Quakers*, (who have no Quality or Gentry among them; but consist of Tradesmen, Artificers, Farmers, Servants, and Labourers) and thereby make a [I-182] just Judgment, whether the Two Millions *per Annum* are *well* or *ill* bestowed.

No Man will deny, that the *Quakers* are born with the same natural Parts as the Churchmen. It will also be manifest, that they improve their natural Parts by the Knowledge of what the Clergy esteem the most important and sublime Points of Religion, under their general, diffused, *unhired* Ministry; equally at least with the Members of the Church, under the Direction of their Clergy, *hired* for Wages: For by free Conversation with both Sorts, you will find, that the *Quakers* understand as well the Nature and Attributes of God, the Doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, the Satisfaction, the Incarnation of God, and other such Points, and express themselves as clearly about them, as Churchmen; and I presume, that this Matter will

appear so clear, as not to admit of the least Doubt. I do confess, that the *Quakers* have some *Errors*, (for what Man is or can be free from Error?) But as to those *Errors*, I think Two Things may be offered in Excuse of them.

FIRST, I observe in general, with the most ingenious and Reverend Mr. *NORRIS*, (in his *Two Treatises of Divine Light*, Tract II. p. 32.) who says, *That he cannot think Quakerism inconsiderable, as the Principles of it are [I-183] laid down and managed by Mr. BARCLAY. That great and general Contempt they lie under, does not hinder him from thinking the Sect of the Quakers to be far the most considerable of any that divide from the Church, in case the Quakerism that is generally held, be the same with that which Mr. BARCLAY has delivered to the World for such; whom he takes to be so great a Man, that he professes freely, that he had rather engage against an Hundred BELLARMINS, HARDINGS, and STAPLETONS, than with One BARCLAY.*

SECONDLY, I observe, that the *Quakers* seem very excusable in respect to several of the *Errors* wherewith they are charged; and that their Neighbours, if they would do as they desire to be done unto, may justly pardon them. For, as to their Opinions about Tythes, and paying Wages to Clergy, (which are deemed fundamental *Errors*, and judged by the Clergy in their Books against the *Quakers* to be a sort of *Atheism*) they have it to say in their Excuse, that *Tythes*, which were a Part of the ritual Law of the *Jews*, are, as such, abolished under the Gospel, which has repealed the whole ritual Law. It seems also strange to them, that *Embassadors*, (as the Clergy pretend to be) or *Negotiators*, should claim Money from those to whom they are sent; that it appears [I-184] more strange, that the Clergy, who pretend to be Successors in Embassy to *Christ* and his Apostles, should claim Tythes or Money; and thereby suppose our Blessed Saviour himself, and his Apostles, to have begun that Claim: Therefore they allege, that if the Clergy are only voluntary Embassadors or Negotiators, they ought to bear their own Charges; and if only *Ministers* or Servants, they should be paid their Wages by those who *hire* them, and not claim an independent Maintenance; and herein they pretend to follow the Primitive Christians, *who* (according to the Reverend and Learned Dr. *REEVES*, in his *Apologies*, &c. Vol. I. p. 44.) *would not pay Taxes for the Maintenance of the Heathen Temples*. And indeed, there is no Colour to make Tythes due *Jure Divino*, that Point being fully determined on the Side of the *Quakers*, by that accomplished Scholar and Divine, Dr. *Prideaux*, in his *Original and Right of Tythes*; and besides, it is a Matter of Contest among the Clergy, to which Sort of them an independent Maintenance does by Divine Right belong.

As to the *Quakers* Doctrines of Passive Obedience, or taking patiently all manner of Affronts and Injuries, and refusing to bear Arms on any Occasion; it is known, that herein they follow St. *JUSTIN MARTYR*, *ORIGEN*, [I-185] *TERTULLIAN*, St. *CYPRIAN*, *LACTANTIUS*, St. *BASIL*, *SALVIAN*, and others the most Learned and Antient of the Primitive Fathers.

AND as to their Principle of *not Swearing at all*, they follow *the Fathers of the Five First Centuries*, *who* (according to the most learned Dr. *WHITBY*, in *Dissert. de Script. Interp.* p. 164.) *all agreed, that Oaths of all Kinds were Unlawful to Christians*; those Fathers understanding our Saviour's Words, *Swear not at all*, universally; which, indeed, seem suited to the Notion, as they were the very Language, of the *Essenes*, a Sect of *Jews* in our Saviour's Time, who maintained all Oaths to be unlawful.

It will be difficult to find one *Quaker* that cannot read, unless he has been educated and bred up in the Church, and became a Convert to *Quakerism*: Whereas I will venture to affirm, that Half the Common People of the Church, especially in the Country, cannot read a Word.

THE *Quakers* are great Readers of the Bible; and it is their Principle to endeavour to *make the Best* of that Divine Book; which, though containing infinite Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, yet as it is a perfect Rule of Faith to the whole Word, is a plain and most [I-186] intelligible Book, and must naturally improve the *Quakers*, more than it does those Churchmen, who either cannot read, or do not read the Bible at all, or not so much as the *Quakers*; or that think they are *not to make the Best of their Bibles without any Restraint*. I dare to be so unfashionable as to assert, that the Bible may, and will, improve the Readers thereof; notwithstanding Dr. *SOUTH* says of a Part of that Holy Book, that it *either finds Men mad, or makes them so*; and that Dr. *REEVES*, in Derogation of its Divine Precepts, thinks fit to suppose, that *Quakers*, by reading the Bible, become *stark Bible-mad* (*Preface to Apologies, &c. p. 11.*).

BUT there is one Point wherein the *Quakers* greatly exceed the Churchmen in Understanding, and whereof the meanest among them is firmly persuaded; and that is, that *Every Man is to judge for himself in Matters of Religion*: Whereas few Churchmen are clear, as Men, Christians, and Protestants, ought to be in this Matter; which is the Foundation of all good Sense, Christianity, and our glorious Reformation from the *Worst Priestcraft*, *POPERY*. This Principle naturally produces Knowledge. For the Use of the Understanding improves the Faculty; as delivering up the Understanding to Priests or Guides, sinks and [I-187] debases it. And accordingly the *Quakers* reason and act very nicely in their Affairs, as a Politic Body, in relation to Marriage, Orphans, Care of their Poor, &c. and Particulars among them; understand Trade, and the Business of the World, and how to live in it, as well as any Men whatsoever.

As to the Comparison, which are the *Best Men*, *Quakers* or Churchmen; I suppose, it will not be denied, but that the *Quakers* are as good Men; as good in their Families; as good Neighbours; as Quiet, Temperate, Chaste, Sober, free from Passion, Industrious; as clear from the gross Crimes which fill the Gaols, and expose Men to the Pillory and Hanging; as Charitable in their Sentiments to those who differ from them; as great Enemies to Persecution; as true to Liberty and Property, as any Churchmen; and, in fine, as good Subjects, and as loyal to King *GEORGE*, (though Loyalty be the distinguishing Principle and Glory of our Church) as any professed Follower of Dr. *SACHEVEREL*, *LUKE MILBOURNE*, or other swearing loyal Divine.

SINCE, therefore, it is undeniably evident, that the *Quakers* are at least as *wise* and as *good*, *without* any Charge to the Public, as Churchmen are *with it*; I conceive that it is incumbent on every one, who does not envy [I-188] the Clergy their Preferments, to endeavour to find out some other Way to make them as useful as possible to Mankind, and to put them upon such an Establishment as may enable them to deserve all their Power and Riches; which shall be the Subject of some future Papers.

C.

## NUMBER XXII.

***Priestcraft corrupts every thing, and perverts the Use of Words.*** ↪

*Wednesday, June 15. 1720.*

POETS tell us, that *Midas* changed every thing which he touched into Gold, and *Medusa's* Head, every one who saw it, into Stone: But Priestcraft is yet of a more mischievous Nature; for That converts all who come within its Influence into Idiots or Lunatics; and every Virtue or good Quality of the Mind into Nonsense or Roguery.

[I-189]

EVERY Creature and Plant assimilate the Food or Nourishment which they receive, into their own Substance: The Toad converts into Poison the same Juices, of which the Bee makes Honey: The same Breath, blown into different Instruments, makes good or harsh Music; it is no wonder therefore, if that which is all Corruption itself, should corrupt and spoil every thing else which touches or comes near it.

It has so mangled and perverted the Signification of Words, and the Nature of Things, that Language is rendered useless, or rather a Snare to Mankind: There is scarce a Sound or an Action, which has received the Stamp of a general Approbation, that has not lost its Meaning; and is stript of all Honesty to become Orthodox, and be made free of the *sacred Society*, as the *Popish* Priests are pleased to call themselves.

A BECOMING Zeal for the Glory of God, which ought to be a fervent Disposition of Mind to promote Holiness and Virtue amongst Men, by Softness, Persuasion, and Example, is now nothing but Party-Rage, an implacable and furious Hatred, and the Denunciation of Woe and mortal War against all, who do not believe just the same with us, and cut their Corns as we do: Moderation is become a [I-190] Vice, and esteemed to be Lukewarmness, and an Indifference to Religion and Goodness.

AN obstinate Bent of Mind, and a determinate Resolution to adhere to Opinions, the Truth of which we have never examined, never intend to examine, and for the most part, are not able to understand if we did, is what is called Constancy in the Faith; and to burn ourselves, or to fight with our best Friends till we can burn them, passes for Heroic and Christian Courage.

WE must shut out the Sun at Noon in a Summer's Day, to make use of Candle-light; and give up all our Senses, to submit to frail Authority. We are to believe every thing in exact Proportion as we cannot understand it, or as it appears absurd; and allow that alone to be true Faith, which contradicts the first Principles of Science. Reason, the only Light which God has given to Men, to distinguish Truth from Falshood, Virtue from Vice, Religion from Imposture, is decried; and the Use of it deemed impious and dangerous.

PERSECUTION of our Fellow-Creatures, Fellow-Subjects, and Fellow-Christians, for doing the best Actions which they are capable of doing, (that is, worshipping God in the Manner which they think to be most acceptable to [I-191] him) is called serving the Almighty, and promoting his Religion. The ruining and destroying our Neighbours, (whom we are commanded to love as ourselves) and cutting their Throats, is having Pity upon their poor Souls; and the acting against all the Dictates of Nature, and Precepts of the Gospel, is Christianity, and doing the Will of our Saviour.

ENTHUSIASTS, fanatical, melancholy, monkish, recluse and sequestred Persons, are esteemed *the Religious*; and are supposed to know the other World, in Proportion as they know little of this. Philosophers, and Men of Wit or sound Knowledge, are generally accused of Infidelity and Atheism: Nay, the cardinal Virtues themselves cannot escape; but without the Belief of certain fashionable Speculations, are accounted only *splendida Peccata*, and those who possess them are treated with Ignominy; and indeed, none are thought fit for Heaven by Gentlemen of this Cast, but such as no Man of common Sense would care to keep Company with upon Earth.

CELIBACY is esteemed a Virtue in some Churches, and not discouraged in others; and the disobeying the great Dictates of Nature, and the positive Command of God, *to increase and multiply*, is miscalled Chastity; and the wasting our Time in running up and down [I-192] from Church to Chapel, from Chapel to Church, to hear *Masses*, and idle Harangues, and being perfectly useless to Society, and good for no one Thing in the World, is called by the *Popish* Priests *Devotion* and *Godliness*; as if the Almighty could be any way served but by

doing good to his Creatures.

POORNESS and Dejection of Mind is called Meekness of Spirit; and a Readiness to submit to Injuries and Impositions is Christian Humility; Stifling our Senses is Submission and Deference to Authority; and our best Searches, and most sincere Inquiries after Truth, are called the Desires of Novelty, and curious and forbidden Studies: The doubting of any thing, which our Guides think it their Interest to tell us, or shewing the Weakness of their Arguments, is Scepticism, and renouncing the Faith; and a hearty Concern for the Honour of Almighty God, and the Good of Men, is often interpreted to be downright Atheism; and to communicate with our Christian Brethren, when we can do it with a good Conscience, is Hypocrisy; unless we do it too when we think it sinful.

AN Attempt to oblige the Clergy to keep the Laws, which they have sworn to, and the Articles which they have subscribed, is to oppose received Opinions, and to disturb Points already settled. An Endeavour to preserve our [I-193] legal Constitution is Sedition, Faction, and being *given to Change*; and a generous Love for all Mankind, and the Liberty of our Country, with a noble Resolution to venture Life, and all which is valuable here below, for that glorious Cause, is Rebellion, and worse than the Sin of Witchcraft.

WASTING, macerating, and torturing our Bodies by Fasting and Penances, is sanctifying our Souls; and to reject and throw back the Benevolence and bountiful Gifts of indulgent Providence, is to shew and pay our grateful Acknowledgments to his Goodness; as if he gave us any thing, not to use and enjoy it; but we were to accept these Blessings only in Trust for the Clergy, and so live poorly our selves, that they may riot in Luxury, Profuseness and Pride: Which they have seldom failed to do, when they have had the Means of doing it; carnal Things being observed best to suit with spiritual Minds.

PLAYING Monkey Tricks at Church passes amongst the Papists for the Worship of God; and they go to ghostly Dancing-masters to know how to accost Him fashionably: The Failing in a Ceremony, the Omission of a Bow, the not Filing to the Right or Left readily, or not Adjusting their Motions to the Tune and Time of the Organs, are all dangerous Errors, [I-194] and savour much of Heresy; and the *Worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth* only, is Disobedience to the Church, and little better, if not worse, than Atheism: The decking up, and dressing of Churches, and giving the Deity fine Cloaths, is Decency, and doing him Honour.

CONSECRATION, which is the Appointment or Approbation of Places, Persons, or inanimate Things, to be used only in the immediate Service of God, (and which may be so applied indifferently with any Ceremony, or with none at all) is turned by the *Romish* Priests into a sort of Incantation or spiritual Juggling. By Virtue of a little Holy Water, looking towards the *East*, mumbling over a few cunning Words, certain Motions of the Hand and Head, and by the Force of Grimace and Mummery, the said Places, Persons and Things become sacred, and the Holiness is transferred from the Minds of the Communicants to the Ground, the Wainscot, and the Carcass and Cloaths of the Priest; and so the Devotion due to Almighty God is changed into a senseless Idolatry to as senseless Men and Idols.

PRAYERS are turned by them into Curses, and Sermons into Invectives and Libels: Benevolence and Good-will towards Men, and even Charity itself, which is comprehensive of all [I-195] the Virtues, and without which Faith and Hope signify nothing, and which is not confined to Persons, Nations, or Languages, to Sects nor Opinions, but ought to be as free as the Elements, and diffusive as the Animal Creation, is changed into Faction, Partiality, and often Profuseness, to support a Party, and a Combination against Mankind, who do not think and act as we do.

BUT no Parts of Speech have had so ill Fortune, as Scripture-Language, and even amongst some Protestants: Appellatives, and the Names of complex Ideas, are often left untranslated, that they may pass for real Beings, and signify whatever the Priests have Occasion for; and sometimes, where they have been translated, false or unfair Meanings have been assigned to them, and they have been made to convey a quiet different Sense from what they import in Scripture: The Word *Ecclesia* or Assembly is translated *Church*, which *there* always signifies the *Christian People*, and in our Articles is defined to be the *Congregation of the Faithful*, but is now generally used only for the Clergy; and the Word *Episcopus* (which in *English* is *Overseer*) is Englished *Bishop*; so that Women, and the ignorant Croud, are fully satisfied, that they have found in Scripture a *Lord of Parliament*, and a [I-196] *Diocesan Prelate*, with a Mitre upon his Head, and a Crosier in his Hand; and whenever they hear or read the Word *Presbyter*, they fancy they see a Parson beating his Cushion in a Pulpit, and believe him to be *Jure Divino*: Instances of this kind are endless.

EVEN Literature itself is perverted, and instead of being made to improve Mens natural Faculties, is used to extinguish or stifle the first Principles of Knowledge. Seminaries have been erected and endowed to teach Men backward: The Youth, at a very great Expence, learn to be Blockheads, and accomplished Dunces; and spend the first and most improveable Part of their Manhood to be finished in Folly. The Discovery of Printing, which brought about the *Reformation*, is used to destroy it; and, like the *Scotchman's Monkey*, is made to bite every one but him who has the sole Custody of the Machine.

OF all, or most of these Heads, I shall treat separately, in order to undeceive Mankind, and to manumit them from the Fraud and Tyranny of *Popish* and popishly-affected Clergymen; by shewing, that they *now do*, and *ever did*, make use of all their Influence over the stupid and unhappy Laity, and of all the Power and Riches which they have been ever trusted with, to drive Religion and Virtue [I-197] from the Face of the Earth; and therefore have always endeavoured to turn the worst Things into the best, and the best into the worst.

ONE Drop of Priestcraft is enough to contaminate the Ocean.

T.

### NUMBER XXIII. *Of ZEAL.* ↩

*Wednesday, June 22. 1720.*

I Do not know any Word, in any Language, which, next the Word *Church*, has so much Wickedness and Roguery to answer for, as the Word *Zeal*. It is indeed an important and dreadful Monosyllable, which, when used with proper Gestures and Emphasis, can turn a Cutthroat into a Saint, and a Madman into a Martyr. It can commit Bloodshed and Butchery with innocent Hands, destroy Life and Property with a good Conscience, and dispeople Nations with Applause.

[I-198]

*TRUE Zeal is a sincere and warm Concern for the Glory of God, and the Spiritual Welfare of Mankind.* This Desinition seems to me to take in every Idea which ought to be annexed to the Word *Zeal*; and shews it to be a Virtue full of Affection, Meekness, Humanity and Benevolence, and void of all Choler, Bitterness, Ill-will, and Severity. This is its Character; and whatever contradicts it, is not *Zeal*, but *Rage*.

ESPECIAL Care ought therefore to be taken, effectually to distinguish true *Zeal* from false, and the Thing from the Pretence of it. For if it be not well grounded, it falls under the Apostle's Censure of a *Zeal*, which is *not according to Knowledge*. Of the latter Sort is that



with which crafty Men infatuate the credulous Multitude, who take their Religion upon Trust, and their Faith and Zeal at second Hand. Their Godliness consists in Prejudices, and a Set of Names. They hate Dissenters, because they do not come to Church, and because they are strict Observers of the *Lord's-day*, and seek God without Book: And they are *zealous* for the Church; but if you ask them what they mean by it, you will find it to be either the Organs, the Ring of Bells, or the Parson. They have a zealous Antipathy to a black Cloak, which is a certain Sign of a wrong Religion; and they have a doating Fondness for a black Gown, which is an infallible [I-199] Mark of the true Church: They therefore abhor and insult the former, and honour and bow down to the latter. This Temper and Behaviour in them are wonderful Demonstrations of the Spirit of the Gospel; and intitle them to the highest Favour and Approbation of their Spiritual Governors. At the time when Dr. *Sacheverel* was suffering the Law for Sedition, I asked one of his Mob, who was straggling at some Distance from the rest, in *Lincolns-Inn-Fields*, (as they were proceeding to demolish *Daniel Burgess's* Meeting-house) What provoked him to so much Outrage against *Daniel*, and his Congregation? He answered, *Because they had murdered King Charles the First*. I then asked him, What he knew concerning King *Charles the First*? Why, quoth he, *he was one of the Twelve Apostles; and Dr. Sacheverel is the best Friend he has in the World*. Here he swore a great Oath, and left me to pity the Ignorance and Frensy of the enchanted Crowd.

IGNORANCE is the Mother of this sort of *Zeal*, and Craft its Father: And as its Pedigree is vile, so is its Behaviour brutal and abominable. It is the Tool of Knavery and Design, and operates by Folly, Wickedness and Force. It is a Mastiff uncoupled, and hallooed at Conscience, Sobriety, and Peace; and set [I-200] on to devour every good Quality, itself possessing none. It is roused by Lyes, and animated by Liquor. It combats Truth with Curses, and Moderation with Blows. Its Courage is Madness, and it is bold through Blindness. It has never any Mercy upon others, and seldom upon itself. It takes the Word of its *Driver*; and mistakes Mischief for Merit, and his Word for God's. It is the most miserable of all Slaves; it is blind, and it is distracted; and its only Freedom is to act Outrages, and shed Blood. It is neither blessed with Enjoyment nor Rest. It boils with Anger; it burns with Envy; it is tortured with Hatred; it is hurried headlong by all the worst Passions. It is incapable of Happiness, and either deaf to Instruction, or undone by it: For the Moment it grows wiser, it dies.

How often do Ambition and Design work their own impious Ends, under the plausible Disguise of sanctified *Zeal*! Men are never weary of being deluded with Sounds; and a pious Word, artfully prostituted, and devoutly pronounced, will at any time lure them into the grossest Impostures, and push them on to commit the most inhuman Barbarities. Thus the Papists are first taught, that the Pope is a *Vice-God*, and the Representative of *Jesus Christ*; and that his *Zeal* for his own Revenues and [I-201] Dominions is *Zeal* for *Christ*, and his Church; and then it is an easy matter to persuade these poor Slaves and Bubbles to adopt such a Portion of the same *Zeal*, as will prompt them to poison, and murder, and plunder, and burn all those unhappy Schismatics, who continue so, rather than abandon their Senses, their Humanity, their Charity, and the Fear of God; all which are destructive of the Character of a *Zealot*. And thus both Papists and Protestants, being persuaded by their Priests, that all who, either through Reason or Grace, think differently from the said Priests, are in a State of Damnation, become further persuaded, that because they are to be damned, therefore they are to be undone; and so anticipate the Labour of the Devils, and add Misery to the Miserable. By this means, as *Satan* is the Almighty's Executioner, they make themselves *Satan's*; and such *Zeal* is at once the Instrument and Qualification of a *Dæmon*.

WHEN I see a grave Doctor proudly urging upon his Hearers the *Divine Right of Episcopacy*, which is just of as much Importance to Mankind as the *Divine Right of Geography*; I see presently into the Heart of the Man, and would lay any Wager, that he has a

burning Zeal to succeed St. *Peter* in the Divine Revenue and Lordship of some human Diocese; [I-202] or else courts some Bishop, with great *Zeal*, for his Lordship's Niece, or for a fat Benefice. And I cannot but own, that a Christian *Zeal* for a Thousand Pounds a Year, or even for Two Hundred Pounds a Year, or even for a rich Wife, gifted with a good Apostolic Fortune, is a very commendable and very prevailing sort of *Zeal*; but I cannot see that it equally affects the whole Congregation. Pray, of what Moment is it to a harmless, well-meaning Flock of Sheep, whether their Shepherd be called *Pastor* or *Overseer*? or, Whether he have Twenty Pounds a Year Wages, or Twenty times as much? or, Whether he be hired by the whole Village? or only the chief Man of the Village? or, Whether he wear a plain *Hat*, or a *high crowned Cap*? or, Whether he wear *Linen* or *Woolen*? But it is of great Moment to them, whether he feed them or starve them; or, whether he defend or plunder them; or, whether he utterly neglect them himself, or only leave them to the Care and Command of his Dog; or, whether he seek their Safety and Happiness, or only their Flesh, and their Fleeces.

BUT further: The Tempers of Men being either naturally warm, or quickly made so, it is easy to mistake a hot Head for a devout Heart, and an angry Heart for a devout *Zeal*. But, alas! how different is the meek Spirit of [I-203] the Gospel, from that Fury which is raised by strong Beer, or passionate Sermons! How little do Men consider, that the same Arteries do often beat with equal Vigour for a Punk as for the Church, and occasion broken Heads for the one as soon as for the other!

TRUE Christian Divine *Zeal* is inspired by God Almighty, and comes attended with every other Christian Virtue, and subdues every unruly Passion. It is inseparable from Charity, the highest *Christian Grace*, and the chief Characteristic of a Christian; that Charity *which wisheth all Things, hapeth all Things*; which forgives all Men, but hurts none. It neither burns nor imprisons Men Bodies; nor plunders their Goods, nor rails at their Persons, nor stirs up Mischief against them, nor marks them out for Damnation. It is not raised by cruel Language, nor increased by Bottles of Brandy; it is modest, it is merciful, it is temperate, it is discerning.

ON the other hand; There is not in the World a more cruel, debauched, or more ignorant Passion, than false *Zeal*. It is void of Pity, of Grace, of Knowledge, and of Charity; it is outrageous; it delights in Blood; it commits Massacres, and murders *Innocents*; it dispeoples Nations. Nothing can restrain it, neither Kindred nor good Qualities, nor Pity nor [I-204] Tears. It usurps the Name of Religion, and destroys all Religion; it commits Abomination in a Style of Devotion, and talks Blasphemy in the Name of the Lord. It prostitutes God's Authority to destroy God's Works; and, in the Name of *Christ*, damns and destroys those whom Christ died to save.

IF People would but look a little into their own Hearts and Constitutions, they would too often find, that their *Zeal* is only Anger, and that this hot Devotion resides altogether in the Blood. I have long observed, that your choleric Fellows are your most zealous Fellows, and are always the warmest Churchmen; and that, amongst the Ladies, the most amorous are ever the greatest Bigots. He who is peevish at his Table, will be peevish in his Pulpit; and as highly offended at an ill Dinner, as at a Conventicle. I once caught a great fat Doctor at *St. Paul's*, cursing and storming against *Presbyterians*, whom he consigned in a Body over to *Satan*, with great *Zeal*, and no Remorse. Says I, to myself, *This Reverend ill-tongued Parson will certainly quarrel and kick over his Claret as well as over his Cushion*. In order to try, I got into his Company at the *Baptist's-Head*, and by the Humility of my Behaviour, and the Divinity of the *Hermitage*, I sat at tolerable Ease with the Doctor, till the [I-205] middle of the third Bottle, and then he swore at the Drawer for not answering before he was called; and, before it was out, he drank Confusion to *Fanatics*, and a Health to *Sorrel*. The Doctor then shewed a violent Appetite for Quarrelling; but meeting nobody in the same Humour, he only eased himself in Oaths; till an honest Citizen drank to him, The Glorious Memory of King

*William*; which the Doctor pledged, by throwing a wild Duck just hot from the Spit, full in the Citizen's Face, and got up at the same time to fall upon him with his Hands; but as soon as he got up, he fell, and we left him upon the Floor, to the Care of the Drawers.

How long are Mankind to be deluded with Sounds? And how long will Uncharitableness and Outrage, which are Enemies to the Nature of Christianity, pass for *Zeal* for Religion? Are Men to be cursed, or punished, or destroyed, out of *Zeal* for the Gospel, by which all Severity is forbid? Where are we commanded to quarrel for the Peace of the Church? or to run mad for the Reasonableness of Liturgies? or to fight for the *Divine Original* of *Human Forms*? or to deliver Men to the Devil, for the Saving of their Souls?

How unlike is our Modern *Zeal* to that of the Apostles, and how unworthy to be called [I-206] by that Name! They lived under Hardships and Stripes, and ventured their Lives to convert Unbelievers: Our present Zealots live at Ease, and in Plenty: And their *Zeal* is devoutly employed about Tythes, Honours, Garments, and Forms. They do not pretend to venture their Livings, and their Lives, to convert either *Pagan*, or *Papist*, or *Mahometan*. The *Idolatry* and *Infidelity* under which the miserable World lies, do not seem to interrupt their Quiet, and their Enjoyments. But if a Dozen harmless Christians presume to worship God in a Barn; or to pray to God without Book; or to commemorate *Christ's* Death with Praises and Prayers, such as a devout Heart dictates; or to refuse complying with a Rote of Words, which they judge neither edifying nor warrantable; or to follow their Consciences, which alone can justify them in the Sight of God; and not the Authority of Men, which cannot justify them in the Sight of God; they are alarmed: And their Church totters, if Conscience be protected.

If this be the Spirit of Christianity, I must own myself to have been hitherto a Stranger to Christianity; and yet these Men go on to tell us, that they are the only true Church, though they possess not one Grain of that Charity which distinguishes a Christian from a Reprobate, as much as a rational Soul does a [I-207] Man from a Monkey; and to damn all other Churches, that is, the whole World, without taking one Step towards bringing them into a State of Salvation.

G.

NUMBER XXIV.  
*Of* PERSECUTION.↵

*Wednesday, June 29. 1720.*

THERE are but Two Ways of propagating Religion, namely, Miracles and Exhortation. The one depends upon Divine Power, and the other upon the Strength of Reason. Where the Finger of God appears, all further Testimony is needless; and where the Truth is obvious to Reason, Miracles are needless. God never wills us to believe that which is above our Reason, but he at the same time commands our Faith by Miracles. He does not leave necessary Things doubtful; and for this Reason alone it is, that Men are said to be *left without Excuse*.

[I-208]

EVERY Point of Belief therefore must be supported either by Reason or Miracle, or else it is no Point of Belief at all. Both the *Jewish* and the Christian Law were delivered and enforced with manifest Signs and Demonstrations of God's extraordinary Presence and Power. And it has been very justly boasted of the Christian Religion in particular, that it spread and prospered by Miracles, Persuasion, and Clemency, in Opposition to Violence and Cruelty.

BUT when Christianity became tainted and defaced by Priestcraft, it grew necessary to have many Points believed, which contradicted both Revelation and common Sense: Therefore its *Foster-Fathers*, who to the Worship of God added the Worship of themselves, had no other way to prove their System but by Wrath and Vengeance. Reason was against them, and Miracles not for them: So their whole Dominion stood upon Falshood, guarded by Force. This Force, when it is exercised upon a religious Account, is called *Persecution*; which is what I am now to consider and expose.

To punish Men for Opinions that are even plainly false and absurd, is barbarous and unreasonable. We possess different Minds, as we do different Bodies; and the same Proposition [I-209] carries not the same Evidence to every Man alike, no more than the same Object appears equally clear to every Eye. A choleric Temper, when it is not corrected with Reason, and seasoned with Humanity, is naturally zealous. A phlegmatic Temper, on the other side, as it is naturally slow, so it is lukewarm and indifferent. Is there any Merit in having a warm Complexion, or any Sin in being dull?

BUT further, to punish a Man for not seeing the Truth, or for not embracing it, is, in the first place, to make him miserable, because he is already so; and in the second place, to pluck Vengeance out of God's Hands, to whom alone it belongs, if we will take his own Word for it. If this Severity is pretended to be for his Good, I would ask, Is manifest Cruelty any Token of Kindness? or was it ever taken for such? Does it not always increase the Evil, which it is employed to cure? Is Destruction the Means to Happiness? Absurd and terrible!

BUT what if, after all, the Person persecuted should be found an Adherent to Truth and Honesty, and *his* Enemies should prove *their* Enemies? Would not this be adding Cruelty to Falshood, and heaping up Guilt with both Hands? This indeed is often the Case. And where it is not altogether so, the Persecutors are still inexcusable. He who, in [I-210] the Search of Truth, does all that he can, does as much as he ought. God requires no more; and what Man dares do it, who fears Him? When *He* acquits, Who is it that condemns?

BESIDES, he that suffers, or at least dies, for Religion, gives a Testimony by so doing, that his Conscience is dearer to him than Ease or Interest: Whereas the Patrons of Persecution have manifestly personal Motives and Self-Ends in it. It gratifies their Pride, awes Mankind, and brings them Obedience and Gain.

OUR blessed Saviour, who had no View but the Redemption of the World, never used his Omnipotence, or the least Force, to subdue his Enemies, though he knew their Hearts to be malicious and implacable. He neither delivered them to Death nor the Devil, even for their hellish Designs to kill him; much less for Points of Error or Speculation. He reasoned with all Men; but punished none. He used Arguments, he worked Wonders; but Severities he neither practised nor recommended. His was a different Spirit. He rebukes his Apostles with Sharpness, when, being yet full of the Spirit of this World, and void of the Spirit of God, they were for bringing down Fire from Heaven upon the *Heretical Samaritans*. The merciful Jesus would not hurt these half Heathens, though they rejected him [I-211] in Person; for he *came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them*: And they who take another Method, give the Lye to the Lord of Life, and disown him for their Head.

His Apostles, as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost, grew wiser and more merciful. They shewed by Miracles, that they were endowed with the Divine Power; but they never used either to compel or to burn, though they were beset with false Teachers, and opposed by Gainsayers. They were so far from giving ill Usage, that they never returned it. The Exercise of *wholsome Severities* was no Part of their Doctrine. Prayers and Persuasions were their only Arms, and such as became the *Gospel of Peace*.

THIS was the mild and heavenly Behaviour of Christ, and his Apostles, towards those who did not believe, or believed wrong; and it was followed by all their Successors, who aimed at the Good of Souls. But those who used the Sacred Function as a Ladder to Power and Gain, made a new Gospel of their own Decisions, and forced it upon the World, partly by Fighting, and partly by Cursing. The Apostles taught Christ, and their Successors taught themselves. It was not enough to believe the Doctrine of Christianity, but you must believe it in Words of their inventing. To dispute [I-212] their Decrees, though they contradicted common Sense, and the Spirit of God, was Heresy; and Heresy was Damnation. And when, in consequence of this, they had allotted a pious Christian to eternal Flames, for his Infidelity in *them*, they dispatched him thither with all Speed; because he was to be damned in the *other* World, therefore he was to be hanged or burned in *this*. A terrible Gradation of Cruelty! to be cursed, burned, and damned! But it was something natural; it began from persecuting Priests, and ended in Hell, and the Devil was the last and highest Executioner.

THUS they became *Prelates* of both Worlds, and Proprietors of the Punishments of both. Even where the Civil Sword was not at their Command, their Vengeance was as successfully, and, in my Opinion, more terribly, executed without it, by the temporal Effect of their Excommunication. For the Person under it was looked upon as a Dæmon, and one in the Power of the Devil; and so driven out, like a wild Beast, from all the Comforts of Life, and human Society; to perish in a Desert, by Hunger, or the Elements, or Beasts of Prey. And all this, perhaps, for denying a Word, or a Phrase, which was never known in Scripture, though impudently pretended to be fetched from thence.

#### [I-213]

SUCH dreadful Dominion had they usurped over the Bodies and Souls of Men, and so implacably did they exercise it! And, to fill up the Measure of their Falshood and Cruelty, they blasphemously pretended to be serving God, when they were acting as if there were none.

THOSE who set up for Infallibility have found a good Excuse, if it were true, for the insupportable Tyranny, infinite Murders, and wide Devastations, which their Religion has every-where introduced. But those, who exact a blind Obedience to Decrees, which they own to be human, and annex Penalties to Positions, which we know to be false, and they know to be disputable; and, in fine, act and dictate as if they were infallible, without pretending to be so; are so utterly without all Excuse, that I know no Language which affords a Name proper for their Behaviour.

THE *Mahometan* Imposture was professedly to be spread by the Sword. It had nothing else but that and Libertinism to recommend it. But to propagate the Christian Religion by Terror or Arms, is to deny it. It owns no such Spirit. It rendered itself amiable, and gained Ground, by a Principle of Peace and Love. These were the Means instituted by Christ, for the Recommendation and Defence of his Gospel; and they, who would chuse [I-214] contrary ones, charge him with Folly, and have Ends to serve very different from his. Ambition, Pride, and Revenge, may make good Use of Violence and Persecution; but they are the Bane of Christianity, which always sinks when Persecution rises. The vilest and most profligate Men are ever the greatest Promoters of it; and the most virtuous are the greatest Sufferers by it. Libertines stick at nothing, but they who have the Fear of God, cannot comply with all Things.

PERSECUTION is therefore *the War of Craft against Conscience*, and of Impiety against Truth. Reason, Religion, and Liberty, are its great Foes; but Ignorance, Tyranny, and Atheism, its great Seconds and Support. We ought then constantly to oppose all Claims of Dominion in the Clergy; for they naturally end in Cruelty. I believe it will be hard to shew,

that ever the Priesthood, at any Time, or in any Place, enjoyed the Power of Persecution, without making use of it.

G.

[I-215]

NUMBER XXV.  
*Of CONSECRATION.* ↩

*Wednesday, July 6. 1720.*

HOLINESS is that Character of Purity, which originally and essentially appertains to God Almighty (as a Being utterly incapable of Stain and Imperfection); but is also ascribed, in a restrained and relative Sense, to every Act of Devotion, and every Person performing it. It is an active and rational Thing; and where it is attributed to Things inanimate or irrational, it is either merely in a figurative Sense, or in no Sense at all.

THUS, when the Elements in the Sacrament are said to be Holy, it is meant only of the Uses to which they are applied, and the Purposes for which they are taken; for, though they were consecrated over and over again; yet, if they are never taken, or never devoutly taken, they have in themselves no more Holiness [I-216] than a common Roll, or a Cup of cold Water.

AND thus, when a People are said to be a *Holy People*, it is meant of their sincere Love of God, and Conformity to his Will, and of the Actions by them performed in consequence of these good Affections. But if such Actions, though feemingly devout, are superstitious, or hypocritical; there is no more Holiness in them, than in the *Indians* worshipping the Devil, or in a Boy's saying his Prayers to avoid Whipping.

AND thus, when a House, or a Piece of Ground, is said to be Holy, it is understood only of some Mark of Holiness there shewn, either by the extraordinary Presence of God, or by some Act or Acts of Worship performed there to him. But when these Marks of Omnipotence, and these Acts of Devotion, cease, that Ground is no more than common Ground, and that House is a common House.

AND thus, *Lastly*, When the Priests are called *Holy unto the Lord*, it is meant only of their assisting at the solemn Acts of Adoration which are paid to him. At other times, they are as other Men; as is evident from their living after the manner of other Men.

HOLINESS, therefore, consists only in a virtuous and pious Disposition towards God, [I-217] and is only shewn by the Actions which it produces. But as Superstition, especially when governed by Craft, never fails to see, or to think that it sees, Effects and Operations, which neither Religion nor common Sense can shew; hence Men have been generally persuaded, that Places, Buildings, Utensils, and Garments, did actually possess a real Holiness; that Stones and Brickbats are blessed; and that Timber, Surplices and Bells are exceeding godly Bodies.

To help on this wretched and senseless Credulity, the *Pagan* and *Popish* Priests have gone so far as to compose Farces of *Legerdemain*, called by them *Offices of Consecration*; the whole End of which was, they pretended, to bestow Godliness upon dead Earth, and Things inanimate. Thus they deceived the People in the Name of the Lord, and gravely made Speeches (which they called Prayers) over Wood, Stones, and Iron; by virtue of which, the said Wood, Stones and Iron were obliged to become good Orthodox Lumber, and as sanctified Bodies as the other Members of the Congregation.

If one was to demand of these Reverend Worthies, *Who required these Things at their Hands?* I doubt it would prove a hard Question; and probably, the impertinent Inquirer would be dispatched for Satisfaction to *Satan*, [I-218] or the Inquisition ----- An effectual and orthodox Answer to such busy Unbelievers, and often practised with terrible Success!

BUT as I live in a Nation where such Superstitions and Cruelties are, I bless God, at an End; I take Leave to be amazed at the Assurance of those Popish Consecrators, who thus impiously pretend to draw down an Attribute of the Almighty, and endow with it what Spot of Earth they please. Will these insolent Deceivers say, that God Almighty cannot hear as well, and as favourably, a Prayer put up from a Ship as from a Chapel? Or in what Part of Scripture are we told, that he will be rather worshipped at *St. Peter's* than upon the *Alps*; or at *Loretto*, or any other *consecrated Place*, rather than in a Booth, or a Barn; provided the Worship be performed with equal Piety? Or does e'er a Text in the *New Testament* inform us, that one Piece of Earth is holier than another? or that any Man, or Society of Men, can make it so?

If consecrated Ground have no more Holiness in it than other Ground, how is divine Worship more acceptable in it than in other Ground? And if it have some uncommon Sanctity in it; let those concerned tell us what it is, how it is, and by what certain Signs we shall know it: And whether it keep all the said Holiness to itself, [I-219] and amongst its own inanimate Heap of Stones, Timber, and Nails; and then what are *We* the better for it? Or whether the religious Bricks and Mortar do in good earnest communicate Part of their Piety to the People: And if so, In what manner do they perform this? And how does it appear first, and operate afterwards? But if all this be a Mystery, let them shew us where it is revealed in Scripture, wherein all other Mysteries are revealed.

If by Consecration any Change be made, the same must be either visible, or only mystical. If the Change be visible, then it comes under the Test and Examination of our Senses, and must be evident to all Men: But if the Change be purely mystical, it must be revealed to all. So that we must either have the Evidence of Sense, or the Evidence of God's Word and Authority, which is as good. But where neither of these Proofs appear, our Faith and Assent ought neither to be demanded, nor given, if demanded.

If Prayers be more prevailing with God, and divine Service more welcome to him, when they come from consecrated Ground; then all Worship and Devotion ought to be performed only at Church; and Family Religion ought either to be neglected, (as lame and insufficient) or every private House should be [I-220] consecrated, and then every House would be a Chapel, and every such Chapel a Church. I would be glad to know, why only one House in a Parish should be consecrated, that is, made fit to pray in; and why not every House, for the same Reason? For, nothing that helps Devotion ought to be omitted, such Omission being doubtless a great Sin.

BUT if it be allowed, that People may pray to as good Purpose *out of* consecrated Ground, as *in* it; how are Prayers at Church better than in a Chamber, or the Fields? Or, why should the Prayers of Five hundred have more need of consecrated Ground, than the Prayers of One, Two, or Three? Or, if a Place become Holy by the Devotions performed in it, then every Place where Devotions are performed, is as Holy as another; and if so, pray what Use of a Form of Words, and a particular Office, for that Purpose?

SUPPOSE a Church to be consecrated, and yet never after used; is it, for all this, Holy? Or, suppose that it has been used for all the Purposes of a Church, and yet was never formerly consecrated; is it, for all that, not Holy?

EITHER the Scripture is not a sufficient Rule of Worship, or this Business of Consecration, in *Popish* and *Pagan* Countries, is a needless, empty, superstitious Foppery, an evident [I-221] Trick of Priestcraft; as if the Priests could change the Nature of Things, and confer the Grace which they have not themselves, upon Stocks and Stones, that have not, nor can have, the least moral Goodness, or Pravity, in them. A General of an Army may as modestly and rationally contend, that the Ground, on which his Pavilion stands, is valiant Ground; and that the Ticking, of which it is made, is courageous Ticking. And, according to the same way of Reasoning, there is prodigious Policy in the Boards that compose the Council-table: The Carpet is a long-headed Carpet, and the Wainscot and Chairs understand wonderfully well the Interest of *Christendom*.

If Devotion communicate a Tincture of itself to Wood and Walls; the Pravity of ill Actions must, by the same Rule, diffuse itself, and taint all the House or Fields where such ill Actions are committed. A Jobb of Lewdness must needs debauch the Curtains greatly, and the Bed-cloaths must partake of the Iniquity; and were justly punished by Fire in *Herefordshire* for that Reason: At which Execution, I am told, a certain devout Person now living, was a very zealous and useful Assistant. Every Counter and Shop-board in the City must, for the like Reason, be guilty of unpardonable Tricking [I-222] and Lying; and for Falshood and Dissimulation, Heaven have Mercy upon some great Buildings at the Court-end of the Town!

I WOULD here be glad to know the precise Extent of the Influence which Holiness and Vice have upon the inanimate Creation. Is a thick Church-wall as quickly and fully impregnated with them as a thin one? And do they never extend an Inch beyond the Church and Churchyard? Or is the Church equally Holy, whether much Devotion, or little, be performed in it? Or have the Popish Priests set Bounds to the Godliness of the Ground, and the Building; and said----*Thus far, or thus deep, O Ground! shall thy Holiness extend, and no farther?*

If Consecration signify any thing more than a Declaration, that such a Place is set aside for the Worship of God, I wish it could be explained and proved; and the rather, because Things of the most simple and obvious Nature have, by the Guile or Superstition of designing Churchmen, been rendered, to the credulous gaping Multitude, mysterious and tremendous; the natural Enthusiasm which resides in the Mind of Man, having always made him the Prey and Property of Delusion and Deluders.

HAPPY, thrice happy, are we, who live in a Country where all this *Pagan* Idolatry, and these Monkish Fooleries, receive no Countenance [I-223] from our Laws; but, on the contrary, are forbid and punishable by them. The Laity at the *Reformation* had seen what Use the Priests made of this dark Juggling, and of these *Hocus Pocus* Tricks; and, therefore, would not suffer them to be played over again, to deceive superstitious and enchanted Bigots, by making them pay great Prices to be buried in consecrated Ground, which rose, like the Value of Jewels, as they approached nearer to the Bodies of Saints, or to the Altar, where it seems the Devil could not come at them; with many other advantageous Frauds, which I shall hereafter expose to the World, when I treat again upon this prolific Subject.

G.

[I-224]

NUMBER XXVI.  
*Of FAITH and MORALITY.* ↩

*Wednesday, July 13. 1720.*



RELIGION and Virtue consist in doing good Actions, or in a Disposition to do them. These being in our Power, as we perform or neglect them, we merit Praise or Blame. But in Matters of Speculation, or Doubt, or such as are not necessarily attended with some Consequences, it is of no Moment on which Side of the Question we stand. Where there is no Certainty, or Significancy, there can be no Duty. Faith without Works, in Scripture, has but a very indifferent Character: It is said to be dead; and we all know, that what is dead, is useless.

If you would know any Man's Affections towards God, consult his Behaviour towards Men. Though his Professions be ever so voluminous; though his Zeal be ever so noisy; [I-225] though he believe by the Lump, and swallow Creeds by Dozens; yet if he be immoral, he is worse than an Infidel. What is the Use of Belief, but to govern our Practice, and beget good Deeds? We all see the Necessity of living well; but to believe well, and do no more, is the same Thing, with regard to others, as not to believe at all: And, with regard to ourselves, worse.

A WORTHY Life infers worthy Principles; but a base Behaviour contradicts and dishonours an honest Profession. Will any one tell me, that a virtuous Heathen is not a better Man, and more in the Favour of God, than a profligate Christian? A *Pagan*, who violates not the Laws of Truth and Peace, is, in my Eyes, an infinitely more religious Person, than a turbulent and forsworn Christian Priest, though he wear a Mitre.

*SOCRATES, Plato, Cato, and Brutus*, were excellent Persons, though they were only governed by the simple Dictates of human Reason, and were utter Strangers to Creeds and Fathers, and our present Orthodox Notions established by Law. Who, that has any Care for his Soul, any Honour for his God, or any Love for Mankind, would not rather chuse to be animated by the rational and beneficent Sentiments of these *righteous Gentiles*, than he [I-226] possessed with the fierce and inhuman Spirit of *Father Laud, Frier Francis, or Doctor Bungy*, though they were all sound Believers? I would have mentioned *Aristotle* here with the other *Antients*; but I find, that though he was very Orthodox, and a great Enemy to Dr. *Clarke's Arian Principles* [\*], yet this true Believer was a very wicked Liver. However, as a true Friend to the Church, *he died the Death of the Righteous*, and, 'tis said, enjoys *everlasting Life* [†].

BESIDES; saying, is not proving. If we would be thought Christians, we ought to shew ourselves Christians. Living well, is the best and only Evidence we can give, that we believe well. If a Man profess his Faith in Jesus Christ with one Breath, and swear falsly by his Name with another, Why should I give credit to one who so effectually contradicts himself? We do not credit the Propositions of Mathematicians, till they have gained our Assent by Demonstration: And why should we trust any Man's Professions of Faith and Morality, before he has, by Works of Faith and Morality, [I-227] proved them sincere? If we hear a Man full of the Praises of Loyalty, and yet see him every Day rebelling, would we not take him for a Madman, or a Deceiver? A good Life is beneficial both to ourselves and others, but a good Belief, without it, is neither.

BUT besides, this same Belief is perhaps the necessary Consequence of Evidence; and if so, what is unavoidable, is not virtuous. Where is the Praise or Merit of feeling the Heat of the Sun, or the Severity of the Winter; or of hearing Sounds, when our Ears are open? To believe in Christ was and is inevitable: His Miracles command Assent. But to do his Will, is a Trial of our Piety and Virtue. And for our Saviour himself, would his Law have been ever received, or his Doctrine believed, had he contradicted both by his Example? Or could the Apostles, without leading the Lives of Christians, have gained Converts to Christianity?

I HAVE placed Faith and Practice in this Light, to shew how little valuable the Pretence of believing well makes Men, unless they also live well. I would therefore bring our High Clergy to be tried by this Test. If they be more zealous for Orthodoxy than Piety; if they abhor a virtuous Man, who prefers the Dictates of his own Conscience before those of their [I-228] Ambition and Authority; and openly court and honour any Person, who is observant of the Priesthood, though he live at manifest Defiance with Heaven; if they treat Unbelievers and Debauchees as pure Churchmen, and devout Christians as Schismatics, Heretics, and the Lord knows what; their Faith is selfish and vain, and such Religion is false and absurd.

CONFORMITY is the Word! It is the Mother of all Virtues, and the Sanctifier of all Crimes. It is, in fine, All in All. And yet, so weak and blind am I, that I take this same applauded Conformity to be in some Cases a very great Sin. If a Man, for Instance, in the Worship of God, follow the Authority of any Church whatsoever, and dissent, at the same time from the Suggestions and Persuasions of his own Conscience; it is certain, that he does not worship God at all, but mocks him; adores Men, and condemns himself. If, on the other hand, he think his Soul in Danger, or in no way of being edified in any Church, though ever so Orthodox; he ought to desert it, and join with that which appears to him better. If I should thwart or disturb my Conscience, by bowing fashionably to the Altar, I would ask the Clergy, Whether ought the Altar, or my Conscience, to be first or most regarded? He who believes at random, and obeys blindly, [I-229] may give great Satisfaction to Churchmen; but he neither knows the Gospel of Truth, nor obeys the Precepts of the Holy Ghost.

It is a surprising Thing, the Selfishness and Pride of Man. What Priest is there, that (in Disputes of the most trivial Nature) does not grow hot and eager for Victory, and angry if his Opinion does not prevail? In Spiritual Affairs, this Spirit of levelling all Men to our own Conceits, is still fiercer; and Religion, which was given and intended to subdue the Passions, is turned into an Engine to raise them. We are much more zealous, that Men should conform to us, than to Holiness; and would rather have them obedient, than godly. How many High-Church Parsons would not rather see their Parishioners *drunken Churchmen, than sober Dissenters!*

LAYMEN are at least as capable of judging of *Error* as the Clergy, and more proper, as having no Interest on either Side of the Question. However, the latter have usurped this Privilege wholly to themselves, and with good Policy; for it has wonderfully answered their great Ends of Power and Wealth. We are not therefore to wonder, that many of them give much more Countenance and Quarter to the most heinous Immoralities, which are only Sins against God, than to the least Variation [I-230] from an Orthodox Opinion, which is an unpardonable Sin against themselves. The greatest Mistakes, when involuntary, are innocent in the Sight of God; but in the Eyes of the Priests, the smallest are often damnable. Nay, many a Man has been pronounced a Heretic, and delivered to Hell and the Devil, for his pious Searches after Truth, and his devout Adherence to it.

THUS we see, that God may be pleased, and some of the Clergy provoked, by one and the same Action. From hence it wofully happens, that weak Men and Profligates, who will do and say as they are bid, without any Biass from Reason and Conscience, are caressed, encouraged and promoted; while the Wise and Virtuous, who cannot abandon Truth, and the Fear of God, to promote the Craft, and humour the Pride, of assuming Men, are brow-beaten, reproached, and persecuted. Mr. *Whiston*, and the Parson of his Parish [\*] , are known Instances of this shameful Truth.

I KNOW several, who, notwithstanding their avowed Disbelief of the Gospel, and all Revealed Religion, are in high Esteem with the High Clergy; because, though they deny our Saviour, they reverence his Successors; and [I-231] are zealous for the Hierarchy, though they laugh at Religion. The Truth is, if a Man be but a hearty Churchman, it is never asked

whether he be a Christian. Profligates, void of common Honesty, and common Sense, have been, and are still, reckoned true Friends to the Church, and courted by the Ecclesiastics, as their Patrons and Defenders. And indeed, where Religion is turned into Faction, such Measures and Alliances are natural and necessary.

BUT in the Opinion of us Christians, a wicked Liver, whether he be a Believer or no, is an Enemy to Religion, which is propagated and supported by Example; and to human Society, which is maintained by the Bonds of Morality. Whereas a good Man, though a Heretic, is a Friend to Religion, Virtue, and his Country. To conclude: He who is a Rebel to the King of Kings, is like to prove but an ill Subject to his Vicegerent; and as bad a Pattern to his Fellow-subjects.

G.

[I-232]

NUMBER XXVII.  
*Of Fasting.* ↩

*Wednesday, July 20. 1720.*

DR. Burnet tells us, in his *Letters of Travels*, that the Priests of *Italy* have found out a Secret to make Men miserable, in spite of all the Abundance and Profusion wherewith Nature hath blessed that happy Climate. They measure their own Happiness by the People's Calamity; enjoy no Pleasures in which they take any Part; nor are satisfied with all the Plunder and Depredations which they make upon them, unless they can also heighten their own Relish, by making the Little which they leave to the Laity, insipid and tasteless.

As one Instance of this Truth; he informs us, that the Priests have made it a Principle of Religion in the People, to mingle Water with their Wine in the Cask, which soon sours it; whereas they always keep their own pure and [I-233] unmixed, because they say, that it is to be used in the Sacrament: And so he observes, that Travellers can drink no good Wine, but what they buy from the Convents.

FOR this, and such-like Reasons, they preach Penances, Mortification, Fasting, and a Contempt of worldly Riches, and of all those earthly Blessings, which indulgent Heaven has given to wretched Mortals, to alleviate their Sorrows, sweeten their Calamities, and make the nauseous Draught of Life go down; whereas we cannot better shew our Acknowledgment and Gratitude to the Author of them, than by making a proper Use of the good Things which he has given us, and by enjoying them in every Degree, which will not destroy that Enjoyment, and change it into a Misfortune.

If we drink or eat more than our Heads will carry, or our Stomachs digest, Distempers, Indiscretions, and sometimes Murders, succeed; and, if we spend faster than our Incomes will supply, there is a sure Foundation laid for future Want and Misery: But nothing can be more absurd or impious, than to make Abstinence from Food or Pleasures meritorious, any farther than it conduces to Health, or qualifies us for Business. Almighty God reserved but one Tree in all *Paradise* from our first Parents, [I-234] but the Priests would keep them all from their Posterity.

BESIDES, the Luxury of the Rich (when it does not exceed the Bounds of Virtue and Prudence) is the Wealth and Support of the Poor, and the best-judged Charity: For, what we give in gross Sums to, or for the Use of, those who appear to be in Necessity, is often mistaken, and applied to maintain present Idleness, or reward past Extravagance; and sometimes too, I doubt, is pocketed by those who are trusted to distribute it: Whereas whatever is laid out upon the Produce of Labour, and for such Manufactures as employ

Multitudes of People, can never be misapplied. It might easily be made appear, that there is not a Piece of wrought Silk, Linen, or Woollen Cloth, which has not contributed to the Maintenance of more than an Hundred thousand industrious People, who must be all kept alive one way or other.

As it is the highest Crime to destroy our Beings, so it is proportionably wicked to endeavour to make them miserable: The Glory and Honour of God are best consulted, in promoting the Happiness of Mankind. It is profane, and a kind of Blasphemy, to attempt to persuade People, that the good God takes Pleasure in the vexing and tormenting his Creatures. He [I-235] is not pleased by human Sacrifices, nor by human Sufferings of any Kind: A pale Aspect, the Griping of the Guts, wry and distorted Faces, and being Ghosts before our Time, will contribute to no Ends of Religion; and therefore, I confess, that I cannot see how Fasting can serve God, or answer any Purposes of Devotion, or indeed can enhance any Appetite, unless to a good Dinner.

NOTHING consequently can be more ridiculous, than for the *Romish* Clergy to tell us, that any Part of Religion consists in fasting Days, and fasting Weeks; which oblige the wretched People to insipid and unwholesome Diet, whilst they indulge themselves, and riot in the richest Wines, and the luxurious Dishes of Salmon and Turbot; with all the costly Inhabitants of the liquid Element. Besides, it is impolitic, as well as uncharitable; it discourages Trade and Industry, depopulates Nations, and depreciates Matrimony, by rendering the People unable to maintain and raise their Families.

RICHES and Labour are two Words which signify the same Thing. Nature spontaneously supplies but little to the Use of Man; all the rest is the Produce of Invention and Industry: And therefore whatever does contribute to make Mankind idle, and less useful to one another, [I-236] conduces so far to their Want and Misery. One Holy-day, strictly kept, robs the Poor of more than a whole Year's Charity will supply. A little loose Money picked up at the Church-doors, and afterwards divided between the Parson, Churchwardens, and a few favourite Objects, will make but poor Amends for the Taxation of the Nation, and of every Person in it, with the Loss of a Day's Labour, and Profit of his Trade; which Loss probably cannot amount to less than Two hundred Thousand Pounds, without having any regard to the Extravagance and Debaucheries committed upon those Days; which often consume the Acquisitions of a Week, and render the common People listless, and unwilling to return to their Labour again. I may therefore venture to affirm, that there is more Charity in taking away one Saint's Day, than in building and endowing Twenty Colleges.

HOWEVER, to do Right to my Countrymen, and their genuine Clergy, I must freely confess, that we suffer very little from the penitential Observance or fasting Part of our Holydays; for the Poor do not fast at all, unless they can get nothing to eat; and the Rich, in Imitation of their Guides, hold out no longer than is necessary to digest their former Excesses, and get better Stomachs to a double Dinner; [I-237] as old experienced Sinners often live a Day or two with Sobriety and Innocence, to enjoy a Debauch the remaining Part of the Week. At the Universities, as I am told, it is quite given up, and there is not more *Epicurism* than on those Days; and to their Churches there are antient Vestries annexed, which are the consecrated Repositories of Pipes, Sack, and Tobacco, where the Reverends take regularly a Whiff and a Cup, to prepare them for the Fatigues of the the ensuing Service.

BUT how little soever Holy-days, and stated Fasts, contribute either to the temporal or eternal Happiness of the Laity; yet the *Romish* Clergy have been able sufficiently to find their own Account in them. When all other Shops are shut, theirs are open; where they sell their Spiritual Cargo of Grimaces, Visions, Beads, Indulgencies, and Masses, for Silver and Gold, Lands and Tenements; and, to enhance the Value of their Merchandize, and persuade the People of the Reasonableness of such an Exchange, they make it their Business, and exert all

their Endeavours, to depreciate worldly Happiness, and cry down all the good Things of this Earth, that they may have them all to themselves. If they can extinguish the Appetites which God has given us, and teach us the Secret to live [I-238] without our Estates, or to make us think it dangerous to live on them, they hope to have them for their Pains: For who can have a better Title to our Superfluities than our spiritual Guides, who have inspired us with so much refined Devotion, and have given to us lasting Estates in Paradise, in lieu of a few momentary Pleasures, and frail and earthly Tabernacles below?

By these Arts, and many others, which I shall shew in the Progress of this Paper, the Priests are become possessed of so much Dominion and Wealth.

T.

**NUMBER XVIII.**  
***Of AUTHORITY.***

*Wednesday, July 27. 1720.*

BY Faith is often, if not most commonly, meant, An inward Persuasion, or determined Assent, of the Mind to a religious Proposition, affirmed or denied; and such Consent can never be given but by the Conveyance, [I-239] and from full Conviction, of the Senses, or the manifest Operation of the Holy Ghost; and therefore must depend wholly upon what appears to be infallible Inspiration, or infallible Information. In this Sense of the Word, I doubt there can be no such Thing in the World; for as no Man living ever saw the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, or can prove his particular System from self-evident Propositions, or can be sure that he is inspired by the Holy Ghost; so he cannot have Faith in this Sense, whatsoever he himself may imagine.

THEREFORE the only reasonable Sense of the Word is, *An Assent of the Mind to the Truth of a Proposition, upon probable Arguments, or upon the Testimony of other Persons;* which can never produce Certainty, but only *Opinion* or *Belief;* which must be stronger or weaker, according to the many Degrees of Probability. A probable Evidence can only produce a suitable Assent; and when any thing does not appear at all probable to us, we cannot avoid dissenting as to the Truth of it. Almighty God does not require of us to give the Lye to our Understandings, and to put out and extinguish the only Light he has given to Men, by which they can discern Truth from Falshood, and Virtue from Vice.

[I-240]

THE Apostles and Evangelists, who were evidently endowed from Above with extraordinary Gifts and Graces, were undeniable Witnesses of the Truth of the Gospel, to those who saw their Miracles: And their Writings, and the Testimony which they bequeathed to their Followers, sealed, as it was, with their Blood, have passed the Examination of many Ages, and constitute the highest Degree of human Probability, and consequently carry along with them an irresistible Authority, and can admit of no Disobedience or Dispute: They are a real Authority, in the most strict Sense of the Word; I mean, as it is applied to the Propagation of religious Opinions, and as producing a lively Faith next to Persuasion.

BUT no Decisions or Resolutions of uninspired Men are, or ought to be, of any Weight with us, but so far as they will bear the Examination of our Senses, and our Reason. The only Motive which any Man can have to believe, or to put this Confidence in another, is, that the Person trusted is not deceived himself, and will not deceive him; neither of which he can have any tolerable Assurance of: For no Man is infallible; and the gravest and most solemn Pretenders are as easily cheated as the mere Vulgar; and, what is more, will as often lye, and cheat others; and therefore there can be no such thing [I-241] as Authority in this Sense

amongst Men. For let a Matter in itself be ever so certain, I am by no Precept human or divine obliged to believe it true, till it is proved true; and it is the Business of my Reason alone to distinguish what is so from what is otherwise.

GOD's Word, though to be believed without Proof, yet ought first to be proved to be his; which Proof it is the Province of my Understanding to examine. The Words and Allegations of Men, or of the Church, ought, before they are believed, to be proved, either by Divine Authority, or by Reason: If by Reason; then Reason must judge of Reason, and every Man who has it, is a Judge: If by Divine Authority; even here our Reason must be satisfied, whether it be Divine Authority or not. So that human Authority is either nothing at all; or at most only an Opportunity given, or an Invitation made, to examine by private Judgment, the Truth of what it says.

ALL Books, therefore, except the Holy Scriptures, and all Names, except those of our Blessed Saviour, and his inspired Followers, ought to be of no Authority with us, any farther than to convince our Understandings by solid Arguments, and self-evident Truths; and a Beggar, or a Cobler, when he can do this, is so far [I-242] intitled to equal Credit, or, if you will, to equal Authority, with Councils and Fathers.

EVERY Man, that reasons with you, appeals to your Reason, and his Arguments lie at your Mercy, whether you will believe them or no; and every Man, who brings you only his Assertions, ought also to bring you his Proofs, or else you are at full Liberty to reject or despise them: It adds nothing to his Weight in this matter, that perhaps he wears a cloven Cap, or a sable Gown: There have been no greater Deceivers of Mankind, than such as have worn these Emblems of Gravity; and indeed Gravity has ever been one essential Characteristic of Imposture.

THERE is no Authority in sounding and sanctified Names, whether they be those of *Archbishops, Bishops, Priests* or *Deacons*. It is very certain, that these goodly Words are so far from having any Charm in them against Deceit and Roguery, that the completest of all Villainies, and the most masterly and mischievous of all Delusions, have been, and still are, protected and propagated by them in *Popish* and other Priest-ridden Nations. *His Holiness*, and *Most Holy*, are Terms appropriated to St. *Peter's* Chair, (and in our precious Pope *Laud's* Days they began to be current at *Lambeth*) although most that filled that Chair, have lived at Defiance [I-243] with God and Man, and were the greatest Deceivers and Disturbers of the World.

NOR is there any certain Authority in Learning of any Kind or Degree. Who are better Scholars, or greater Rogues, than the *Jesuits*? Who was a more learned Man, or a greater Simpleton, than Mr. *Dodwell*? And, as to his genuine Ancestors, *Aquinas* and *Scotus*, those celebrated Founders of the Schools, who have been long the infallible Guides of the infallible Church, they were the most voluminous and most unintelligible Dunces, that ever dabbled in Sophistry, and darkened common Sense.

PRAY what Evidence of Truth necessarily attends the Knowledge of the Oriental Tongues? The *Jews* understand *Hebrew*, and the *Turks Arabic*; and yet both continue fierce and obstinate Enemies to Christianity.

NOR are Men the more to be trusted, merely because they are acquainted with Ecclesiastical History, and the Fathers. As to the Fathers, they are guilty of grievous Errors against Orthodoxy, and Church Power; insomuch that Father *Petavius* the Jesuit has pretended to prove, that most of them were infected with Heresy, especially in their Notions about the Undivided Trinity. We all know, that St. *Austin* (the Foreman of all the *Latin* Saints and Fathers) was for admitting Children to the *Lord's Supper*, [I-244] contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of our Church of *England* as by Law established. St. *Jerom* derives Episcopal

Power from the Instigation of the Devil, which is also an impudent Reflection upon our Orthodox Church. St. *Basil* (I think it was) very fairly challenged the Emperor, his Liege Lord, to fight him; in Defiance of the Doctrine of Passive Obedience, which is the peculiar Doctrine of our High Churchmen; and which unless a Man believes and practises, he cannot be saved. St. *Ambrose* bullied *Theodosius*, the *Lord's Anointed*; and refused to admit his Imperial Majesty to partake of the Lord's Body, till he had made his humble Submission. St. *Gregory Nazianzen* gives a miserable and vile Character of Synods and Councils; and his Grace of *Canterbury* [\*], when he was Bishop of *Lincoln*, and before, did the same. Dr. *Prideaux* shews *Tertullian* to have been a credulous weak Man, often mistaken and misled.

As to Ecclesiastical History, which is nothing but many large Volumes, containing some few of the Squabbles of the Bishops and inferior Clergy with one another, and all the World; I know not whether the Use of it can much alter for the better any Man's Life and Principles; [I-245] since the most which he can learn by it is, that the Reverend Heroes of the Story were eternally cussing and contradicting one another. Nothing of Humility, nor of Charity, nor of Uniformity, nor of Certainty, is to be found amongst them, or learned from them. And I know not at this Day any prevailing Opinion of any Sect of Christians, but what is both countenanced and condemned by one Father, or another.

LASTLY; even the most apparent Piety, the most disinterested Mind, and the most unblameable Life, though to me certain Signs of a good Man, yet in the Eye of our best High Churchmen, are only *shining Sins*, and cannot intitle the Possessor to the least good Word or Tenderness, much less to any Authority amongst Men. Dr. *Clarke*, Mr. *Whiston*, and others, are undeniable Instances of this Truth.

UPON the Whole, Authority, as it is generally understood, is a Word pregnant with Danger and Nonsense. It is a false misleading Light, or rather none at all; for those who follow it, do only grope in the dark: When we blindly trust to another, our own Eyes grow useless, or may give Offence.

THIS shews its Peril; and for its Absurdity, it will appear from hence, that it is impossible to trust to one Authority, without trusting [I-246] to more. For, either my own Reason must be consulted and followed; and if so, there is an End of all Authority: Or else, I must trust to some Authority to direct me what Authority I must trust to. And, if I have Liberty to chuse my first Guide, why not also my second, and so on? For no Reason can be given, why I may rely on my Judgment in one Case, and yet must resign it in just such another Case.

BUT if no Choice at all is left us in these Matters, pray how shall we discern Heresy from Orthodoxy, and a *regular* Set of Ecclesiastics, from an *irregular*? If I am born in *Scotland*, and educated in the *Presbyterian* Way; must I continue in an invincible Antipathy to what is there called *proud, lordly, Prelacy*, and superstitious Surplices, and Popish Ceremonies? Or, have I a Right to examine and embrace the Doctrine and Discipline of our Orthodox, Established Church? Or, am I to embrace them without examining them? And is my Judgment to approve and condemn, only what the Parson approves and condemns; and, in all other Spiritual Matters, to lie still, and take its Rest? If I leave one Church for another, out of Judgment; how am I to behave myself when my Judgment changes? Or, is it our Duty to conform in spite of our Inclinations? And [I-247] have we no Right to dissent with Conscience and Conviction on our Side?

To conform without consenting, is a Contradiction, and a Mockery to the Spirit of Religion: And to conform, because I approve, is no Compliment to Authority, but, indeed, destroys it, and justifies every Man in every Religion, provided he have taken all necessary Pains to find out the true one. If I have a Liberty to inquire which is the best Church, I have also a Liberty to blame its Errors, if I see any, as well as to admire its Excellencies: And the



Authority of no Man or Men shall determine me in either, in Opposition to my Reason. If I praise the Advantages of any Church, I am myself praised by its Votaries, for doing Justice to those Advantages, which my Reason shews me: But if the same Reason discover Blemishes in it, I am condemned by the same Votaries, for what I cannot help: So that I am applauded for Seeing, and damned for Seeing, at the same Time, and from the same Principle; namely, that of Passion and Partiality.

THERE is therefore no Authority but Two, Scripture and Reason. The Scripture is our Rule of Faith; and Reason, where God gives not his Spirit, is our Rule for understanding the Scripture.

G.

[I-248]

NUMBER XXIX.  
Of EDUCATION.↵

*Wednesday, August 3. 1720.*

IT has often been the Subject of my serious Thoughts, to what Causes are owing the Depravation of Virtue and Morality in the World, and the seeming Decay of human Understanding. If we read the *Greek, Roman*, and other antient Histories, we shall find another Race of Men, than seem to be now existing upon the Face of the Earth. *Alexander* had conquered the *East* before Thirty: *Scipio* and *Hannibal* performed Actions of great Eclat before Twenty: *Pompey* triumphed over *Europe, Asia* and *Africa*, long before his Middle-age. Indeed, through the whole *Roman* Story, we find that their Generals, Orators, and Statesmen, shone in full Lustre in their early Youth; and could demand their Discharge from public Business, before the Age at which we are often thought qualified to enter upon it.

[I-249]

THIS Difference sure cannot be owing to any real Decay of Human Nature, which undoubtedly has been always the same since the Flood; on the contrary, 'tis to be presumed, since Almighty God hath communicated to us the marvellous Light of his Gospel, and has made himself more known to Men, that their Faculties are bettered and improved. Besides, this Difference is observable only in such as are intitled, by their Birth and Fortunes, to the most liberal Education; for, as to Arts and Sciences, the Moderns eminently (as I conceive) exceed the Antients: They are better Mathematicians and Mechanics, better Navigators, better Musicians, and better Husbandmen, and they attain early to their greatest Perfection in these Arts; and therefore we must look out for other Causes to account for this *Phænomenon*, which I conceive to proceed only from their different Manner of Education.

THE Antients were instructed by Philosophers; and the Moderns are taught by Priests: The first thought it their Duty to make their Pupils as useful as possible to their Country, and the latter as subservient to themselves, and the Interests of their Order: One endeavoured to inspire them with noble and generous Sentiments, equally fit for Dominion or Subjection; and the other always instil into them abject, [I-250] sordid, and pusillanimous Principles, to qualify them to be proper Tools for their own low Purposes: In short, the first made it their Study and Business to enlarge and improve their natural Faculties, and growing Reason; and the latter to pervert, stifle, and extinguish, every Approach towards true Knowledge, and public Virtue.

As soon as the Emperors and their Courts came into the Church, Ambition and Pride got in too; and the Innocence and Simplicity of primitive Christianity became corrupted, and changed into outward Pomp and Pageantry: The Clergy bethought themselves how (in the



modern Phrase) *to make the best of their Bible*: Unluckily it was all against them; and though they read it over and over, they found it everywhere levelled against spiritual Pride and Domination, and they could not so much as pick out one direct Text for their purpose.

WHAT must be therefore done in this momentous Affair? The Holy Writings were dispersed abroad, and could not be suppressed, and yet Riches and Power were of indispensable Necessity to the Good of the Church. Why! since they could not get them out of the Peoples Hands, they contrived how to render them of as little Use as possible there; and, in order to it, they pointed all their Batteries against human Reason, and polite Learning, and made [I-251] it an heinous Sin to read any Heathen Authors: By which means, in an Age or two, few could read at all: And the *Romans*, once so famous for Knowledge, Virtue and Humanity, became (for the most part) sunk to the lowest Dregs of Barbarism, Superstition, and Ignorance.

BUT lest the curious and inquisitive Part of Mankind should not be wholly diverted from the Search after Knowledge, they invented, and substituted in its room, a senseless Jargon of undefined, insignificant, and canting Terms, confused Ideas, and indistinct Images; which they persuaded the World to esteem profound Learning, and deep Wisdom: And then they reduced and determined all Questions in Philosophy and Religion by this Gibberish; and he got the Victory, who could hold out longest, and most confound his Auditory, by entangling them in an endless Labyrinth of Nonsense. Men of Wit and Genius were distasted at a Study, which would cost them so much Pains to attain, when they could find neither Pleasure in the Pursuit, nor Profit or Improvement in the Conquest; and having no Notion of any other Learning, they consented to let the Clergy have it all to themselves.

WHEN they had so reduced the Laity to this happy and desirable State of Stupidity and Submission, they took away their Bible from [I-252] them too; or, which was the same thing, they continued it only in a Language, which by the many Conquests upon the Empire, and the Revolutions of Time, was understood by none but themselves. And now, having converted their Hearers into Asses, and Beasts of Carriage, they bridled them, they saddled them, they yoked them, and put heavy Burdens upon them, till they so overloaded them, that they grew resty, and overturned their Burdens, and Riders too.

THUS the World came by the *Reformation*; which dispersed the thick Mist of Superstition and Ignorance, that then overshadowed all *Christendom*: The Laity were resolved to be no longer hoodwinked; but a general Disposition arose in *Europe*, to revive antient Learning, and useful Knowledge: And the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors were sought after, rescued from Dust and Worms, and diligently read. Many Princes promoted these Studies, and gave all due Encouragement to Virtue and Learning: But this noble Spirit of Liberty lasted no longer than the Lives of those Princes, and while the Images of sacerdotal Oppressions were deep engraven in Mens Minds; which, like all other Things, wore out by degrees.

THE principal Expedient, necessary to secure all the rest, was never thought of, or, at [I-253] least, quite forgotten; namely, that of retrieving the Education of Youth out of the Hands of the Priesthood, and of reforming the Universities, which were contrived and established by Popes, to support their own Pride and Power over the unhappy Laity. Instead of suffering these to continue Seminaries of Faction, Tyranny, and Ecclesiastical Usurpations, they should have been converted into Schools of Virtue, Liberty, Knowledge, and true Religion: But the old Leaven was permitted to remain, and the Clergy had still left to them the Education of the Nobility and Gentry in most Countries; and they were educated accordingly.

It became a Maxim in the Universities abroad, That those, who were born to large Possessions and Estates, had no need of Learning; and such were always encouraged or connived at, in mis-spending their Time in Idleness and Luxury, and were generally made the

Companions of their Governors and Tutors in their Pleasures, who were perpetually instilling into their tender Minds tyrannical or slavish Principles. But when they met with Youths of sprightly Wit and Genius, who either from their own Inclinations, or the Impulse of their Relations, would not be diverted from the Pursuit of Knowledge; they industriously put them upon a wrong Scent, and perplexed and confounded [I-254] their Understandings with metaphysical Whimsies, and an artificial Cant, out of which many of them could never extricate their Senses; and such as did; spent often as many Years after they came into the World to do so, as they lost before in the Universities, to be upon the Level with those who had never been there.

THIS soon became again the State of Learning and Knowledge amongst the Nobility and Gentry: Either they had none at all, or such as they were the worse for having: Insomuch that those, whose Birth and Fortunes intitled them to be Legislators and Governors of Mankind, were themselves the Slaves and Dupes of Pedagogues and Chaplains, were contented to do all their Drudgery, and be humble Instruments of their Pride and Luxury.

HOWEVER, as the Priests could not agree amongst themselves about sharing the Laity, and as Printing was before this Time invented in *Christendom*, which made it impracticable to suppress all Copies of useful Books, or to hinder them from being read; many Persons had the Virtue and Resolution to oppose Clerical Usurpation, and kept alive some Spirit of Liberty, in spite of all the Efforts of Priestcraft and Delusion, ever supported by worldly Interest, and too often by worldly Power.

[I-255]

It is a hard Circumstance for Truth, that in most Countries it must subsist upon Converts; and Education, Interest, and Authority, must combine against it: But if, notwithstanding all their Efforts, its own clear Evidence, and irresistible Authority, can make such a Progress in the World, what might we not expect, if the Approaches and Passages to it were made easy and advantageous, and proper Rewards and Encouragements given to the Promoters and Discoverers of such Philosophy and Knowledge, as will make Men useful to themselves and their Country? It cannot be doubted, but antient Virtue, and antient Eloquence, would then revive again; the Nobility and Gentry of *Christendom* would resume their proper Stations, and exceed the inferior Part of Mankind, as much in public Spirit, Courage, and Wisdom, as they do in Fortune and Quality; and possibly might in time as much outshine the *Greeks* and *Romans* in those great Endowments, as they evidently surpass them in those Arts and Sciences, which the Priests do not pretend to teach, and seldom know any thing of.

T.

[I-256]

**NUMBER XXX.**  
***Of EDUCATION. Part II.*** ↩

***Wednesday, August 10. 1720.***

NOT all the Cruelty of Tyrants, the Subtilty and Craft of Priests, or the Malice of Devils, have ever invented or brought a greater Plague or Mischief upon Mankind, than false Learning. We may be upon our Guard against all other Calamities; but here the Enemy is within us, and admitted at all times to the innermost Recesses of our Souls; where he acts the Part of a treacherous Friend, betrays us under the Pretence of serving us, and administers Poison in Cups of seeming Nectar and Ambrosia: We are gradually deprived of our Senses, whilst we think we are improving them; become Fools by Industry, and great Application; like *Tantalus*, are starved with an imaginary Banquet at our Mouths; and, in the midst of an

appearing Profusion of Knowledge, want common Sense; and, what is yet worse, [I-257] are insensible of our Distemper, and consequently are incapable of a Remedy.

OUR Minds, as well as Bodies, are easily distorted, and put out of their natural Frame; Absurdity and Nonsense is to be learned, and good natural Faculties may be improved into foolish ones, or none at all. A Man, like a Vessel, is capable of holding only a certain Quantity, which, when it is full of one Liquor, is incapable of receiving another; and even when the first is drawn out, it generally leaves a Tincture behind it. The Mind, when rightly set out, usefully employed, and upon proper Objects, will improve, and every Day strengthen; but when conversant only with Visions, Phantoms and Whimsies, will assimilate with the Company which it keeps, and thus by degrees loses its distinguishing Faculty.

A PROPER Exercise, and a natural Use of the Limbs, give Health and Vigour, as well as Gracefulness, and becoming Motion; whereas Grimace, and absurd Posture, are Qualifications only for Jack-Puddings and Merry-Andrews. One who has been long taught by an ill Master, is farther from a good Dancer, than another who has never begun, because he must unlearn all his ill Habits, to be in the Circumstance of him who has not learned at all; as a Man, who gets out of his Road, is farther from his Journey's [I-258] End, than if he had staid at home; and commonly must return thither again, to find out his right Way.

WHOEVER spends his Time in reading foolish Books, and in studying useless or false Speculations, will grow the greater Coxcomb, the greater Progress he makes: He is learning backwards, and undermining and destroying the first Sparks of Knowledge, and in time will be fortified and impregnable against common Sense. A great Philosopher tells us, that Ignorance is a middle State between Knowledge and false Learning; that is to say, one who is wholly untaught and unimproved, is as much above a learned Man, in the common Acceptation of the Word, as a Man well educated does exceed another who has had no Education at all: The Capacity of the first is intire, and susceptible of Information; whereas in the other, all the Avenues and Passages to Wisdom are destroyed or locked up, and he is so puzzled, perplexed, and confounded in a Maze of improved Nonsense and Absurdity, that he never can get through it, or out of it. The Acquisitions in such Learning have been aptly compared to the Fluttering and Rumbling of a Swallow falling down a Chimney, who, when he is at bottom, flies about, and hurries backwards and forwards to every Window, and every Corner of the [I-259] Room, to make his Escape; but never thinks of the Way by which he came in, and so becomes an easy Prey to the first Enemy which assaults him.

WHOEVER is conversant with Scholastics, and has any Understanding of his own, (if such a Correspondence can possibly be) must readily assent to this Truth. It is even grown a Proverb in the learned Language, that *Merus Scholasticus est merus Asinus*: What an Appearance do these Reverend Drones, and accomplished Dunces, make amongst Mankind! How are they exceeded in Conversation, agreeable Address, and useful Knowledge, by the youngest Gentlemen, by Soldiers and Merchants, and often by Mechanics and Tradesmen, who can only write and cast Accompts! Nothing but the Solemnity of their Habits, and the austere Gravity of their Phiz, Mien, and Behaviour, hinders them from being the Jest and Contempt of Women and Boys. It is said, that *Villiers*, Duke of *Buckingham*, once took a Conceit to invite all the deep Chins about the Town to a magnificent Entertainment spread upon a long Table; and he made himself amends, by sitting at the Upper end, and enjoying the Visto. Indeed I cannot deny, but I have sometimes had such a sort of ill-natured Pleasure, in imagining that I saw some of the Governors of the Two [I-260] Universities (with others of their Betters, who shall be nameless) uncased of their reverential Robes, and dressed up with Hats and Feathers, Sword-knots, and laced Coats, and in that Equipage marching in solemn Guise, like a Call of Sergeants from *Temple-Bar* to *Westminster*.

THEY give us, in some degree, the same Figure, when they shew themselves in the World abroad: Like Snails, they carry their Houses about them, and bring Pedantry, Conceit, sour Humour, Bigotry, magisterial Grimace, and ill Manners, into all Conversations where they mix; and indeed are seldom fit for any polite Conversation whatsoever. They have neither the Temper of Christians, the Reason of Philosophers, or the Affability of Gentlemen, and therefore are justly despised by them all. *Frier John*, as I remember, asks of *Panurge* or *Pantagruel*, in *Rabelais*, What is the Reason that the Houshold Priest is used worse than any one else in the Family? And, I think, he answers; Because he neither ploughs the Ground like the laborious Ox, nor carries Burdens like the useful Horse, nor keeps the Door like the faithful Dog; but, like the Monkey, runs about every-where fouling the House, chattering and making a Noise, biting Peoples Fingers, and doing nothing but Mischief; and so every body has a Stroke at him, and gives him a Knock as he passes by.

[I-261]

THE Writings of many of these solemn Gentlemen are of the same Kind, and carry the same tragical and grim Aspect. They would be Dictators in Faith and Science, and so their Books are full of the Spirit of Pedantry, false Zeal, and Illbreeding; and, under the Appearance and Affectation of Learning, contain only Paradoxes, Uncertainty, harsh Severity, or aukward Buffoonry. Any one who is the least acquainted with these dogmatical Zealots, these punning Inquisitors, must own that I have done Justice to their Characters, and the Merit which runs thro' them; unless in some Instances, mostly about this great Town, where an uncommon natural Genius, Liberty of Mind, generous Birth, or a free Conversation, has got the better of a constrained and corrupt Education.

I THANK God, such as have of late Years had the Honour of being admitted to great Dignities, and been brought into the Legislature or Royal Councils, are of the latter Sort: But what Figure have others formerly made in the Senate-house, or Council-board? How much below young Noblemen, who had never been at the Universities, or had just forgot what they had learned there, and rubbed or filed off College Rust by polite Conversation? In one, you might have observed an Easiness of Address, Softness of Speech, and Freedom of Thought; in the other, [I-262] Starchness of Behaviour, Sourness of Looks, and starved Conceits, urged with fierce and impetuous Rage. A late noble and great Genius of our Age and Country compares them to those Grotesque Figures, and Dragon Faces, which are often seen in the Frontispiece, and upon the Corner Stones of old Buildings: They seem placed there as the Defenders and Supporters of the Edifice; but with all their Grimace, are as harmless to People without, as they are useless to the Building within.

T.

NUMBER XXXI.  
*Of CEREMONIES.* ↩

*Wednesday, August 17. 1720.*

PLAINNESS and Simplicity are not more inseparable Marks of Truth, than they are of true Religion, which wants neither Paint nor Pageantry to recommend itself to the Hearts of Men. It wins the Affections, by the Force of its Persuasions; and the Understanding, by the Reasonableness of its Precepts. It abhors Violence, [I-263] as opposite to its Nature; and despises Art and Policy, as below its Dignity. Human Ornaments may hide and disfigure, but cannot preserve nor improve its intrinsic Beauty, and divine Lustre: And Pomp and Grimace, as they are no-wise a-kin to it, so neither are they the Effects of it, nor bring any Advantage to it. On the contrary, they tend to fill the Mind with gross Ideas, or sullen Fear; and so create Superstition instead of Piety, and Farce instead of Worship.

GOD himself has told us, that he will be worshipped *in Spirit and in Truth*: Which shews, that Love and Sincerity constitute Devotion, and that Religion resides in the Mind. As to bodily Religion, and corporeal Holiness, the Gospel is silent about them; leaving every one at full Liberty to behave his own way in the *Practice of Piety*.

It is justly esteemed the Glory and Felicity of the Christian Religion, that by it we are released from that grievous Yoke and Bondage of Ceremonies, which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear. It is a Religion of Reason, void of all Superfluities, and trifling Impertinences.

MEN cannot judge of one another's Thoughts and Inclinations, but by Words and Actions: And, because it would be both troublesome and silly to be on every Occasion haranguing our Friends and Superiors, upon the profound Veneration [I-264] which we profess for their Persons or Characters; it has become necessary to agree upon some outward Forms, to denote internal Respect. And this I take to be the only good Reason which can be given for such Manner of Address or Ceremony. It is ridiculous, either by Sounds or Gestures, to tell a Man over and over again, what he knows already; and therefore, the most intimate Friends, and old Acquaintance, make but little Use of Shew or Compliment; and those who make most, are ever found the least sincere. But how senseless and absurd must it be to entertain Heaven with such Grimaces! that Heaven, which searches our Hearts, and knows our most hidden Thoughts; and will not be deceived by outward, arbitrary and fallacious Marks of inward Disposition!

It can never be conceived, that the All-merciful and Omniscient God should, by the sending of his Son, abolish, or suffer to be abolished, the whole *Jewish* Legion of Ceremonies, though appointed by himself in Person; and should graciously condescend to establish a new Dispensation, destitute of all Ceremony, and exterior Grandeur; and yet should leave it to the Ambition of designing Men, or to the Folly of weak ones, to invent and impose a fresh Load of Rituals, in Opposition to the plain Genius of the Gospel. This would be for the All-merciful to be merciful [I-265] in vain; for the Creator to resign his Power to the Creature; and for God to recall his own Injunctions, which he once gave for a gracious and wise End, since ceased, that Men may enforce theirs, for a weak or a wicked one.

NOTHING is, or can be, pure Religion, but either what God commands and tells us he will accept; or what is dictated by eternal Reason, which is the Law of Nature: And whatever is superadded, however dignified by a venerable Name, is no Part of true Religion; which, as has been said, can be supported by nothing but *Divine Revelation*, or *Divine Reason*. When both these are wanting, we wander in the Dark, and worship blindfold; being led by the Hand of Conjecture and Invention, which are uncertain and endless.

THIS is so true, that where-ever there is true Religion, there are few Ceremonies: And, on the other hand, where Ceremonies abound, there Religion is either utterly lost, or miserably decayed; and, in Popish Countries, it is more or less visible, according as Ceremonies and Bigotry (which, like Cause and Effect, go always Hand in Hand) are more or less practised or promoted. Thus, in *France*, where, through the Commerce of that Kingdom with *Protestants*, there are still some Remains of common Sense, and consequently of Religion; God Almighty is worshipped [I-266] as well as dead Men, though not so much: Whereas, in *Italy* and *Spain*, the Saints have deprived their Maker of all Devotion; and the *Blessed Virgin*, *St. Dominic*, *St. Jago*, and *St. Antony*, are, by these hot-headed Bigots, made Governors of Heaven and Earth, and the Givers of eternal Life; and consequently are become, next immediately after the Priests, the only Objects of their Adoration. If you deprive them of their Saints and their Ceremonies, there is not the least Face of Religion left amongst them.

So little has Christianity gained by Ceremonies, that a great Part of Mankind have, by adopting them, banished all true Religion. If they were introduced, as it is alleged, to kindle Piety; I am sorry to say; it has so happened, that this Heat of Devotion has quite drank up the Truth and Vitals of Religion; and the blind Compliance with a senseless Cringe, invented and enjoined by a Popish Priest, is made of more Importance and Merit, than the Possession of all Moral and Christian Virtues, without it. Religion, good Sense, and Humanity, are inseparable Friends; but a superstitious Fondness for Ceremonies is a Contradiction, and an Affront to all the Three.

THE Teachers of Mankind have, for the greatest Part, been the most unteachable of all Men; and these our Guides to Peace have been always the foremost to break it. They have seen, [I-267] from time to time, the Violence and ungodly Effects produced by their Contention for human Forms, Habits, and Decisions; and yet, where the religious Laity and the Law did not interpose, to restrain this unchristian Behaviour in *Churchmen*, they have not only still adhered with Obstinacy to their Inventions and Impositions, but frequently made it their Business to broach new ones, and to throw about fresh Balls of Strife and Cruelty.

CEREMONIES were first brought in under a very plausible Pretence; namely, that of aiding and promoting Religion. But we have seen, by above a Thousand Years Experience, that these its pretended Friends always become its real Rivals, and successful Enemies; and, by the Help of those, whose Interest it was to contrive and support them at any rate, never failed to banish it as far away as their Power extended.

It is pretended, that the Invention of stated Ceremonies and Garments is justified by these Words of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *Let all Things be done decently, and in Order*. Which Words are only a Precept to avoid Immodesty and Confusion, in their religious Assemblies. Two, for Example, were not to speak at the same time: One was not to sing Psalms, while another prayed. Neither Love nor Trade was to be the Business of their Meetings; nor Tythes [I-268] and their own Power the Drist and Business of the Preachers: Christ was not to be confounded with *Belial*; nor Pride and Dominion with Meekness and Christianity: Exhorting was not to be mixed with Railing, nor Praying with Cursing; nor were the People to be taught to hate one another: In short, God was to be adored with the Heart and Affections, and not with a Fiddle, or a Pipe and Tabor.

I DO not find, that the Apostle's Words were understood in any other Sense than this, by those to whom they were addressed: It does not appear, that immediately upon the Sight of St. *Paul*'s Epistle, the *Corinthians* concluded, that Prayers should be said in Surplices; and that the Faithful, as soon as the Word was given, should kneel, stoop and stand, or turn to the Right or Left, like a File of Musqueteers; or that they were to nod towards the East, as if the Almighty kept his Court only there.

NOR were the *Corinthians* directed by this Text to play *Popish* Tricks over the Forehead of a Babe baptized, as *sure and certain Signs* of Regeneration: Nor were they commanded to put up their Petitions in Quavers, and to sing their Prayers as well as say them; nor was that subtle Distinction then and there found out, of bowing at the Name of *Jesus*, but not at the Name of Christ, or of God.

[I-269]

ALL these pretty Fashions were unknown to the Apostle and his Correspondents; and their Genteelness and *Significancy* have been long since discovered by the *Romish* Clergy in the latter Days; and indeed, it is now become impossible to make one's Court well without them.

THE Words *Decorum* and *Significancy*, which are made use of to justify the Celebration of Ceremonies, are Words of such prodigious Latitude, that the World does not agree, nor ever can agree, what it is that does come properly under their Denomination, and what does not. With the *Turks*, it is *decent* to be covered at Devotion; with *us*, to be bare-headed. How is the wearing of a Perriwig, or a Cap, more *decent* and orthodox than the wearing of a Hat? How is a Prunella Gown, or a Lawn Frock, more significant than a Cloth Coat? Is God Almighty better pleased with a Cambrick Band than with a Muslin Cravat? And is an Organ-Loft more acceptable to him than plain Country Piety, that has neither Motion nor Music in it?

If Men be at Liberty to invent and injoin *One* unnecessary Ceremony, Why not *Two*? And if *Two*, Why not *Two thousand*? When such a Power is once granted, it cannot be easily, nor indeed reasonably, limited. If the Clergy can oblige me to throw my Head into my Bosom, upon their pronouncing certain Sounds; they [I-270] may, by the same Right, upon pronouncing different Sounds, oblige me to run it against a Stone Wall: Nay, which is still worse, whoever has an Authority to direct my *Manner* of Worship, must have also a Power to direct the *Matter* of it, and may *command* me WHOM to worship as well as HOW.

SUPERSTITION in the People, and Power in the Priests, were the true Ends and Consequences of creating *Popish* Ceremonies; for as to their Significancy, it was a mere Bubble and Pretence. Such a Plea would justify endless Phrensy and Fooleries; and every Madness would be made a Mystery. For Instance, we might be made to walk bare-footed into the Church, to *signify* the Sanctity of the Place; and to crawl upon all Four out of it, to *signify* the Humiliation of our Hearts. A Match of Cudgel-playing every *Sunday* might be instituted, to *signify* our spiritual Warfare; and a Game at Blindman's-buff, to *signify* the Darkness of our Understandings. In short, any thing might be made to *signify* every thing; and any Punishment be inflicted upon the profane *Gainsayer*: And upon this foot may be justified all the *Pagan* and *Popish* Fopperies that ever were, or ever could be, invented; and nothing can be said against all the many Garments, and many Colours, and many antic Gestures used by the *Romish* Priests at this Day.

[I-271]

It must be evident to every intelligent Man, that all this pretty Pageantry and *Raree-shew* can never make Men more acceptable to God, who will not be gratified or obliged by a Jigg, or a Tune. But, I believe I may safely affirm, that if all this Merry-making, and jovial Devotion, in the *Popish* Churches, do no manner of Good, they must needs do Harm, because they divert the Mind from deliberate Devotion, and calm Repentance, and can at best only work it up to a wild and enthusiastic Worship.

HOWEVER, though this pompous Parade in Piety does no Service to Religion, it effectually answers the End proposed by it; and contributes vastly, as every thing else does, to the Advancement and Grandeur of the *Romish* Clergy, as it turns Mens Thoughts from divine Objects to a superstitious Veneration for Postures, Habits, Grimaces, Cringes, Utensils, &c. all invented by Priests, who are always sure to appoint themselves Masters of the Ceremonies, and to be well paid for their deep Knowledge in this momentous Science. Besides, it lists into their Service great Numbers of People; such as Organists, Fiddlers, Singing-men, with all the piping and chanting Crew, as well as Artificers of various Kinds. It engages Men of Pleasure, and Ladies, in their Interests; it catches the Multitude by the Ears, and the Eyes, and sets them a staring; and it [I-272] alleviates their own Drudgery of frequent Preaching and Praying: It also serves the Purposes of Interludes in the perpetual Tragedies they are acting; which they render less terrible, by playing, like *Nero*, upon their Harps, in the midst of Conflagrations of their own making.

WHAT a Blessing is it to this Church and Kingdom, that all this Farce in Devotion is forbidden by the *Act of Uniformity*, as well as by our *Homilies!* As shall be further taken notice of, when I treat again upon the same Subject.

G.

NUMBER XXXII.  
*Of CEREMONIES. Part II.* ↩

*Wednesday, August 24. 1720.*

MY last Paper treated of superstitious Ceremonies; and this shall contain a Prosecution of the same Subject.

THE Pagan Religion consisted altogether in a vast Number and Variety of strange and senseless [I-273] Ceremonies; and, being foolish and false, it could consist of nothing else. Its Votaries had, for their Religious Task, certain frantic Actions to perform, certain wanton Motions to make, or certain mad Races to run; sometimes galloping about the Streets like Lunatics, stark naked, and sometimes half naked; or in a religious antic Dress, *significantly* suited to their Behaviour. They were to be religious with their Heads, Feet, Joints, and their *other Organs*: They were also to utter certain harsh and devout Sounds, which had no Meaning, but were prodigious *significant*, and, being very ridiculous, were very *decent*.

DURING all this holy Exercise, which was edifying in proportion as it was mad, their Minds were possessed with a drunken Festivity and Wantonness, or with Craziness and enthusiastic Fear. They were either lewd or raving, Rakes or Fanatics. It never entered into their Heads, nor did their Priests ever put it into them, that Religion was a sober Thing, consisting in the Exercise of Reason, and the Practice of Virtue. No; a Spirit of Sobriety, or a Ray of Understanding, would have blown up the Authority and Dominion of the *Heathen Parsons*; and therefore, the poor *Lay Pagans* were not suffered to know, that a Man might be a religious Man, without being a good Dancer, and please God without roaring and running Races.

[I-274]

THIS was the *godly and wholesome Discipline*; invented and instituted by the *Pagan Clergy*, for the Use and Edification of the deluded and idolatrous World. *Action* and *Outside* was all that they knew of Religion; and therefore their Superstition took great Delight in building and beautifying Temples. They imagined, that the doing of a thing which had any Reference to Religion, was actually a Piece of Religion; and that any Jobb of Work about a holy Place, was, in good earnest, a Jobb of Holiness. They might have as rationally believed, that Masons, Joyners, and Plaisterers, employed about a Temple, derived Piety and Merit from that Employment.

HAD not Pagan Ceremonies (and *Pagans* were the first Inventors of Ceremonies) signified nothing, or rather something very bad, as indeed it was evident to every Eye, that they were either senseless or impious; our Saviour would never have instituted, as he did, a Religion without one Ceremony in it. The Religion of the Gospel is as pure from Fancies and Ceremonies, as from Pride, and the Spirit of Dominion.

OUR Blessed Saviour knew well, that the crafty and profane Priests had, by their shameless Inventions, and filthy Ceremonies, polluted or abolished all Religion; and therefore, in Mercy [I-275] to Mankind, founded a Religion without Priests, and without Ceremonies (as shall be fully shewn hereafter). For, it is to be observed, that while the Established Church of *Paganism* flourished, Priests and Ceremonies always flourished or increased together.



SUCH was the simple Institution of the Gospel: But when *Popery* began to expel Christianity, Ignorance and Ceremonies were some of the principal Engines by which it effected the same. For as the Meekness of Christians was then converted into the Cruelty of *Barbarians*, and the Plainness of the Gospel into all the detestable Fopperies of *Paganism*; so Holiness of Heart was changed into Holiness of Posture; the Humility of the Soul into bodily Bowings; the Worship of God into the Worship of *Bread*, and the Piping of Organs: And the Clergy, as they had called themselves, were no longer clothed with Meekness, but with *Surplices*, &c.

NOR was this mighty Revolution, this unnatural Transition from the Beauty and Gentleness of Christianity, to the unhallowed Spirit and abominable Rituals of the Heathens, at all hard or impracticable. The People had, by the Idleness, Insufficiency, and Debaucheries of the Ecclesiastics, become corrupt and blind to the last Degree, and therefore ran readily and chearfully into every new Absurdity. Whatever the [I-276] Bishop pronounced *decent*, though ever so vile or silly, his conforming Flock received as *reverend* and *edifying*. A gross and sensual Manner of Worship suited best with the Grossness of their Understandings, and the Sensuality of their Minds. They had no Conception of the spiritual Nature of the Gospel, and of that evangelical Grace, which operates internally, and is wholly employed about the Soul, but produces neither Cringes nor Dances, nor Grimaces.

A RELIGION therefore of Ceremonies, which is no Religion at all, agreed well with those carnal Christians, who were taught to place all Religion in Ceremonies. When the ignorant Vulgar are once persuaded, that Ceremonies are good for any thing, they come quickly to think them good for every thing, and *the more, the merrier!* They are delighted with Shadows, and Mystery, and Juggling. Ignorance, like every other Habit, is daily improving itself, and increases in Strength as in Years; it delights to be still plunging into farther and deeper Darkness. The less People understand, the more they stare; and because there is nothing in the Gospel but plain Piety, plain Reason, and plain Matter of Fact; therefore it can raise no Wonderment in them, and consequently no *pleasing Piety*: But strange and *mysterious* Ceremonies can do all this; and, for that Reason, have [I-277] always got the better of Religion in all bigotted Countries.

HERE therefore is a glorious and ample Field of Gaping, Sottishness, and Credulity, for crafty Priests to play their Tricks, and sow Superstition in. And, indeed, they have topped their Parts, in this Undertaking, with such Dexterity and Success, that their humble and resigned Votaries do not any longer pretend to carry their own Eyes or Understanding: Their very Palates and Noses are Priest-ridden, and dare neither taste nor smell, without an *Ecclesiastical Licence*. Thus even the invincible Operations of the animal Spirits, and of the Five Senses, must stand still, when commanded by the Priest, who can annihilate the Creature, and create his Creator.

As, under the sacred Name of God and Religion, the greatest Irreligion and Impieties have been propagated; so, under the Colour and Umbrage of *significant* and *decent* Ceremonies, the most ridiculous and immodest Usages have been introduced. It would require more than a whole Paper to expose all the many apish Gesticulations of the *Romish* Mass; I shall only run over a few of them.

THE Priest, in the Administration of Mass, must wear a white Linen Garment, which, I suppose, must signify *Whiteness*; for I cannot see a more obvious Meaning in it. The same was [I-278] also worn by the primitive Heathen Clergy, when they butchered Bullocks, to appease their Deities.

As he approaches towards the Altar, having great Devotion in his Back-bone, he bows, and bows, and ducks his Head, as if he was playing at *Hop-Frog*. The Altar is also covered with a *Surplice*, or white Cloth, which, doubtless, signifies some great Mystery; but, in profane Eyes, typifies only a Damask Table-cloth. It moreover stands towards the East, which, to be sure, has a deep Meaning, and seems to imply, as if God Almighty was either more merciful or more powerful in that Quarter of the World, (though he made it All) than in any of the other Three; or, as if he liked that Climate best, and All those who bow to it.

HE then, after many monkish Gestures and Scrapings, says a World of short Prayers, (the whole Service being judiciously sliced into pretty little Morsels of Devotion) and reads Scraps of Scripture; all which Prayings and Readings would not be half so wholesome anywhere else, as they are just at the Elbow of the Altar. Their there is a lighted Candle standing by him at Noon-day, probably to signify, that there is Light enough without it. Now, in some other Churches, the Altar is only illuminated with dark Candles, which, for aught I know, may be [I-279] equally mysterious and significant. But, upon this great and essential Point, I shall pronounce nothing dogmatically.

THE Priest then mutters Words over the Bread and Wine, which thereupon start into Omnipotent Flesh and Blood; and the living Jesus is swallowed Whole, in Remembrance of the dead One; and the Priest makes his Maker; and the People eat him. The Wine, which the Priest very naturally keeps all to himself, must not be poured out of a Bottle into a Glass, which would not be *significant* enough; but out of a Flaggon, which, being of Silver or Gold, and holding more Liquor, is consequently very *significant*. He repeats, *Lord have Mercy upon us*, very often, to *signify* that he does it more than once; and speaks loud, to *signify* that he may be heard.

BUT I am quite sick of this strange significant Stuff, before I have gone through the tenth Part of it. The whole Performance is perfectly Theatrical, and improperly and impiously called a Sacrament. It is indeed a wretched, unentertaining Interlude; a stupid Farce, of which the Priest is the chief Mimic; for mumbling and making Mouths does not deserve the Name of *Acting*.

WE have had several Attempts made to revive among us this infamous Mummery in [I-280] Devotion, and these apish Ceremonies; which are an Affront to common Sense, and below the Dignity of human Nature, much more of Religion: But such Attempts can never succeed, while we enjoy either Liberty or Knowledge. *Archbishop Laud*, therefore, when he had bewitched the Court, swayed the Sceptre, and destroyed the Liberty of the People and of the Press, took the best Opportunity he could get, to transport *Rome* to *Lambeth*; and having married the *Harlot*, he adopted her Trumpery.

A SAMPLE of this Man's Genius for Popery may be seen in his mad Manner of Consecrating some new Brick and Mortar, which had been used in the Repair of *St. Catharine Creed-Church, London*; as the same is related at large by *Rushworth*. At his Approach to the Westend of the Church, the Doors flew open, upon pronouncing certain Words out of the *Psalms*, *That the King of Glory might enter*; and then entered the Bishop, and, falling down upon his Knees, baptized the Ground, or, which is the same thing, pronounced it Holy, *in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and Holy Ghost*. Then he threw Dust in the Air, and played some other pious Pranks. Then he pronounced many Curses, and called upon the People to curse with him. Then he scattered a Basket-full of Blessings amongst all the Masons, and other holy [I-281] Mechanics, who had helped to make that Church fine. He also went round the Church in Procession, and told God Almighty and the People, over and over, that that was holy Ground. At last, after a Bead-roll of Prayers, and a hundred and fifty Bowings; and after many wild Gestures, sometimes advancing, sometimes recoiling, like one affrighted and crazy, he gave the Sacrament.

BESIDES all this, he removed the Communion-Table, and placed it in the Chancel Altarwise, contrary to the express Direction of the Rubric; which says, that it shall stand where Morning and Evening Prayer is directed to be said. He made Pictures of the Trinity, and caused them to be hung up in Churches; and was guilty of many other Popish Innovations, all tending to create Fanaticism and Superstition.

THIS Paper grows too long, and leaves me no room to do Justice to Crosses, Square Caps, and fantastical Garments: All which, I warrant you, are profoundly mysterious; though, to carnal Eyes, they seem only to *signify* to make the People stare: For every odd Sight strikes the Imagination, and disposes the Beholder either to Laughter or Reverence. Nor have I Time to honour, with a proper Encomium, that ingenious and ecclessastical Device, of explaining the sublime Mystery of the Trinity by a Pair of Compasses, though it is above all Explication, [I-282] and even of Conception, unless through Faith; and of representing the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a Triangle in a Circle over the Communion-Table. Was there ever such a pretty Piece of pious Cunning! By the said Triangle is typified and held forth to us, that the said Triangle consists of Three Angles; which is exceeding plain and edifying: And by the Circle is signified, that the said Circle is but One Circle, which is prodigious good again! But, that a Triangle is a Circle, and a Circle is a Triangle, Dr. *Waterland* saith not.

I MUST, for the same Reason, pass over unobserved, the praising of God with Organs, which our Homilies very uncivilly call superstitious; Cuts in the Common-Prayer Books, tending to prepare People for Idolatry; and Pictures in Churches, for the same devout Purpose.

G.

*The End of the FIRST VOLUME.*

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## Endnotes

[\*] Dr. *Benjamin Hoadley*, now Lord Bishop of *Winchester*.

[\*] Dr. *Benjamin Hoadley*, then Bishop of *Bangor*, and now Bishop of *Winchester*.

[\*] *25 Hen. VIII. Cap. 20.*

[\*] *26 Hen. VIII. Cap. 1.*

[\*] Dr. *Benjamin Headley*, now Bishop of *Winchester*.

[†] Dr. *Francis Atterbury*, late Bishop of *Rochester*, and Dean of *Westminster*.

[\*] Dr. *Francis Atterbury*, late Bishop of *Rochester*.

[†] Dr. *William Wake*, late Archbishop of *Canterbury*.

[\*] *Ecclesiastical History, nothing else but a Detail of the Villainies of Priests.*

[\*] *Emanuel de Moura, and some other Orthodox Writers say, that Aristotle was a steady Believer of the Trinity.*

[†] *This is the Opinion of Sepulveda, a learned Man in the 16th Century.*

*The whole Article of Aristotle, in Mr. Bayle's Dictionary, is well worth reading.*

[\*] *St. Andrew's Holbourn, where the late Dr. Sacheverell was then Rector.*

[\*] *The late Dr. William Wake.*