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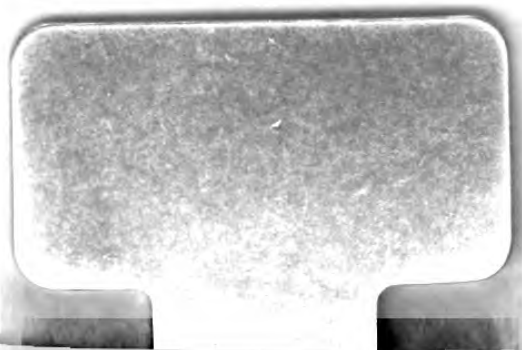
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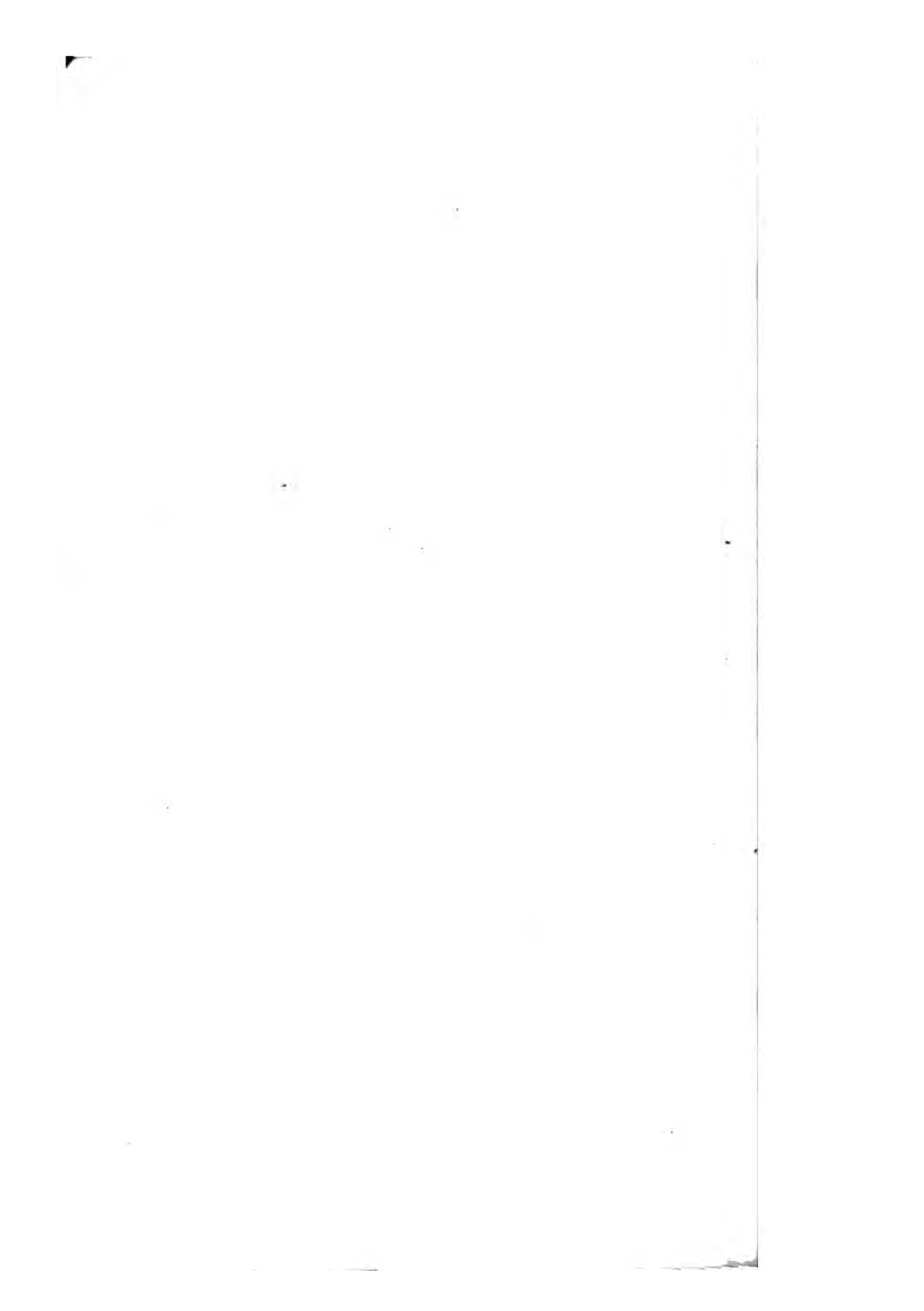
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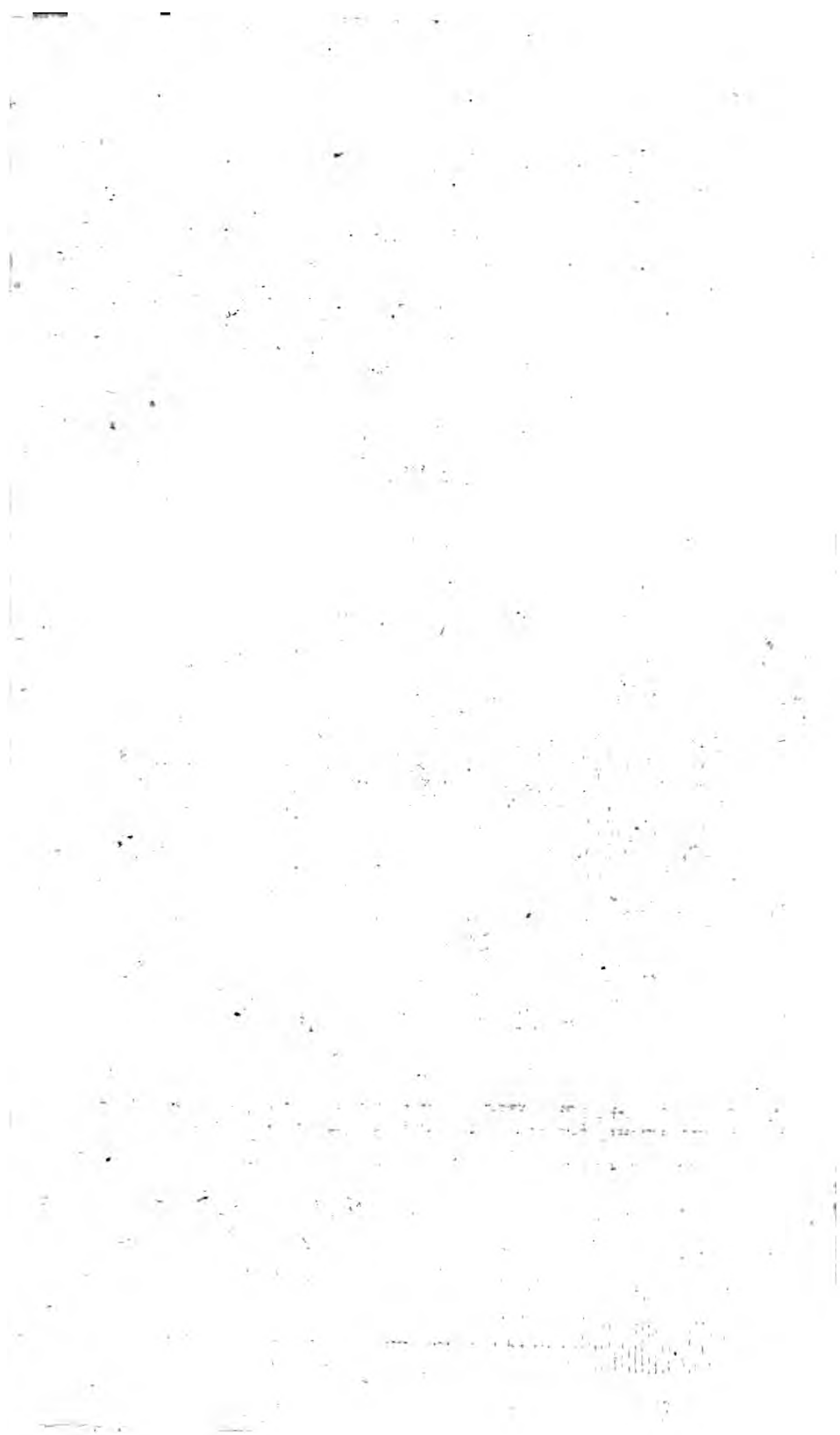
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*Vera effigies doctissimi Viri  
D. IOHANNIS HALES Colleg. Eton. Socij  
et Eccles. Colleg. Windesoriensis Canonici.*

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SEVERAL  
TRACTS

By the Ever-memorable

Mr. *JOHN HALES*

Of *Eaton-College, &c.*

*VIZ,*

- I. Concerning the Sin against the Holy Ghost.
- II. Of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
- III. Paraphrase on *S. Matthew's Gospel.*
- IV. Of the Power of the Keys.
- V. Of Schism and Schismatics.
- VI. Miscellanies.

To which is Added,

His LETTER to Archbishop LAUD,  
occasion'd by his Tract of Schism; never  
before published among his Works.

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Printed in the Year M. DCC. XVI.



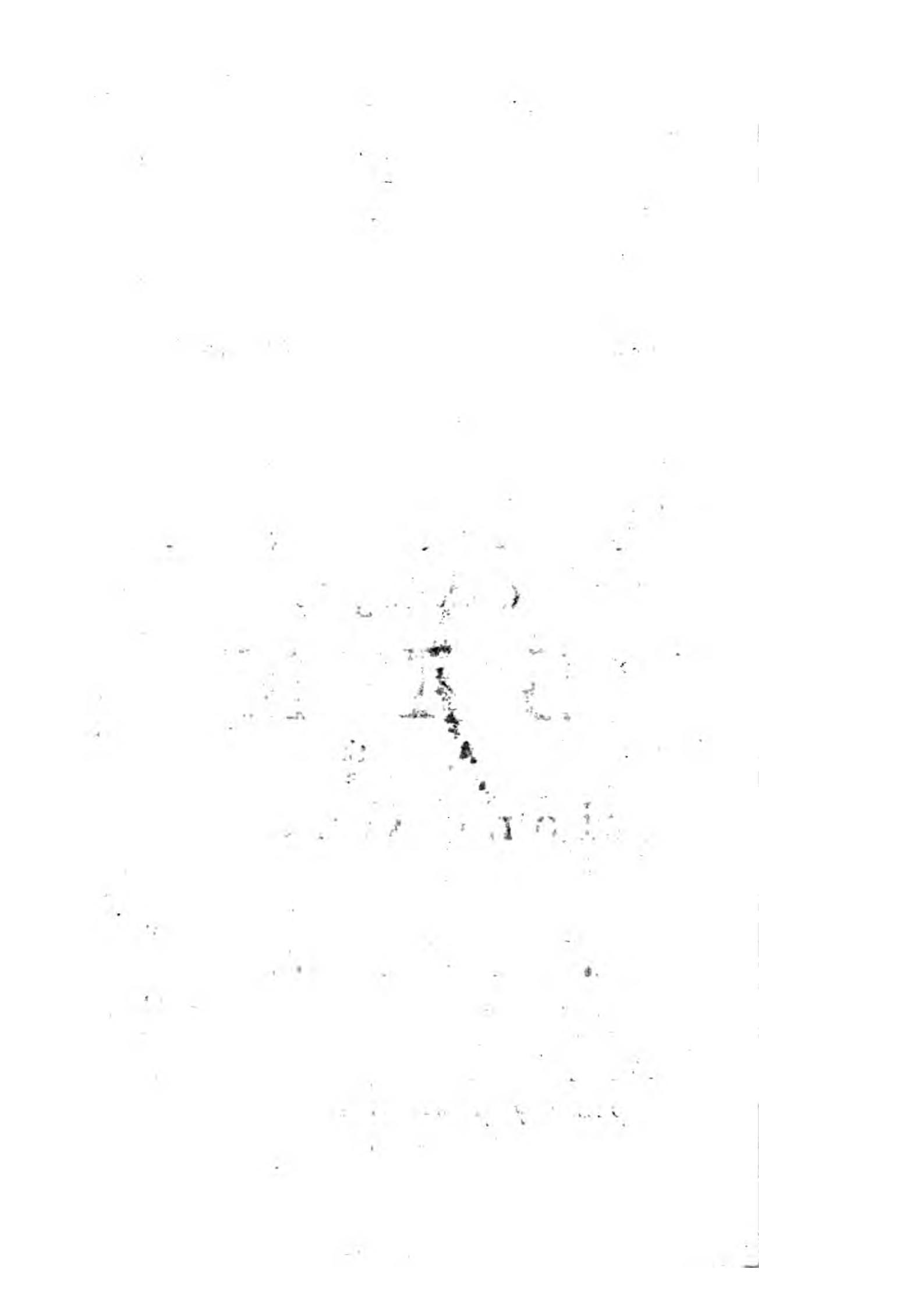
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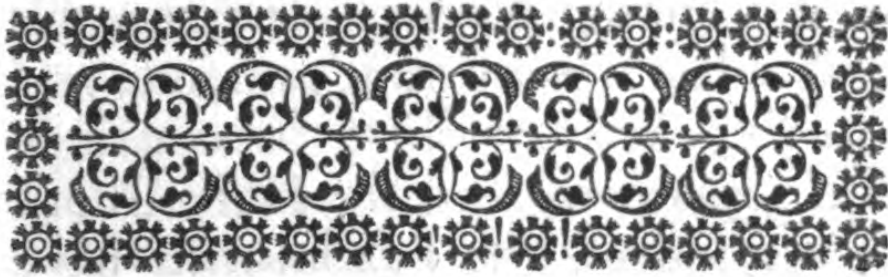
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



A  
T R A C T  
Concerning the  
S I N  
Against the  
H O L Y G H O S T.







**A TRACT** *concerning*  
*the SIN against the HOLY*  
**GHOST.**



**M**ANY have written of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and in defining or describing of it, follow their own zealous Conceits, and not the Canon of Holy Scriptures. The more dreadful the Sin is, the more fearful we must be, in charging it upon any special Crime or particular

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Person. In defining a Sin of so heinous a Nature, direct and evident Proof from Scripture is requisite: It is not enough to consider (as many do) what Sins are most desperate and deadly, and therefore to conclude such Sins are against the Holy Ghost. Thus indeed the School-men have done, who have made six Differences of this Sin, without Ground or Warrant from Scripture for so doing. *V. in fine.* And *Bellarmino* is so liberal in bestowing on such as he calls Hereticks, that his Opinion is, that a Man can scarce be a learned Protestant, without committing the Sin against the Holy Ghost. Neither are the Papists the only Men that are mistaken about this Sin; but too many Divines of the Reformed Churches have started aside from the Scripture, and have given us such intricate and contradictory Definitions of this Sin, as tend only to the perplexing the tender Consciences of weak Christians. To make good this Censure, I will briefly set down so much touch-

*the Holy Ghost.* 9

touching this Sin, as I conceive is warranted by the Word of God, and humbly submit to the Judgment of the Learned.

THE Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, was an evil speaking of, or flandering of the Miracles which our Saviour did, by those, who tho they were convinc'd by the Miracles, to believe that such Works could not be done but by the Power of God, yet they did maliciously say, they were wrought by the Power of the Devil.

IN this Definition, these Points are observable.

I. I FORBEAR to call it the Sin against the Holy Ghost, but the Blasphemy; for tho every Blasphemy be a Sin in general, yet our Saviour Christ terms it the Blasphemy. And the Evangelists do all agree, to give it the same Term; and 'tis now here in Holy Scripture called the

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Sin against the Holy Ghost, and yet it appears both in *St. Matthew* and *St. Mark*, that there was just Occasion offer'd to our Saviour to call it so: where he compares it with the Sin against the Son of Man, but he forbears to call it any thing but the Blasphemy; thereby, no doubt, to teach us, it consisteth only in cursed Speaking and Blaspheming. A serious Consideration of this Point, may teach us so much Moderation, as to confine our selves to that Term which our Saviour in the three Evangelists hath prescrib'd unto us. I cannot find that any Man that hath writ upon this Argument, hath made any Observation, or noted this Phrase and Term used by the Evangelists, in pronouncing the dreadful Sentence of our Saviour against the Blasphemy of the Holy Ghost: I will cite these Texts, where it is named; *Mat.* 12. 31. *Mark* 3. 28. *Luke* 12. 10.

2. A SECOND Observation is, That Blasphemy is a speaking against another, as both *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke* expound the Word: for in the Original, it is a blasting the Fame, or *blaming* of another; for from the Greek Word *βλασφημέω*, both the *French* Nation and our *English* by Contraction have made the word Blame.

To pass from the Name to the Thing itself, we may observe by the Coherence of the Texts, that Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was spoken of by our Saviour, concerning the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. It was (saith *St. Mark*) because the *Pharisees* said, he had an unclean Spirit, and that he cast out Devils by *Beelzebub*, &c. This Speech of the *Pharisees*, whereby they slandered his Miracles wrought by the Power of the Holy Ghost, is properly the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. How transcendent a Crime it was,  
to



to traduce that Power by which our Saviour wrought his Miracles, may appear, from the End for which these Miracles were wrought; which was, to prove to the People that saw them, that he was the *Messias*: which is evident from the Places of Scripture, wherein he appeal'd to his Works: *John* 10. 37, 38. *John* 14. 11. *Mat.* 11. 4. *John* 4. 29. These and other Places shew, that the working of Miracles was an Act of the most glorious Manifestation of the Power of God; by which at the first view, the simplest People were led by their outward Sense, to the great Mystery of inward Faith in Christ, their Redeemer.

**THEREFORE,** for those Men that were Eye-witnesses of those Miracles which did make them know that Christ was a Teacher come from God, to blaspheme that Power, by which these Miracles were wrought, and to say they were done by the help of the Devil, was the most spightful

ful and malicious Slander that could be invented; for thereby they attempted, as much as in them lay, to destroy the very Principles of Faith, and to prevent the very first Propagation of the Gospel, to the universal Mischief of all Mankind. And tho these *Pharisees* were no Christians, and therefore could not fall away from Faith, which they never had, yet they did know and believe that Christ was a Teacher come from God; for so our Saviour tells them, *John 7. 28. Ye both know me, and whence I am.* They did not believe him as a Saviour, but as a great Prophet from God; (as the *Mahometans* do at this very day) they trusted to be saved by their Law: and because he taught such things as did abrogate their Law, in which they so much glory'd, they were so malicious to his Doctrine, which they did not believe, that they spoke Evil of his Miracles which they did believe; lest the People by approving his Miracles, should believe his Doctrine.

4. **OBSERVE** that it's said to be Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; because, by the Holy Ghost the Miracles were wrought, *Mat. 12. 28. I Cor. 12. 10.*

5. **THE** Blasphemy against the Son of Man was, when Men consider'd Christ as a mere Man, and did disgracefully tax his Conversation, by saying, *Behold a Glutton, a Bibber of Wine, a Friend to Publicans and Sinners.* But the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was, when Men beholding Christ's Miracles, did enviously ascribe them to the Devil, which they knew and believ'd to be done by God's Power.

6. **THE** Text formerly cited out of the three Evangelists, being all the Places wherein the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is named; we cannot find by them, that we have any safe Rule to conclude, that any but the *Scribes and Pharisees,* and their

their Confederates, committed that Sin. I dare not say, that *Judas, Julian* the Apostate, or *Simon Magus*, or those that stoned *Stephen*, were guilty thereof.

7. THE Apostles have not in any of their Epistles once mention'd this Blasphemy, and yet they were most careful and frequent in Exhortations from all sorts of Sin: It were much therefore if they should omit or forget such a fearful Crime, without often and precise admonishing to beware of it. And tho negative Proofs from Scripture are not demonstrative, yet the general Silence of the Apostles may at least help to infer a Probability, that the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not committable by any Christian, which liv'd not in the time of our Saviour. As for those Texts in the sixth and tenth Chapter to the *Hebrews*, and in 1 *John* 5. 16. (which by late Divines are expounded of the Sin against the Holy Ghost)

Ghost) I do not find that the antient Fathers did so understand them, excepting only *St. Austin*, who so interprets that one Place in *St. John*, that all Men confess him to be in an Error. There be three Texts in the Epistles, wherein altho the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost be not named, yet most think it is intended and meant. And *Bellarmino* confuting *St. Austin's* Opinion, (who held, that final Impenitency was the Sin against the Holy Ghost) affirms that it seems the three Texts in the Epistles, are spoken of that Sin; and yet this great Cardinal forgetting what he had said, in the same Chapter contradicts himself, and shews how that those three Places are not to be interpreted of that Sin. I will cite the Texts, and then his Interpretation of them, according to the Exposition of *St. Ambrose*, *Chrysostom*, *Hierom*, and other Fathers, as he saith.

THE first is *Heb. 6. It is impossible, &c.* The Apostle here speaks only of Repentance, which did go before Baptism; for so *Chrysostom* and *Ambrose, &c.* expound it: which the Apostle intimates in these words; *Which were once enlightened*, that is, baptized; for anciently to be illuminated, signified to be baptized. Secondly, in these words, *to renew again*; for we are properly renewed in Baptism. Thirdly, in these; *Crucifying the Son of God afresh*: for when we are baptized, we are conformed to the Likeness of his Death, *Rom. 6.* And as Christ was only once crucified, so also we are only once baptized; and he that will be again baptized, should again crucify to himself Christ. Let me add this, that in the Verses next before this Text, the Apostle speaks of the Foundation of Repentance, and the Doctrine of Baptism. And in this Text, our new Translation followeth

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 eth *Beza* (who hath varied from  
 the Original, by putting the Con-  
 ditional *Si, If*, instead of the Copu-  
 lative *Et, And*, and by adding the  
 Causal *Ut*) so that whereas *Beza*  
 and our Translation is, *si prolabantur*  
*ut crucifigant*; the Greek and vulgar  
 Latin is, ἢ ἀπεσόντας ἀνασχυρῶντας,  
*prolapsi sunt crucifigentes*; for the  
 word doth not signify to fall away,  
 but to fall casually or negligently:  
 so ἁμαρτία *Gal. 6.* is translated  
 Fault, but not falling away.

THE second Text is, *Hebrews 10.*  
*26.* For if we sin willingly, or wil-  
 fully, after we have received the  
 Knowledge of the Truth, there re-  
 maineth no more Sacrifice for Sin.  
*Answ.* I say with *Chrysostom, Am-*  
*bruse*, and other Fathers, The sense  
 is, we must not expect another  
 Christ to die for us, or that he that  
 died once, should come again to die  
 for us.

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THE third Text, 1 *John* 5. 16. *There is a Sin unto Death: I do not say ye shall pray for it.* St. *Hierom* saith, that nothing else is here meant, but that a Prayer for a Sin unto Death, is very hardly or difficultly heard; and this seems to be the truest sense of this Place: for St. *John* saith, in the Verse immediately before, *We know we have the Petitions we desire of him:* therefore lest we should think this to hold true in all Petitions even for others, he adds, *If any Man see his Brother sin a Sin, which is not unto Death, he shall ask, &c. He shall ask;* that is, let him ask with Confidence, for he shall obtain: but if it be a Sin unto Death; that is a great Sin, such an one as is not ordinarily pardoned, but punished with Death; *I do not say, ye shall pray for it:* that is, I dare not promise that you shall easily obtain, and therefore I do not say that you shall pray for it;



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it ; that is, with that Confidence of obtaining : for often in such Cases, God doth not hear the Prayers of his Saints ; as God saith, *Jer. 7. 16.* If these Expositions upon the former Text be found, the Definition of the Sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be grounded upon all, or any of them ; for as it is not named, so it is not meant in any of them : but if they seem to any to be unfound, let him bring better and more agreeable to the literal Meaning and Sense, Coherence and Scope of the Text ; and I shall gladly learn. It seems a probable Exposition of the first place, *Heb. 6.* that a Learned Divine, who produceth this Text for proof of his Definition of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, doth confess against himself, that the Apostle in this place denieth a second Baptism, where he speaketh of Repentance, because they are mentioned together in the same place, and have some Affinity and Correspondence. As for the  
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second Text, *Heb. 10.* I must say, that if *St. Paul* in this place meant the Sin against the Holy Ghost, that then this were the only desperate Text in the whole Bible: for what Man is there that sins not willingly? for so the word ἐκδοικως properly signifies. *Beza* translates it *ultrò*, the vulgar *Latin*, *voluntariè*, or willingly, not wilfully, or obstinately. It is but a miserable shift, when *St. Paul* saith, *If we sin willingly*; for *Mr. Calvin* to tell us, that the Text doth not mean every willing Sin, but only a malicious resisting of the Truth. Could not *St. Paul*, as easily as *Mr. Calvin*, have said, *If we sin maliciously*, as say, *If we sin willingly*? My Comfort is, that if the Text be advisedly considered, there is no such thing as the Sin against the Holy Ghost, or any other desperate Conclusion, to be found in the Text. The Scope of the precedent Verses does evidently expound the *Apostle's* meaning to be this; to let  
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the *Jews* know, that the Case was not now with them, as it was under the Law: for under the Law they had daily Sacrifice for Sin; but now under the Gospel they had but one Sacrifice, once for all: every Priest standeth daily ministring and offering oftentimes the same Sacrifice, but this Man after he had offered one Sacrifice, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; as it is, Verse 11. of that Chapter, which may serve for a Comment upon the Verse now in question. And it is worth our noting; that the Text doth not say, If we sin wilfully, there is no Sacrifice for Sin; this had been an hard saying indeed: but the words are, *There remains no more Sacrifice for Sin.* There is some comfortable Difference, I hope, between these two Propositions; *There is no Sacrifice,* and *there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin.* So that if we do not believe in that one Sacrifice, as sufficient, but look every day for some  
new

new Sacrifice for every new Sin, we must expect nothing but Judgment.

As to the third Place, 1 *John* 5. 16. many would conclude, there is a Sin, for which we may not pray: First, because it is irremissible; and this they think must needs be the Sin against the Holy Ghost, meant by *St. John*. Their best Argument is, *John's* not saying we should pray, is a saying we should not pray; his Silence to them is Prohibition: This is bad Grammar and worse Logick. For we find, that *St. Stephen* pray'd for them that stoned him, and yet told them, they resisted the Holy Ghost. And *St. Peter* exhorted *Simon Magus* to Repentance, and yet both he and those that stoned *Stephen*, are commonly reputed Sinners against the Holy Ghost. *St. Ambrose* is of that charitable Opinion, that he thinks the Sin against the Holy Ghost may be pardon'd by Repentance, because the People of the *Jews*, that had said of Christ, that  
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he cast out Devils by *Beelzebub*, afterwards at the preaching of *St. Peter*, are said to be converted, *Acts* 2. *St. Austin* in a Retract concludes, we must despair of no Man, no not of the Wickedest, as long as he liveth; and we safely pray for him, of whom we don't despair. For tho it be expressly said, That the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven; yet these Words may justly receive a Qualification, if we will but allow the same Mitigation of these Words, which all Men confess we must needs allow to the precedent Words in the same Verse, to which these have relation: where it is said generally, all Sins and all Blasphemies shall be forgiven, it cannot be meant of all Sins always, and to all Men, for then no Sin could be damnable, but the Sin against the Holy Ghost, which is most false. And therefore the Meaning must be, all Sins shall be forgiven ordinarily, and for the most part; so on the contrary, Blasphemy against the Holy

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ly Ghost shall not ordinarily, but hardly be forgiven. Even those who are most strict to maintain the Sin against the Holy Ghost to be unpardonable, will yet acknowledg, that sometimes, in Scripture, Impossibility is used to note a Difficulty; and those things are spoken indefinitely to all, which belong but to a Part only. Thus the Difficulty of a rich Man's entring into the Kingdom of Heaven, is presented to us by our Saviour under the Similitude of an Impossibility.

HAVING dispatch'd these Texts of Scripture, which do either name, or are thought to concern, the Sin against the Holy Ghost; it remains to examine those common Definitions of this Sin, which are now current, tho' different in the Terms by which they define it. Some call it a total or final falling away from Faith, or a wilful Apostacy, or a malicious resisting of the Truth; yet when they come to explain their Meaning, the Difference among  
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them is not considerable. I shall chiefly apply my self to Mr. *Calvin's* Definition, because his Judgment hath gained the greatest Reputation among the Multitude; as also, for that he himself promises such a true Definition, as shall easily, by it self, overthrow all the rest. In his *Institut. lib. 3. chap. 3.* he saith, They sin against the Holy Ghost, *qui divinae veritati (cujus fulgore sic perstringuntur, ut ignorantiam causari nequeunt) tamen destinata malitia resistunt, in hoc tantum, ut resistant.* *Arminius* also useth Mr. *Calvin's* Words. The Rhetorical Parenthesis, which might well have been spar'd in a Definition, being reduc'd to plain and brief Terms; this Definition of *Calvin* may be thus englished: "They sin  
 " against the Holy Ghost, who of  
 " determined Malice resist the  
 " known Truth of God, to the end  
 " only to resist." In this Mr. *Calvin* doth not define what the Sin is, but who they are that commit it; whereas by the Rules of Logick,  
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*Concretes* admit of no Definition, but only *Abstracts*. But taking the Definition as it is, it consists principally upon these three Terms. First, Truth; Secondly, Known; Thirdly, Resisted: or a resisting of the known Truth. The Words being general and doubtful, we will consider them singly.

FIRST, If by the Truth Mr. *Calvin* understands the Word of God, or the whole Doctrine reveal'd in the Scriptures, then the Sense of this Term will be too large: for even the *Pharisees*, which spoke against the Holy Ghost, did not resist the whole Truth of God in the Scripture, for they believ'd in the Law of *Moses*, and had Confidence to be saved by the keeping of it; and in defence of that Law (as they thought) they did blaspheme the Holy Ghost. Therefore properly, by the Truth of God, Mr. *Calvin* must confine his Meaning to the Truth of the Gospel or Doctrine of Faith; for so both he



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himself and others expound themselves, by terming the Sin against the Holy Ghost, a falling away, or turning away from Faith, or Apostacy.

SECONDLY, By this word Known, *Mr. Calvin* must mean Belief; for Faith is properly by believing, not knowing the Truth.

THIRDLY, The word Resisting must mean Unbelieving: for if receiving of the Truth be by Belief, then resisting of the Truth must be by Unbelief. And indeed *Mr. Calvin* explains himself in the same Chapter, saying, There is no Place for Pardon where Knowledg is join'd with Unbelief; *Non esse veniam locum, &c.* So then by this Definition, to resist the known Truth, is all one, as if *Mr. Calvin* had said in proper Terms, for a Man at once to unbelieve that which he doth believe: which two things it is impossible to do together; and if they be not together, there can be no Resistance. It is true, that for some  
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Reasons a Man may be brought, not to believe that which he formerly believed : this cannot be in an instant, but successively Unbelief comes in the place of Belief. And this may not be called a resisting, for that all Resistance consists in a Violence between two at the least; but where two succeed one another, and are never together, it cannot possibly be. I confess a Man may resist the Truth, when it is a Truth in it self only, or in the understanding of some other; but to resist the Truth which is known, and believ'd by the Resister himself, is a direct Contradiction: for the Nature of Truth is such, that if the Understanding apprehend it for Truth, it cannot but assent unto it. No Man can force himself to believe what he lists, or when he lists. Sometimes a Man knows not what to believe, but finds a Suspension of his Faith, or Trepidation of his Understanding, not knowing which way to turn. This cannot be called a resisting of the Truth, when

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the Truth is not known, but doubted of. Again, some Truths there be, tho they be assented to by the Understanding for Truths, yet they are not desired as good; for Truth is one degree nearer the Soul of Man than Goodness. The *Pharisees* did apprehend the Miracles of our Saviour as true, but not as good; because they tended to the Derogation of their Law, which they esteem'd a better Truth. And for this cause they blasphemed that Truth, which in their Hearts they believed for Truth: For the Truth of Words, or Speech, is (as the Schools say) nothing else but the Sign of Truth, not Truth it self; for Truth it self is seated in the Understanding, and not in the Speech. That Truth which the Understanding assents to, the Speech may affirm to be false; there are many things believ'd in deed, which are denied in word: but such a Denial is not resisting, but only making shew of resisting the Truth; for Resistance must be in the same place

place where Truth is: Truth being seated in the Understanding, Resistance must be placed there also; the Understanding can resist no Truth, but by unbelieving of it. If Mr. *Calvin* had intended of the Truth only in Word, he had come one step nearer to the Truth of Scripture, but he was not so happy in the Expression of his Meaning; nay his Terms of Incredulity, Apostacy, falling away, &c. relate to a real, not verbal Apostacy, and Unbelief. It remains then to my Understanding, that Mr. *Calvin* makes the Resistance of the Truth to be a not believing of what we do believe; which being a Contradiction, he defines the Sin against the Holy Ghost, to be such a Sin, as no Man possibly can commit. And yet in the other extreme, in expounding his own Definition, he makes it such a Sin, as no Man living but commits; for by his Doctrine, (as I take it) any Sin may be the Sin against the Holy Ghost. His Words are these, *Quorum convicta est*

*conscientia verbum Dei esse quod repudiant & impugnant, impugnare tamen non desistant, illi in spiritum blasphemari dicuntur.* What Man is there that doth not daily, in some Point or other, forsake the Word of God, and ceases not to impugn it, and is convinc'd thereof in his Conscience? I know Mr. *Calvin* was far from thinking, that St. *Paul* did sin against the Holy Ghost; and yet St. *Paul*, it seems, was convinc'd in his Conscience, that it was the Word of God he fought against, and yet ceased not to fight against it, when he saith, He delighted in the Law of God, yet another Law warring against the Law of his Mind, brought him into Captivity of the Law of Sin. What dangerous Consequences weak Consciences may draw to themselves, out of this unbridled, unlimited Proposition of Mr. *Calvin's*, let others judg. There is a just Cause, I presume, to except against Mr. *Calvin* and all others, who in this concur with him, to omit the Term of Blaphemy

phemy in their Definitions; for this is perpetually observ'd by our Saviour in his Speech concerning this Sin, by the Evangelists with one Consent. But instead of the word Blasphemy, he hath brought in the word Resist, for a Genus of this Sin; but by what Authority I know not: I cannot find it, or the equivalent to it, in any of those places, which are thought to touch this Sin. I find only falling away mention'd, *Heb. 6.* which Phrase is used by Mr. *Calvin*, for resisting; whereas falling away, and resisting, are no more alike, than fighting and running away, which are little less than Contraries. The last Point I shall touch in Mr. *Calvin's* Definition, is, where he saith, the Sinners against the Holy Ghost resist, to the end only that they may resist; and yet withal he tells, they resist out of a determinate Malice: If they resist out of Malice, then the End for which they resist, is for the satisfaction of their Malice. The *Pharisees* here con-

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demned by our Saviour, had another End than bare resisting. The Defence of the Law of *Moses*, was the End for which they blasphem'd, and not any Pleasure they could have in the bare and simple Act of Resistance. We find three old Opinions concerning the Sin against the Holy Ghost, but they were long since exploded: I will but only name them. *Origen* thought, all Sins committed after Baptism, were Sins against the Holy Ghost; his Reason was only a witless Conceit of his own, That God the Father was in all things, the Son only in all reasonable Creatures, the Holy Ghost in all regenerate Men: Therefore when Men sin against the Divine Person which is in them, if they be Heathen, they sin against God the Father, or Son; if they be Christians, they sin against God the Holy Ghost: but this Opinion is false. The *Novatian* Hereticks agreed with *Origen* in Opinion, for they denied Remission of Sins to any that fell; thinking all  
Falls

Falls of Christians to be Sins against the Holy Ghost: but this Opinion is false, else all Sins were unpardonable to Christians. Yet we find *St. Paul* to remit the Sins of the incestuous *Corinthian*.

OUR Saviour also chargeth the *Pharisees* with this, who were no Christians. *St. Austin* thought final Impenitency to be the Sin against the Holy Ghost; but final Impenitency is no Blasphemy, but only a general Circumstance, that may accompany any Sin: besides, our Saviour intends, that this Sin may be found in this Life; and the *Pharisees* were alive, when they were accus'd of it. *Pet. Lombard*, and *Tho. Aquinas* thought Sins of Malice to be Sins against the Holy Ghost, and Sins of Infirmity against the Father, and Sins of Ignorance against the Son. This Opinion is false, because the Sin against the Holy Ghost, must be a Sin of some certain Blasphemy; but Malice is no certain Sin,  
but



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but a general, and 'tis not always a Blasphemy.

THE six Differences the Schoolmen make of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, are these :

1. ENVYING of our Brother's Graces. 2. Impugning of the known Truth. 3. Desperation. 4. Obstinacy. 5. Presumption. 6. Final Impenitency.

IN this Determination of the Point of Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the Enquiry made into Mr. *Calvin's* and others new Definition; I hope I have deliver'd nothing contrary to the Articles of the Church of *England*.

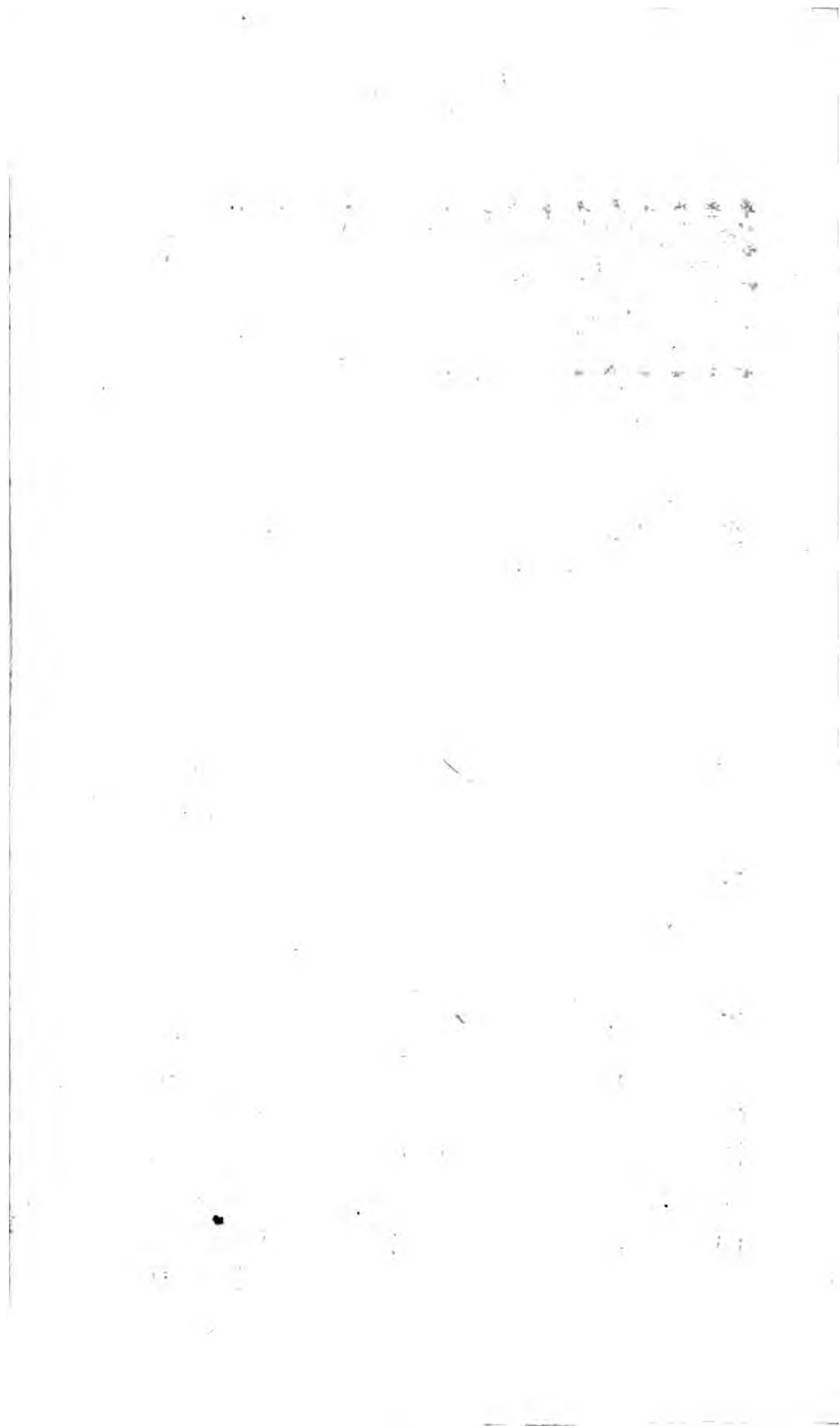


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A  
T R A C T  
Concerning the  
S A C R A M E N T  
O F T H E  
L O R D ' S S U P P E R .







*A Tract on the Sacrament*  
of the LORD'S SUPPER.

*Kind Sir,*



**I**N Perusal of your Letters, together with the Schedule inclos'd, no Circumstance did so much move me, as this, That so ordinary Points as are discuss'd there, and that in a bare and ordinary manner, should amuse either your self or any Man else, that pretends to ordinary Knowledg in Controversies in Christian Religion. For the  
Points

Points therein discuss'd are no other than the Subject of every common Pamphlet, and sufficiently known (that I may so say) in every Barber's Shop. Yet because you require my Opinion of Matters there in question, I willingly afford it you; tho I fear I shall more amuse you with telling you the Truth, than the Disputants there did, by abusing you with Error. For the plain and necessary (tho perhaps unwelcome) Truth is, that in the greater part of the Dispute, both Parties much mistook themselves, and that fell out which is in the common Proverb, *sc. Whilst the one milks the Ram, the other holds under the Sieve.* That you may see this Truth with your Eyes, I divide your whole Dispute into two Heads; the one concerning the *Eucharist*, the other concerning the *Church's mistaking it self about Fundamentals.*

FOR the *First*, It consisteth of two Parts; of a Proposition, and  
of

of a Reply. The Proposition expresses (at least he that made it, intended it so to do, tho he mistakes) the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, concerning the Presence of Christ in the *Eucharist*. The Reply doth the like for the Church of *Rome*, in the same Argument. Now that you may see how indifferently I walk, I will open the Mistakes of both Parties, that so the Truth of the thing it self (being unclouded of Errors) may the more clearly shine forth.

THE first Mistake common to both, is, that they ground themselves much upon the Words of Consecration, as they are called; and suppose, that upon the pronouncing of those Words, something befalls that Action, which otherways would not; and that without those Words the Action were lame. Sir, I must confess my Ignorance unto you. I find no ground for the Necessity of this doing. Our Saviour instituting that  
Holy

Holy Ceremony, commands us to do what he did, leaves us no Precept of saying any Words; neither will it be made appear, that either the blessed Apostles or Primitive Christians had any such Custom: Nay the contrary will be made probably to appear, out of some of the antientest Writings of the Church's Ceremonials. Our Saviour indeed used the Words, but it was to express what his Meaning was: had he barely acted the thing, without expressing himself by some such Form of Words, we could never have known what it was he did. But what Necessity is there now of so doing? for when the Congregation is met together, to the breaking of Bread and Prayer, and see Bread and Wine upon the Communion-Table, is there any Man can doubt of the Meaning of it, altho the Canon be not read? It was the farther solemnizing, and beautifying that Holy Action, which brought the Canon in: and not an Opinion of adding any thing to the  
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**Substance of the Action.** For that the Words were used by our Saviour to work any thing upon the Bread and Wine, can never out of Scripture or Reason be deduced; and beyond these two, I have no ground for my Religion, neither in Substance nor in Ceremony. The main Foundation that upholds the necessity of this Form of Action now in use, is Church-Custom and Church-Error.

Now for that Topick-place of Church-Custom, it is generally too much abused: for whereas naturally the Necessity of the thing ought to give warrant to the Practice of the Church, I know not by what Device matters are turned about, and the customary Practice of the Church is alledged to prove the Necessity of the thing; as if things had received their Original from the Church-Authority, and not, as the truth is, from an higher Hand. As for the Church's Error, on which I told you this Form of Action is founded,



founded, it consists in the uncautious taking up an ungrounded Conclusion of the Fathers for a religious Maxim. St. *Ambrose*, I trow, was he that said it, and Posterity hath too generally applauded it; *Accedat verbum ad elementum, & fiat Sacramentum*. By which they would persuade us, against all Experience, that to make up a Sacrament, there must be something said and something done; whereas indeed, to the perfection of a Sacrament, or holy Mystery (for both these are one) it is sufficient that one thing be done whereby another is signified, tho' nothing be said at all. When *Tarquinius* was walking in his Garden, a Messenger came and asked him, What he would have done unto the Town of *Gabii*, then newly taken? He answered nothing, but with his Wand struck off the tops of the highest Poppies: and the Messenger understanding his meaning, cut off the Heads of the chief of the City. Had been this done *in Sacris*, it had been

been forthwith truly a Sacrament, or holy Mystery: *Cum in omnibus Scientiis voces significant res, hoc habet proprium Theologia, quòd ipsæ res significatæ per voces, etiam significant aliquid, saith Aquinas*: And upon the second signification are all spiritual and mystical Senses founded. So that *in Sacris*, a Mystery or Sacrament is then acted, when one thing is done, and another is signified; as it is in the Holy Communion, tho nothing be said at all. The antient Sacrifices of the *Jews*, whether weekly, monthly, or yearly, their Passover, their sitting in Booths, &c. these were all Sacraments: yet we find not any sacred Forms of Words used by the Priests or People in the execution of them.

To sum up that which we have to say in this Point: The calling upon the words of Consecration in the Eucharist, is too weakly founded to be made argumentative; for the Action is perfect, whether those words  
be

be used or forborn : And in truth, to speak my Opinion, I see no great harm could ensue, were they quite omitted. Certainly thus much good would follow, that some part (tho not a little one) of the Superstition that adheres to that Action, by reason of an ungrounded Conceit of the Necessity and Force of the words in it, would forthwith peel off and fall away. I would not have you understand me so, as if I would prescribe for, or desire the Disuse of the Words: only two things I would commend to you; 1. That the use of the Canon is a thing indifferent. And, 2. That in this knack of making Sacraments, Christians have taken a greater liberty than they can well justify. (1.) In forging Sacraments more than God (for ought doth or can appear) did ever intend. And, (2.) In adding to the Sacraments, instituted of God, many Formalities and ceremonial Circumstances, upon no warrant but their own; which Circumstances, by long use,

use, begat in the Minds of Men a Conceit, that they were essential Parts of that, to which indeed they were but appendant; and that only by the Device of some who practised a power in the Church more than was convenient.

**T**HUS much for the first common Mistake.

**T**HE second is worse than it. You see that both Parts agreed in the Acknowledgment of the real Presence of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, tho they differ in the manner of his Presence, and Application of himself to the Receiver; tho the Protestant Disputant seems to have gone a little beyond his Leader. Had he expressed himself in the point of Bread and Wine, what became of it, whether it remained in its proper nature, yea or no; I could the better have fathomed him. Now these Words of his, that the Bread and Wine, after Consecration,  
are

are truly and really the Body of Christ, howsoever they are supplied and allayed with that Clause, *not after a carnal, but after a spiritual manner*, yet still remain too crude and raw, and betray the Speaker for a *Lutheran* at least, if not for a Favourer of the Church of *Rome*: for as for that Phrase of *a spiritual manner*, which seems to give Season and Moderation to his Conclusion, it can yield him but small Relief. For first, To say the Flesh of Christ is in the Bread, but *not after a carnal manner*, is but the same Nonsense which the Divines of *Rome* put upon us on the like occasion; when telling us, that the Blood of Christ is really sacrificed and shed in the Sacrament, they add, by way of Gloss, that it is done *incruentè*, unbloodily. By the like Analogy they may tell us, if they please, that the Body of Christ is there incorporated unbodily; Flesh not carnally, may pass the Press jointly the next Edition of the Book of Bulls. Again, in another respect,

respect, that Clause of a *spiritual manner*, doth your Protestant Disputer but little service, if any at all; for the Catholick Disputant contriving with himself how to seat the Body of God in the Eucharist, as may be most for his Ease, tells us, that he is there as Spirits and glorified Bodies (which St. Paul calls *spiritual*) are in the Places they possess. So then, the one tells you the Body of Christ is there really, but spiritually; the other, that he is there really, but as a Spirit in a Place. And what now, I pray you, is the difference between them? By the way, in the passage you may see what account to make of your Catholick Disputer. *Aristotle*, and with him common Sense, tells us thus much, *That he that compares two Bodies together, must know them both.* Doth this Gentleman know any thing concerning the Site and Locality of Spirits, and Bodies glorified? If he doth, let him do us the Courtesy as to shew us, at what price he

purchased that degree of Knowledg, that so we may try our Credit, and see if we can buy it at the same rate : *Tertius è Cælo cecidit Cato* ? Is he like a second *Paul*, lately descended out of the third Heavens, and there hath made us the Discovery ? for by what other means he could attain to that Knowledg, my Dulness cannot suggest. But if he doth not know (as indeed he neither doth nor can, for there is no means left to make Discovery that way) then with what Congruity can he tell us, that the Body of Christ is in the Bread, as Spirits and glorified Bodies are in their Places ; if he know not what manner of Location and Site, Spirits and glorified Bodies have ? I shall not need to prompt your Discretion thus far, as that you ought not to make Dainties of such fruitless and desperate Disputers ; who, as the Apostle notes, thrust themselves into things they have not seen, and upon a false shew of Knowledg, abuse easy Hearers ;  
and

and of things they know not, adventure to speak they know not what.

To return then, and consider a little more of this second Mistake common to both your Disputants, I will deal as favourably as I can with your Protestant Disputer: for tho I think he mistakes himself, (for I know no Protestant that teacheth, that the common Bread, after the word spoken, is really made the Body of Christ) yet he might well take occasion thus to err out of some Protestant Writings; for generally the Reformed Divines do falsely report that holy Action, whether you regard the Essence or Use thereof.

FOR first, if in regard of the Essence, some Protestants, and that of chief Note, stick not to say, That the words of Consecration are not a mere *Trope*; and from hence it must needs follow, that in some sense they must needs be taken lite-



rally, which is enough to plead Authority for the Gentleman's Error. But that which they preach concerning a real Prefence and Participation of Christ's Body in the Sacrament, they expound not by a supposal that the Bread becomes God's Body, but that, together with the Sacramental Elements, there is conveyed into the Soul of the worthy Receiver the very Body and Blood of God; but after a secret, ineffable, and wonderful manner. From hence, as I take it, have proceeded these crude Speeches of the Learned of the Reformed Parts, some dead, some living; wherein they take upon them to assure the Divines of *Rome*, that we acknowledg a real Prefence as well as they; but for the manner how, *con*, or *trans*, or *sub*, or *in*, ἐπέχομεν, we play the *Scepticks*, and determine not. This Conceit, besides the Falshood of it, is a mere Novelty, neither is it to be found in the Books of any of the Antients, till *Martin Bucer* arose. He out of  
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an unseasonable Bashfulness and Fear to seem to recede too far from the Church of *Rome*, taught to the purpose now related, concerning the Doctrine of Christ's Presence in the Sacrament; and from him it descended into the Writings of *Calvin* and *Beza*, whose Authority have well-near spread it over the face of the Reformed Churches. This is an Error which, as I said, touches the Essence of that holy Action; but there are many now which touch the End and Use of it, which are practised by the Reformed Parts: for out of an extravagant Fancy they have of it, they abuse it to many Ends, of which we may think the first Instituter (save that he was God, and knew all things) never thought of. For we make it an Arbitrator of Civil Business, and imploy it in ending Controversies; and for Confirmation of what we say or do, we commonly promise to take the Sacrament upon it. We teach, that it confirms our Faith in Christ; where-

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as indeed the receiving of it is a sign of Faith confirmed, and Men come to it to testify that they do believe, not to procure that they may believe: for if a Man doubt of the Truth of Christianity, think you that his Scruples would be removed upon the receiving of the Sacrament? I would it were so; we should not have so many doubting Christians, who yet receive the Sacrament oft enough. We teach it to be *Viaticum morientium*, whereby we abuse many distressed Consciences and sick Bodies, who seek for comfort there, and finding it not, conclude from thence (I speak what I know) some defect in their Faith. The Participation of this Sacrament to sick and weak Persons, what unseemly Events hath it occasioned? the vomiting up of the Elements anon, upon the receipt of them; the resurging the Wine into the Cup, before the Minister could remove his hand to the interruption of the Action. Now all these Mistakes and  
Errors

Errors have risen upon some ungrounded and fond Practices, crept long since (God knows how) into the Church, and as yet not sufficiently purged out. I will be bold to inform you what it is, which is *πρωτον ψευδες*, the main fundamental Fallacy whence all these Abuses have sprung. There hath been a fancy of long subsistence in the Churches, that in the Communion there is something given besides Bread and Wine, of which *the Numerality* given, Men have not yet agreed. Some say it is the Body of God, into which the Bread is transubstantiated; some say it is the same Body with which the Bread is consubstantiated; some, that the Bread remaining what it was, there passes with it to the Soul the real Body of God, in a secret unknown manner; some, that a further degree of Faith is supplied us: others, that some degree of God's Grace, whatever it be, is exhibited, which otherwise would be wanting: All

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which variety of Conceits must needs fall out, as having no other ground but Conjecture weakly founded. To settle you therefore in your Judgment, both of the Thing it self, and of the true Use of it, I will commend to your Consideration these few Propositions.

*1<sup>st</sup>*, IN the Communion there is nothing given but Bread and Wine.

*2<sup>ly</sup>*, THE Bread and Wine are Signs indeed, but not of any thing there exhibited, but of somewhat given long since, even of Christ given for us upon the Cross sixteen hundred years ago, and more.

*3<sup>ly</sup>*, JESUS Christ is eaten at the Communion-Table in no sense, neither spiritually, by virtue of any thing done there, nor really; neither metaphorically, nor literally. Indeed that which is eaten (I mean the Bread) is called Christ by a Metaphor; but it is eaten truly and properly. *4<sup>ly</sup>*,

4<sup>ly</sup>, THE spiritual eating of Christ is common to all Places, as well as the Lord's Table.

Last of all, THE Uses and Ends of the Lord's Supper can be no more than such as are mentioned in the Scriptures, and they are but two.

1. THE Commemoration of the Death and Passion of the Son of God, specified by himself at the Institution of the Ceremony.

2. To testify our Union with Christ, and Communion one with another; which end St. Paul hath taught us.

IN these few Conclusions the whole Doctrine and Use of the Lord's Supper is fully set down; and who so leadeth you beyond this, doth but abuse you: *Quicquid ultra queritur, non intelligitur.* The proof of these Propositions would require

more than the Limits of a Letter will admit of; and I see my self already to have exceeded these Bounds. I will therefore pass away to consider the second part of your Letter.

IN this second Part, I would you had pleased to have done as in the first you did; that is, not only set down the Proposition of the Catholick, but some Answer of the Protestant, by which we might have discovered his Judgment. I might perchance have used the same liberty as I have done before, namely, discovered the Mistakes of both Parties; for I suspect that as there they did, so here they would have given me cause enough. Now I content my self barely to speak to the Question: The Question is, *Whether the Church may err in Fundamentals?* By the *Church* I will not trifle as your Catholick doth, and mean only the Protestant Party, as he professeth he doth only the *Roman Faction*. But I shall understand all Factions in  
Christ.

Christianity, all that entitle themselves to Christ, wheresoever dispersed all the World over.

1<sup>st</sup>, I ANSWER, That every Christian may err that will: for if Men might not err wilfully, then there could be no Heresy; Heresy being nothing else but wilful Error. For if we account Mistakes befalling us thro human Frailties to be Heresies, then it will follow, that every Man since the Apostles time was an Heretick; for never yet was there any Christian, the Apostles only excepted, which did not in something concerning the Christian Faith mistake himself, either by Addition or Omission, or Misinterpretation of something. An evident sign of this Truth you may see in this: By the Providence of God, the Writings of many learned Christians, from the Spring of Christianity, have been left unto Posterity; and amongst all those, scarcely any is to be found who is not confest on all hands to have



have mistaken some things, and those Mistakes for the most part stand upon Record by some who purposely observed them. Neither let this (I beseech you) beget in you a Conceit, as if I meant to disgrace those whose Labours have been and are of infinite benefit in the Church. For if *Aristotle*, and *Aphrodiseus*, and *Galen*, and the rest of those excellent Men whom God had indued with extraordinary Portions of natural Knowledg, have with all thankful and ingenuous Men throughout all Generations retained their Credit entire, notwithstanding it is acknowledged that they have all of them in many things swerved from the Truth; then why should not Christians express the same Ingenuity to those who have laboured before us in the Exposition of the Christian Faith, and highly esteem them for their Works sake, their many Infirmities notwithstanding? You will say, That for private Persons, it is confest, they may and daily do err:  
but

but can Christians err by whole Shoals, by Armies meeting for defence of the Truth in Synods and Councils, especially General; which are countenanced by the great Fable of all the World, the Bishop of Rome?

I ANSWER, To say that Councils may not err, tho private Persons may, at first sight is a merry Speech; as if a Man should say, That every single Soldier indeed may run away, but a whole Army cannot, especially having *Hannibal* for their Captain. And since it is confest, that all single Persons not only may, but do err, it will prove a very hard matter to gather out of these a multitude, of whom being gathered together, we may be secured they cannot err. I must for mine own part confest, that Councils and Synods not only may and have erred, but considering the means how they are managed, it were a great marvel if they did not err: For what Men  
are

are they of whom those great Meetings do consist? Are they the best, the most learned, the most vertuous, the most likely to walk uprightly? No, the greatest, the most ambitious, and many times Men neither of Judgment nor Learning; such are they of whom these Bodies do consist. And are these Men in common Equity likely to determine for Truth? *Qui ut in vita, sic in causis, spes quoque improbas alunt,* as *Quintilian* speaks. Again, when such Persons are thus met, their way to proceed to Conclusion, is not by weight of Reason, but by multitude of Votes and Suffrages: as if it were a Maxim in Nature, that the greater part must needs be the better; whereas our common Experience shews, that *Nunquam ita bene agitur cum rebus humanis, ut plures sint meliores.* It was never heard in any Profession, that Conclusion of Truth went by Plurality of Voices, the Christian Profession only excepted; and I have often mused how  
it

it comes to pass, that the way which in all other Sciences is not able to warrant the poorest Conclusion, should be thought sufficient to give Authority to Conclusions in Divinity, the supreme Empress of Sciences. But I see what it is that is usually pleaded, and with your leave I will a little consider of it.

IT is given out, that Christian Meetings have such an Assistance of God and his blessed Spirit, that let their Persons be what they will, they may assure themselves against all possibility of mistaking; and this is that they say, which to this way of ending Controversies, which in all other Sciences is so contemptible, gives a determining to Theological Disputes of so great Authority. And this Musick of the Spirit is so pleasing, that it hath taken the Reformed Party too; for with them likewise all things at length end in the Spirit, but with this difference, that those of *Rome* confine the Spirit to the  
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the Bishops and Councils of *Rome*; but the Protestant enlargeth this working of the Spirit, and makes it the Director of private Meditations. I should doubtless do great Injury to the Goodness of God, if I should deny the sufficient Assistance of God to the whole World, to preserve them both from Sin in their Actions, and damnable Errors in their Opinions; much more should I do it, if I denied it to the Church of God: But this Assistance of God may very well be, and yet Men may fall into Sin and Errors. *St. Paul* preaching to the *Gentiles*, tells them, that God was with them in so palpable a manner, that even by groping they might have found him; yet both he and we know, what the *Gentiles* did. Christ hath promised his perpetual Assistance to his Church; but hath he left any Prophecy, that the Church should perpetually adhere to him? If any Man think he hath, it is his part to inform us where this Prophecy is to be found. That Matters  
may

may go well with Men, two things must concur, the Assistance of God to Men, and the Adherence of Men to God: if either of these be deficient, there will be little good done. Now the first of these is never deficient, but the second is very often: so that the Promise of Christ's perpetual Presence made unto the Church, infers not at all any presumption of Infallibility. As for that Term of *Spirit*, which is so much taken up, to open the danger that lurks under it, we must a little distinguish upon the Word. This Term [*Spirit of God*] either signifies the third Person in the blessed Trinity, or else the wonderful Power of Miracles, of Tongues, of Healing, &c. which was given to the Apostles, and other of the Primitive Christians, at the first preaching of the Gospel; but both these Meanings are Strangers to our purpose. The Spirit of God, as it concerns the Question here in hand, signifies either something within us, or something without

without us: without us, it signifies the written Word, recorded in the Books of the Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, which are metonymically called the Spirit, because the Holy Ghost spake those things by their Mouths when they lived, and now speaks unto us by their Pens when they are dead. If you please to receive it, this alone is left as Christ's Vicar in his Absence, to give us Directions both in our Actions and Opinions: he that tells you of another Spirit in the Church to direct you in your way, may as well tell you a Tale of a Puck, or a walking Spirit in the Church-yard. But that this Spirit speaking without us may be beneficial to us, *oportet aliquid intus esse*, there must be something within us, which also we call the Spirit; and this is twofold: for either it signifies a secret Illapse, or supernatural Influence of God upon the Hearts of Men, by which he is supposed inwardly to incline, inform and direct Men in their Ways and Wills,

Wills, and to preserve them from Sin and Mistake; or else it signifies that in us, which is opposed against the Flesh, and which denominates us spiritual Men, and by which we are said *to walk according to the Spirit*: that which St. Paul means, when he tells us, *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh* (Rom. 7.) *so that we may not do what we list.* Now of these two, the former it is which the Church seems to appeal unto, in determining Controversies by way of Council. But to this I have little to say;  
(1.) Because I know not whether there be any such thing yea or no.  
(2.) Because Experience shews, that the pretence of the Spirit in this sense is very dangerous, as being next at hand to give countenance to Imposture and Abuse: which is a thing sufficiently seen, and acknowledged both by the Papist and Protestant Party; as it appears by this, That tho both pretend unto it, yet both upbraid each other with the  
pretence



pretence of it. But the Spirit, in the second sense, is that I contend for ; and this is nothing but the Reason illuminated by Revelation out of the written Word. For when the Mind and Spirit humbly conform and submit to the written Will of God, then you are properly said to have the Spirit of God, and to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the Flesh. This alone is that Spirit which preserves us from straying from the Truth : for he indeed that hath the Spirit, errs not at all ; or if he do, it is with as little hazard and danger as may be : which is the highest point of Infallibility, which either private Persons or Churches can arrive to. Yet would I not have you to conceive that I deny, that at this day the Holy Ghost communicates himself to any in this secret and supernatural manner, as in foregoing times he had been wont to do ; indeed my own many Uncleanneses are sufficient Reasons to hinder that good Spirit to participate himself  
unto

unto me after that manner. The Holy Ghost was pleased to come down like a Dove: *Veniunt ad candida tecta Columbae; Accipiet nullas sordida Turris Aves.* Now it is no reason to conclude the Holy Ghost imparts himself in this manner to none, because he hath not done that favour unto me. But thus much I will say, that the Benefit of that sacred Influence is confined to those happy Souls in whom it is, and cannot extend it self to the Church in publick. And if any Catholick except against you for saying so, warrant your self and me out of *Aquinas*, whose words are these: *Innititur fidei natura revelationi Apostolis & Prophetis facta, qui Canonicos Libros scripserunt; non autem Revelationi, siqua fuit, aliis Doctoribus facta.*

IT being granted then that Churches can err, it remains then, in the second place, to consider how far they may err. I answer for Churches, as I did before for private  
Persons,

Persons, Churches may err in Fundamentals if they list, for they may be heretical; for Churches may be wicked, they may be Idolaters, and why then not heretical? Is Heresy a more dangerous thing than Idolatry? For whereas it is pleaded that Churches cannot fall into Heresy, because of that Promise of our Saviour, *That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church*; it is but out of mistake of the meaning of that Place: and indeed I have often mused how so plain a Place could so long and so generally be misconstrued. To secure you therefore, that you be not abused with these words hereafter (for they are often quoted to prove the Church's Infallibility) I shall endeavour to give you the natural meaning of them: for *πύλαι ᾠδης*, the *Gates of Hell*, is an Hebraism; for in the *Hebrew* Expression, the *Gates* of a thing signifies the thing it self, as the *Gates of Sion*, *Sion* it self; and by the same proportion, the *Gates of Hell* signifies

fies Hell it felf. Now "ΑΙΩΝS, which we english *Hell*, as in no place of Scripture it fignifies Herefy, fo very frequently in Scripture it fignifies Death, or rather the State of the Dead, and indifferently applied to Good and Bad. Let us then take the word in that meaning; for what greater means can we have to warrant the fignification of a Scripture-word, than the general meaning of it in Scripture? So that when our Saviour fpake thefe words, he made no Promise to the Church of perfevering in the Truth; but to thofe that did perfevere in the Truth, he made a Promise of Victory againft Death and Hell. And what he there fays, founds to no other purpose but this; That thofe who fhall continue his, altho they die, yet Death fhall not have the Dominion over them; but the time fhall come, that the Bands of Death fhall be broken: and as Chrift is rifen, fo fhall they that are his rife again to Immortality. For any help therefore that this

**Text**

Text affords, Churches may err in Fundamentals. But to speak the Truth, I much wonder, not only how any Churches, but how any private Man, that is careful to know and follow the Truth, can err in Fundamentals: For since it is most certain, that the Scripture contains at least the fundamental Parts of Christian Faith, how is it possible that any Man, that is careful to study and believe the Scripture, should be ignorant of any necessary part of his Faith? Now whether the Church of *Rome* err in Fundamentals, yea or no; to answer this, I must crave leave to use this Distinction: To err in Fundamentals, is either to be ignorant of, or deny something to be fundamental that is, or to entertain something for fundamental which is not. In the first sense, the Church of *Rome* entertaining the Scriptures as she doth, cannot possibly be ignorant of any principal part of Christian Faith; all her Error is, in entertaining in her self, and obtruding

truding upon others, a multitude of things for Fundamentals, which no way concern our Faith at all. Now how dangerous it is thus to do, except I know whether she did this willingly or wittingly, yea or no, is not easy to define: If willingly she doth it, it is certainly high and damnable Presumption; if ignorantly, I know not what Mercies God hath in store for them that sin not out of malicious Wickedness. Now concerning the Merriment newly started, I mean the requiring of a Catalogue of Fundamentals, I need to answer no more, but what *Abraham* tells the rich Man in Hell, *Habent Moſen & Prophetas*, they have *Moſes* and the Prophets, the Apostles and the Evangelists, let them seek them there; for if they find them not there, in vain shall they seek them in all the World besides. But yet to come a little nearer to the Particulars: If the Church of *Rome* would needs know what is fundamental in our Conceit, and what

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not; the Answer, as far as my self in Person am concerned in the Business, shall be no other than this: Let her observe what Points they are wherein we agree with her, and let her think, if she please, that we account of them as Fundamentals, especially if they be in the Scriptures; and on the other hand, let her mark in what Points we refuse Communion with her, and let her assure her self we esteem those as no Fundamentals: If she desire a List and Catalogue made of all those, she is at leisure enough, for ought I know, to do it her self.

LAST of all, Concerning the Imputation of Rebellion and Schism against Church-Authority, with which your Catholick Disputant meant to affright you, all that is but merely Pouders without Shot, and can never hurt you: For since it hath been sufficiently evidenced unto us, that the Church of *Rome* hath adulterated the Truth of God, by  
mixing

*of the Lord's Supper.* 75

mixing with it fundry Inventions of her own, it was the Conscience of our Duty to God that made us to separate; for where the Truth of God doth once suffer, there Union is Conspiracy, Authority is but Tyranny, and Churches are but Routs. And suppose we, that we mistook, and made our Separation upon Error, the Church of *Rome* being right in all her ways, tho we think otherwise, yet could not this much prejudice us; for it is Schism upon Wilfulness that brings Danger with it; Schism upon Mistake, and Schism upon just Occasion, hath in it self little hurt, if any at all.

SIR,

**I** RETURN you more than I thought, or you expected, yet less than the Argument required: If you shall favour me so much as to carefully read what I have carefully written, you shall find (at least in those Points you occasioned me to touch upon) suffi-



76 On the Sacrament, &c.

*cient ground to plant your self strongly against all Discourse of the Romish Corner-creepers, which they use for the seducing of unstable Souls. Be it much or little that I have done, I require no other Reward than the Continuance of your good Affection to*

**YOUR SERVANT,**

*whom you know.*





A  
PARAPHRASE  
ON THE  
TWELFTH CHAPTER  
OF  
*St. Matthew's* Gospel.



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*A* P A R A P H R A S E *on*  
*St. Matthew's Gospel,*  
Chap. XII.

*Scholar.*

*S I R,*



THANK you for the Pains you have taken in facilitating to my Understanding the Scope and Purpose of the 11th of *St. Matthew*: If I might not be too troublesome to you, I would also desire you to take the like pains with me in the Twelfth.

D 4

*Master.*

Master.

I SHALL, with all my heart; provided that you will make your Objections, as they rise within you; for peradventure, I may think you understand that which you do not, and not understand that which you do, and so lose my Labour.

Scholar.

I SHALL obey you readily: and therefore to begin with the Beginning of the Chapter; I pray Sir, how is it said, 1. That *at that time Jesus went thro the Corn, with his Disciples*; when in the very next Chapter before, it is said, *That he sent all his Disciples away from him?*

Master.

By these Words, *at that time*, is not meant the very next immediate Instant of time to that, when he spake the last Words going before; but such a convenient Portion of time, wherein the twelve Disciples might have gone about those Parts, whereunto they were sent, and return'd back again. So St. *Matthew* having

St. Matthew's Gospel. 81

having spoken newly of Christ's dwelling in *Nazareth*, when he was a Child of about two Years old, immediately subjoins, *In those days came John the Baptist*; as if *John* had come within some few days after his coming into *Nazareth*; when we know there passed eight and twenty Years between.

*Scholar.*

I BELIEVE it as you say, and therefore shall pass to that which doth more trouble me; and that is, What that was, which the Disciples did, *which was not lawful on the Sabbath-Day.*

*Master.*

How come you to be troubled at that? Is it not said in plain Terms, *They pluck'd the Ears of Corn, and did eat them?* Why should not you think that this was their Fault?

*Scholar.*

I SHALL tell you why: To my thinking, there are three things said,  
1. *That they went thro the Corn.*

D 5

2. *That*

2. *That they plucked the Ears.* 3. *That they eat them.* Now whether all these, or one of these, was their Fault, I cannot tell; and I shall tell you the Reason of my Doubt.

*First,* IT is true that their very Walking might have been their Fault, because it was not lawful on the Sabbath, to walk above the Space of two thousand Cubits, and we know not how far Christ and the Disciples might have come that Day: But yet methinks, if that had been it, they should have reprov'd Christ as well as his Disciples, because 'tis very likely they walk'd the one as much and as far as the other.

*Secondly,* IT is true, that their plucking the Ears of Corn might have been their Fault, but yet methinks it should not, in regard the Law is so clear, in *Deut. 23. 25.* *When thou comest into the standing Corn of thy Neighbour, then thou mayst pluck the Ears with thine hand, but thou*

St. Matthew's Gospel. 83

*thou shalt not move a Sickle unto thy Neighbour's standing Corn.* And truly why that which is so plainly lawful at another time, should be unlawful on the Sabbath (being it is so far from being any kind of Labour or servile Work) I cannot imagine.

*Thirdly,* It's true, that they did eat them; and I cannot see what Fault there is in that, unless you can shew me.

*Master.*

AND peradventure I shall shew you more in that than you thought on. It is true that the general Consent of Expositors runs on their plucking the Ears upon the Sabbath-day, as being the thing condemned by the *Pharisees* for an unlawful thing: But I think they would be much troubled to prove it. The Custom and Manner of the *Jews* (especially since the times of the *Macchabees*) being to allow Acts of greater Labour and Pain, than the plucking of an Ear, namely, waging  
War



War against their Enemies, the travelling of Carriers and Merchants, with such others, even on the Sabbath-day. I should rather encline to think, that their Fault was eating; especially if that be true, which the very Heathen Poets tax and scoff them so with; namely, their *Sabbath-Fasts*. For if all things be well considered, I believe there will more be said for this, than for the other Crime. And if a Man will go no further than that Answer which our Saviour makes for them, he shall find ground enough to be of this Opinion. For, if the pretended Fault had been working or labouring, our Saviour Christ might have easily laid his Answer upon *Joshua*, or upon many others, who did greater Work than this upon the Sabbath. But laying it as he doth upon *David*, and upon his eating that which was forbidden; he seems to answer one unlawful Eating with another, when Necessity was a sufficient Dispensation for both. I do not oblige you to believe

St. Matthew's Gospel. 85

lieve this as a positive Truth, but only tell you that as much may be said for the one as the other; but if you would be sure to know what their Fault was, you had best put them both together, and you will not miss.

*Scholar.*

I THANK you for this Light, I wish you could give me as good in my next Objection.

*Master.*

I SHALL do my best; what is that I pray?

*Scholar.*

OUR Saviour saith, in the third Verse of this Chapter, that David *did eat of the Shew-bread, and they that were with him*; and the Holy Ghost saith, *1 Sam. 21. 1.* where this History is recorded, That there was no Man with him: for it is said there, that *Ahimelech the Priest was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and why is no Man with thee?* How shall I reconcile this Contradiction to my thinking?

*Master.*

THE truth is, the Words of our Saviour in *St. Matthem*, are too plain and evident, to admit of any other Construction, but that there were some other Men with *David*; and if they could admit of it, yet *St. Mark* would put all out of doubt, for he saith expressly, that *David did eat the Shew-bread, and gave it to them that were with him*, *Mark* 2. 26. And therefore, when the Priest saith, that there was no Man with him, in *Samuel*, it is best to understand that, of no Man in sight; because, peradventure, *David* might have caused them to withdraw for the present, till he had got Relief from the Priest, both for himself and them. And this I conceive the best Satisfaction unto that Doubt.

Scholar.

I THINK it not improbable; but before I leave this Story of *David*, I pray tell me how it comes to pass that our Saviour saith, *David entred into the House of God*, in ver. 4. of

St. Matthew's Gospel. 87

of this Chapter, when as yet the House of God was not built, (*i. e.*) when as yet there was no Temple.

*Master.*

IT was well objected, and the Answer to be given is this; That our Saviour calls that Place where the Tabernacle then was, *the House of God*, which afterwards became the proper Appellation of the Temple.

*Scholar.*

IT is very likely: Now if you please, let us pass from this Answer concerning *David*, to that concerning the Priests, in the 5th Verse; where Christ saith, *That the Priests on the Sabbath-day profane the Sabbath, and are blameless*: What doth he mean by that?

*Master.*

IN those Words, our Saviour useth another Argument, in behalf of his Disciples; which they call an Argument from the less to the greater; to justify their Plucking and their Eating on the Sabbath-day. Amongst the *Jews*, the Law of the Sab-

Sabbath was ever so to be interpreted, as that it hindred not the Works of the Temple; and therefore it was a kind of Rule in the *Jewish* Law, that in the Temple there was no Sabbath. From this Submission of the Law of the Sabbath to the Works of the Temple, our Saviour argueth to that which is greater than it, the Works of a Prophet, who was above a Priest. His Answer is in brief this; The Priests, by their Work in the Temple upon the Sabbath, were not thought to profane the Sabbath; and therefore there is less reason that my Disciples, who are Prophets, should be thought to profane it, in doing of that which is a less Work than theirs. And that this is the Scope of his Reply, will appear by that which follows, when he saith, *That in this place, there is One greater than the Temple*, in the 6th Verse: For, the truth is, every Prophet was greater than the Temple, that is, he was oblig'd in no case to the Laws and Customs of the  
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Temple, but might sacrifice out of it, when he pleased, as appears in the Practice of *Eliab*. And whereas it may be objected, that the Priestly Function, on the Sabbath, could not be perform'd without the Labour of Offering, but the Prophetical Function of the Disciples might be perform'd on the Sabbath without plucking Ears and Eating: The answer is, That both our Saviour and his Disciples were so intent upon their Prophetical Employment, that, as elsewhere, *They forgat to take Bread*, so here, they either forgat, or had no time for the Provision of Victuals before the Sabbath, whereon to feed on the Sabbath.

*Scholar.*

I APPREHEND your Meaning, and desire you to make the Force of Christ's third Argument as evident unto me, which follows in the 7th Verse; where he saith, *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*

*Master.*

HIS Meaning is no more but this, That when two Laws seem to clash so against one another, that both cannot be kept; the better is to be observ'd, and the worse omitted. The Law which willeth us to *do good to all Men*, and to further them in the Means of their Salvation, which to a Christian is a Law Moral, never to be omitted; is better than the Law which willeth us *not to work or eat upon the Sabbath*, which is only a Law Ritual. Christ could not intend to teach, and the Disciples intend to prepare and fit the Minds of the People to be taught, and withal intend the preparing of such things, as were requisite to the strict Observation of the Sabbath; and therefore in Equity, the Law of the Sabbath ought to give place to the Law of instructing the World in the Ways of Happiness, and not to have jostled with it.

*Scholar.*

*Scholar.*

I CONCEIVE this Argument ; but yet, methinks, there follows somewhat like a Reason, which I do not yet conceive, in the next Verse ; *For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.* Pray shew me what the meaning is of that ?

*Master.*

THEY that by the [*Son of Man*] here understand Christ, or the Messias, do mistake ; for in that acceptation of the Words, the Reason doth not hold : for if Christ had meant only, that he, as the Messias, was Lord of the Sabbath, and so could abrogate it at his pleasure, then what needed all the three other Arguments that went before ? By the [*Son of Man*] therefore is to be understood every common ordinary Man, as appears most evidently by that of St. Mark 2. 27. *The Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.* Besides, at this time, Christ neither had preached, nor would have others to preach that he  
was



was the *Messiah* : and a good while after this, as you may see in *Mat. 16. 20.* *He charged that they should tell it no Man, &c.* The sense therefore of the words is this ; That which is ordained for another thing, ought to give place to that thing for which it is ordained : but the Sabbath was ordained for Man, every Man ; therefore it ought to give place unto him : namely, when a thing so nearly concerning Man as his Salvation steppeth in between. For to be [*Lord of the Sabbath*] is to dispose and order the Sabbath unto his own use, and to have a right so to order and dispose it.

*Scholar.*

I T H A N K you for this pains ; and because I have put you to so much already, I shall trouble you with nothing concerning the next Story of the Man which had the withered Hand, because I think I do well enough understand it : only let me desire you to give me your Opinion, why, when our Saviour  
Christ

St. Matthew's Gospel. 93

Christ had healed him and divers other Men of their Diseases, it is added in the 16th Verse of this Chapter, *And he charged them, that they should not make him known.*

*Master.*

TRULY, that which was the Cause of his Seces, or his withdrawing himself from them, in the Verse before, may very well be conceived the Cause also of this enjoined Silence; namely, that he might be safer from all Violence and Force: But they which say, that he did it out of Charity to those *Pharisees* who did seek his Life, say not amiss; as *Origen* reports of *Aristotle*, that he withdrew himself from *Athens*, not for his own sake, but for the *Athenians* sake, lest he should give them an occasion of committing another Murder, after the Murder of *Socrates*. Hitherto, as yet, this Zeal and Endeavours of the *Pharisees* to maintain the Traditions of their Elders, and the Religion of their Fathers, might seem somewhat excusable;

ble ; and therefore Christ, adding Miracle to Miracle, did wait for their Repentance and Amendment ; in the mean time preventing them by Escapes, and concealing of himself, from doing him any Violence or Mischief, till such time as that, resisting the Light and Testimony of their own Conscience (as some of them did very shortly after, as we shall see anon) they had more deservedly drawn upon themselves the Guilt of that innocent Blood, which afterwards fell upon their Heads. So that when Christ charged them, that they should not make him known, he meant only, that they should not discover where he was, that so with the more Silence, and less Opposition, he might do the Business of his Father. And this sense is agreeable to that which follows out of the Prophet *Isaiab*, in the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st Verses.

*Scholar.*

St. Matthew's Gospel. 95

*Scholar.*

I TAKE it to be so indeed; but in these words out of *Isaiah*, there is somewhat which does much trouble me how to understand; and that is the latter part of the 20th Verse, where it is said, *Till he send forth Judgment unto Victory*. Pray what do you take to be the meaning of those words?

*Master.*

I SHALL run thro the whole words of the Prophet, and by that you will better understand that part. These words of the Prophet *Isaiah* are produced by St. *Matthew*, for a Confirmation of that Meekness, Humility, Quietness, and Silence, with which the great Business of our Salvation was to be dispatched: For by these words [*I will put my Spirit on him*] is understood the Spirit of Meekness, Gentleness, and Humility, which was emblemed in the Dove, when it came upon him; and by those words [*And he shall shew Judgment unto the Gentiles*] is understood

derstood the preaching of the Christian Law : and therefore if you mark it, in the 42d of *Isaiab*, and the 4th Verse, it is added as an Explication of the word [*Judgment*] going before ; *And the Isles shall wait for his Law.* When he comes to preach this Law, or to shew forth this Judgment, saith the Prophet, *he shall not strive nor cry* ; that is, he shall discover no sign of Anger or Discomposure in his Mind : *neither shall any Man hear his Voice in the Streets*, saith the Prophet ; that is, he shall cause no Tumult or popular Hubbub, he shall not expose the Vices of Men to the Knowledg and Censure of the World, of whom he hath but the least Hope that they will amend. *A bruised Reed shall he not break*, saith the Prophet ; that is, the Mind which is afflicted, he shall not afflict more : *And the smoaking Flax shall he not quench* ; that is, where he does but see a little *Smoke*, he will look for some *Fire* ; he will so comply with the Weaknesses and  
Infir-

Infirmities of all Mankind, that he will not be out of hope to cherish them up into Virtues. And all this he will do, saith the Prophet, *Till he send out Judgment unto Victory*; of which words, whatsoever the Sense or Meaning be, this is plain, that they contain the Success or Event of that Meekness, Gentleness, and Quietness which went before. Now, taking it for granted, that there is nothing left out in these words, as St. Jerom does suspect, I can imagine but two Senses that can be put upon them; and those two Senses arise out of the two several Acceptations of the word [*Judgment.*] For, (1.) If by [*Judgment*] in this place, be meant the same which was meant by [*Judgment*] in the 18th Verse going before, then the sense of the words is this; He shall preach the Christian Law with all Meekness and Mildness, maugre all Opposition and Malice of those that do oppugn it, till that Law have prevailed, or gotten the Victory; that is, till the  
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greatest part of all the World embrace it: and this Sense is no improper Sense, if we look no further. But then, (2.) If by [*Judgment*] be meant the Disceptation or Discussion of a Cause (in which Sense it is often taken in the Scriptures) then the meaning of the words is this; He shall use so much Meekness and Gentleness in working upon the Minds of all Men in the World, that let any Man sit in Judgment upon that which he hath done, and he shall carry the Cause, or bear away the Victory. To this purpose saith the Psalmist of God, that *he is clear when he is judged*, Psal. 51. 6. And in this sense God saith of himself, *O ye Men of Judah! judg ye, I pray you, between my Vineyard and me*; Isa. 5. 3. And in this Judgment Christ got the Victory, when with all Patience and Long-sufferance, with all Gentleness and Meekness he endured the perverse and crooked Dispositions of the People of the Jews, and spared no Time or Labour

St. Matthew's Gospel. 99

bour to reform them, if they would have hearkned unto him.

*Scholar.*

S I R, I confess there is much reason in what you say; but, methinks, it seems a little strained Sense to be put upon those words, as you read them, *Till he shall send forth Judgment*: for, according to your Sense, we should read them thus, at least, *Till he shall carry away the Judgment with Victory, or to Victory.*

*Master.*

Y O U have judged very right, and so indeed should we read them: for the word ἐκβάλλειν, which we render [*shall send forth*] is of the same signification with ἐκφέρειν, which doth signify [*to carry away.*] But you must bear with more Faults in the Translation of your Testament than this; and I hope you will bear with me, if I tell you plainly of them when I meet with them.

*Scholar.*

I BESEECH you do; for tho I have a very great Opinion of those



Men who did translate the Testament, yet I would be loth to be a Loser by my Reverence. But if you please, I will proceed in framing my Objections.

*Master.*

You shall not need, for I foresee whither you are driving, even towards the great Scruple that affrights the World, the Sin against the Holy Ghost; of which there is mention in this Chapter, upon the occasion of Christ's healing of the blind and dumb Man possessed of the Devil, in the 22d Verse of this Chapter.

*Scholar.*

I WAS indeed; and therefore, if you please, let us come unto that Story.

*Master.*

WITH all my heart: And, first, I must let you know, that so soon as the *Pharisees* saw that great Miracle which Christ had done, they said, *That he casteth out Devils by Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils,* in the  
24th

St. Matthew's Gospel. 101

24th Verse of this Chapter. And truly this was no unusual Practice amongst the Sorcerers and Magicians, as is evident by many of the antient Poets, when they could not prevail any other way, to use the help of the great and chiefest Devil (whose name they would threaten him to publish, if he did not help them) to expel or cast out other less Devils that possessed Men. In *Famblichus* there is mention of that Form, in which they threatned him; and *Porphyry* says, that his name was *Serapis*. But our Saviour sufficiently refuteth that Calumny several ways: 1<sup>st</sup>, By a common and known Axiom amongst themselves, *Every Kingdom divided, &c.* and the meaning thereof is this, That the Devils are wise, there is no question; but they that are wise, will rather seek to establish themselves and their own Power, which is done by Concord and Agreement, than to distract and dislocate it, which is done by Faction and Division: therefore it is

not likely that the Devils will so differ and disagree, as the one to expel the other, as they would persuade the World. 2ly, By Retortion, in these words; *If I by Beelzebub do cast out Devils, by whom do your Children cast them out?* ver. 27. And the force of Christ's Argument is this: In a like Cause, Equity will that Men give a like Judgment; when your Disciples do cast out Devils, do not you think that they cast them out by a Divine Power? Therefore so should you even think of me, if you thought aright. But I should take this to be an *Argument* together.

*Scholar.*

I CONFESS I did partly conceive the Scope of these two Arguments before, but that which follows I do not understand: *But if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then is the Kingdom of God come unto you.* Pray make me understand it, that is, (1.) What is meant by the [*Kingdom of God?*] (2.) What is

St. Matthew's Gospel. 103

is the meaning of this Consequence, *If I by the Spirit of God cast out Devils, then is the Kingdom of God come unto you?* For I see not how it follows.

*Master.*

By the Kingdom of God is meant the time of the Messiah's being in the World, as in *Dan. 4. 29.* and *Dan. 7. 14.* and the Consequence there inferred, is this; That as God, by fundry Works and Miracles, gave his People of *Israel* a Sign of their instant Deliverance out of *Egypt*; so the great Miracles of Christ were ordained by him, to be a Sign unto the World of a greater Deliverance, which was now working for them: and therefore where they saw the one, they should expect the other.

*Scholar.*

I BELIEVE you have guessed right; but what say you to the Verse which follows, *Or else how can one enter into a strong Man's House, and spoil his Goods?* &c. It looks like another Argument which Christ

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useth

useth in his own Defence against this Calumny of the *Pharisees*; but I confess I do not yet apprehend it.

*Master.*

IT is not unlikely, but anon you will. This is indeed a third Argument of Christ's, and it toucheth to the quick: for whereas his other two served only to convince certain Men, this comes to the very thing it self, and quite overthrowes it. There have been, saith Christ, who have cast out Devils thro *Beelzebub*; it may be so, but this hath been without any harm or loss from the one unto the other; it hath not come to spoiling of Goods, to extirpate out of the Minds of Men any of their Sins, but rather to increase them; this hath been nothing but a mere Collusion and Cheat: But when I cast out Devils, you may see I spoil them to the purpose, I rob them of their Power; for I plant in the Minds of Men such Doctrine, as will admit of no Vice and Wickedness to be near it (wherein the Power  
of

St. Matthew's Gospel. 105

of the Devil does consist) and therefore you may well imagine that I am in good earnest; for I bind him and spoil him, which no one Devil ever yet did unto another, or ever will.

*Scholar.*

I SHALL desire to put you to no more trouble in this Verse; if you please, let us pass unto the next.

*Master.*

As I take it, that is this: *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.*

*Scholar.*

TRULY, as the words stand alone, I should not trouble you at all with them, for to my thinking they are easy enough; but as they follow upon what went before, I see not what our Saviour Christ might intend by them.

*Master.*

HAVING declared himself to be so far from casting out Devils in the name of *Beelzebub*, that he la-  
E 5                      boured

boured to bind even *Beelzebub* himself, and to spoil him of all his power which he exercised in the Hearts of wicked Men, he carries the Consideration of this Enmity between the Devil and himself to such a height, as that he will not admit of any Neutrality in any other Man; professing, that whosoever is not the Devil's Enemy, is his; according to that Axiom of the Wars, *Medii habentur pro Hostibus*, All indifferent Men are Enemies. And if all this be not enough to shew how far he was from operating by the help of Satan, surely nothing can be. And therefore having said this, conceiving he had said as much as Man could say, he adds, *Wherefore I say unto you*, (ver. 31.) that is, seeing it is evident by these Reasons and Arguments, that all the Signs and Miracles which I do, I do by the power of God, and not by the help of the Devil: consider what a wretched Punishment you draw upon your selves, that thus do slander and  
and

and belye me. This Connexion St. *Mark* does teach us plainly, *chap. 3. 30.* where he says, *Because they said he hath an unclean Spirit.* And yet it is to be considered, that our Saviour Christ proceeds not merely upon the strength of his own Arguments, but as knowing their Thoughts, as *St. Matthew* tells us in the 25th Verse of this Chapter: that is, he saw in unto them, and he knew that they verily believed that the Miracle which he wrought, was wrought by the Power of God; but yet he saw, that they would rather invent any Lye, or asperse him with any Slander (tho they knew it well enough to be a Lye and Slander) than to suffer the People to forsake their Chair, and to follow Christ.

*Scholar.*

I THANK you, Sir, for this pains which you have taken, to prepare me for the understanding of my great Doubt, which now, methinks, I begin to have a little Glimpse of, but desire you to give me better Light.

*Master.*



*Master.*

I SHALL: But first I would gladly know what you conceive of those words in the 31st Verse, *All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men*; because by understanding of what Sin shall be forgiven, you will the more easily understand me, when I tell you what manner of Sin shall not:

*Scholar.*

WHY, Sir, I understand any manner of Sin whatsoever; and I understand the Sin of the Holy Ghost to be the only Sin which shall never be forgiven.

*Master.*

I DID fear as much, and therefore I did ask you: But you must know that you are much mistaken, both in the one and in the other Opinion. For, (1.) It is to be considered, that Christ speaks not of all Sin, but of that Sin which is Blasphemy or Calumny (for there are many other Sins which will never be forgiven, as well as the Sin against

gainst the Holy Ghost :) And therefore in the next Verse he saith, *Who-soever speaketh a Word against the Son of Man*; that is, whosoever slandereth or calumniateth any other Man, *it shall be forgiven him*: and in those words he expoundeth what he means by Sin and Blasphemy.

(2.) It is to be considered, that when he saith, *All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven*, there is an Hebraism in those words, which is often met withal in Scripture; as in the 5th Chapter of St. Matthew, *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away*: that is, Heaven and Earth shall sooner pass away, than my Words shall pass away; (and so St. Luke reads them :) not that Heaven and Earth shall ever pass away, but that, if it were possible, they should sooner pass away than his Word shall. The meaning therefore of the words is only this; All manner of Calumnies and Slanders are heavy Sins, and shall hardly be forgiven to those that do commit

mit them; but they will be more easily forgiven than that Calumny, which he knows to be a Calumny, who doth commit it: and this Christ calls blaspheming of the Holy Ghost, which was the Case of these *Pharisees*, who calumniated the Miracle which our Saviour wrought, as proceeding from the Devil, which their own Conscience told them issued from the Holy Spirit of God.

*Scholar.*

I CONFESS, Sir, this is very plain and easy; and I pray proceed to the 33d Verse: *Either make the Tree good, and his Fruit good, &c.* saith Christ. The dependance of those words is this: You say, I work by the Devil, saith Christ; but you do not see any other Work of mine besides this Miracle, which looks like a Work of the Devil. You see I go about doing Good, I exhort People to Repentance, I shew them the way to Heaven; these are no Works which the Devils use to do: therefore either say that I do  
all

St. Matthew's Gospel. 111

all this in the name of *Beelzebub* too, or else acknowledg that I do my Miracles by the Power of God : for Men judg of the Quality of the Mind by the common Actions or Habits of their Life, as they do of Trees by the Fruits which they produce, be they good or evil. And that this is true, faith Christ, you may judg by your own selves ; for *how can ye, being evil, speak good things ?* faith he, *ver. 34.* that is, you can never do it. A dissembled and forced Mind will quickly shew it self some way or other, and will return unto its wonted Habit ; and therefore, as you may judg by your selves, that because you speak and do nothing but that which is evil, therefore you your selves are evil : so you should judg of me, that because you see I say and do nothing but that which is good, therefore I am good ; and therefore that Spirit which works in me is good.

*Scholar.*

I APPREHEND all this; and therefore shall save you the Labour of expounding that which follows, for I see, it all tends to the same End and Scope: only, methinks I am much straitned in my Mind, about the 36th Verse, which forbids *all idle Words*; for, if we must give account of every one such, God be merciful unto me, and to many thousand more. Pray make me to understand the full Latitude of this Commination of Christ.

*Master.*

WHATSOEVER is meant by this *idle Word* here, you may be sure it hath reference to that Word which the *Pharisees* had spoke of Christ, when they said, *He cast out Devils in the Name of Beelzebub*; for Christ hath not done with this Calumny of theirs yet, but continues his Discourse upon it, till the 38th Verse of this Chapter. Now considering this [*Idle Word*] in that Reference, it is most reasonable to expound it, not  
of

St. Matthew's Gospel. 113

of every Word which a Man speaks, of which there is no Profit, or which is good for nought, (for if that Exposition should be true, which God forbid, yet it were not pertinent) but of such a Word, wherein there is no Truth; for by *Idle* and *Vain*, in Holy Scripture, is often understood that which is false: and so to take the Name of God in vain, in the Commandments, is to swear falsely. So that the Scope of Christ in those Words is this; Do you think that you shall escape for this horrid Calumny which you have cast upon me, knowing it to be a Calumny in your own Hearts? I tell you nay; for no Man shall escape in the Day of Judgment, for calumniating another Man falsely, tho he do not know that that Calumny is false; and therefore much less shall you. By which we may learn, if not to avoid all idle Words (which to the Nature and Education of Man is almost quite impossible) yet to beware of calumniating Persons, not only when we  
know

know that Calumny is false (which doubtless is a very grievous Sin) but when we are not evidently ascertain'd that the thing is true. And therefore it is the special Office of a good Christian, to refrain his Tongue altogether in that Point; for it is a rare thing for a Man to give himself the liberty, to repeat that of another which is false, and not to wish it true.

*Scholar.*

I THANK you for this Satisfaction, and, by God's Help, shall endeavour to frame *my* Life and Conversation accordingly: for I perceive it is a Sin, which the World taketh little notice of; tho indeed it be the Destruction of Charity, without which no Man is a Christian: for so they avoid doing that which is notoriously Evil, they care not what they say of any Man. Now if you please, we will proceed to that which follows: I pray, what do the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* mean to desire a Sign from Christ, in the 31st Verse of this Chapter, who had seen so many before?

fore? for methinks it seems a very impertinent Request.

*Master.*

SOME Interpreters are of opinion that these *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were not the same, who saw those late Miracles which our Saviour did; and they ground their Opinion upon *Luke 11. 16.* where it is said, *That others tempted him, seeking a Sign from Heaven:* but upon Examination, that Opinion will not hold. The better Answer is, That they did not desire a bare Sign or a Miracle, of which they had seen enough already; but they desired a Sign from Heaven (as *St. Luke* speaks) that is, that God by some strange Prodigy there, should declare him to be a Prophet sent from him, if so be he were so indeed: For, as for those Miracles which he did on Earth, they were not satisfy'd with them, as apprehending them pendulous between two several Powers; for as they might come from God, so they might come from the Devil: but in  
Hea-



Heaven they thought the Devil had no Power.

*Scholar.*

I LIKE your Reason well ; but, I pray what doth Christ mean by that Answer which he gives to their Request in the 39th, 40th, 41st, and 42d Verses ; for I do not understand it perfectly ?

*Master.*

THE Meaning of his Answer is this: You would have a Sign from Heaven, and then you will believe me ; God, that will omit no occasion to leave you unexcusable, hath given you Signs enough, here upon Earth ; but he is not bound to satisfy your Humours, and give them where and when you would have them : he knows these which you have seen are sufficient to persuade Belief, if that your Avarice, and Profit, and Places which you hold in the present *Jewish* State, did not make you seek all Occasions and Cloaks for your Incredulity : And therefore, if those Signs which I  
have

*St. Matthew's Gospel.* 117

have done on Earth, will not serve you, you shall have none from Heaven; but if you will, you shall have one from under the Earth, even the Sign of the Prophet *Jonas*: and that Sign not a Sign to convert you, who after so many Signs and Miracles will not be converted; but a Sign of my Innocence, and your Malice, which will persecute me even unto the death, for all that Good which I have done amongst you.

*Scholar.*

By this which you have said, I do not only perceive the Scope and Purport of Christ's Answer, which he gives them; but the Drift of the 41st and 42d Verses also: wherein he complains, That they who had so many Signs done amongst them, never would believe; whereas those of *Nineveh*, and the *Queen of the South*, without any Sign or Miracle wrought, either by *Jonas* or *Solomon*, believ'd all that was told them. But, I pray, how comes the next Discourse in,  
con-

concerning the unclean Spirit going out of a Man, in the 43d Verse? And what is the Scope and Purport of that Discourse?

*Master.*

IT is not improbable, that our Saviour Christ, being much afflicted with the evil and incredulous Hearts of the People of the *Jews*, taketh a kind of Survey of that whole Nation, even from the time wherein they were first led away captive into *Babylon*, to the time when they were utterly destroy'd by *Titus*. Before their Captivity, they were full of all manner of Wickedness, as appeareth by the Prophets; under their Captivity, they were a little reclaim'd, and, upon that Amendment, were brought back again: but then after their Return, in the times not long before our Saviour's coming, they fell into such Vices, as were abominable, even in the Heathens themselves, as is manifest in Story; and to shut up all, added thereunto the Contempt of their own Messiah, sent amongst  
amongst

amongst them with so much Power, and yet with so much Meekness, as Man never came. Whereupon, being justly forsaken of God, whom they had thus forsok, they became the most wretched and vicious People in the World, as *Josephus* doth describe them to be, about their latter times. And this Contemplation of their miserable Condition, our Saviour seems to insinuate, even unto themselves, in this kind of Parable of the unclean Spirit going out of a Man, and returning back again. Of which, if that which I have said be not the Occasion (as I do not avow, but only offer it unto you) yet certainly this is the Sense; That those Men, who have once left and forsaken the vicious Courses of their carnal Life, if they ever relapse, and fall back again into them; all their latter Sins are far more sinful than their former: Almighty God justly revenging the Contempt of that Grace, which he hath offer'd to them,

120      *A Paraphrase on*  
them, by giving them up to all man-  
ner of Wickedness and Uncleanness.

*Scholar.*

I THINK you have guess'd right,  
and to the purpose; but there are  
some Terms and Phrases in this Pa-  
rable or Story, or whatsoever you  
will call it, which I do not under-  
stand: as, *First*, I pray what do you  
think Christ means *by walking through*  
*dry Places, and seeking Rest, and find-*  
*ing none?*

*Master.*

DRY and sandy Grounds are no  
fit Places of Habitation, and such  
kind of Places are all those Places  
where the Devil doth abide when he  
is out of Man, who is only capable  
of Vice and Sin, wherein the Devil  
taketh pleasure. And the Meaning  
of Christ is this, That as a Man that  
travels, is wearied with heavy, sandy,  
and dry Way, more than with green,  
soft, and pleasant Fields; so the De-  
vil is not half so well satisfy'd, when  
he enters into any other Creature, as  
when he enters into Man.

*Scholar.*

St. Matthew's Gospel. 121

*Scholar.*

IT may be so indeed, but then, why taketh he seven Spirits, more wicked than himself? Why is the Number of Seven here pitch'd on, more than any other?

*Master.*

THE Number of Seven is the Number of Perfection, or the Signification of that which, in its own kind, is grown to full Maturity, whether it be Good or Evil. So St. *John* calleth the Holy Spirit of God the *Seven Spirits*, Rev. 1. 4. So the Barren is said to have *borne Seven*, 1 Sam. 2. 5. that is, to have been as fruitful as any other Woman is, or can be. And therefore when the unclean Spirit is said to take Seven other Spirits with him, the Meaning only is, That that Man becomes perfectly wicked, when that Spirit once returns again, whom before he had cast out.

*Scholar.*

I APPROVE your Exposition of the Word, and think it likely. But

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I pray can you guess what Business the Virgin, and the Brethren of Christ might have with him, because the Scripture saith, *They staid without, to speak with him,* in the 47th Verse of this Chapter? Peradventure you may think me curious, and therefore if Expositors have made no Conjecture thereupon, I will not urge you.

*Master.*

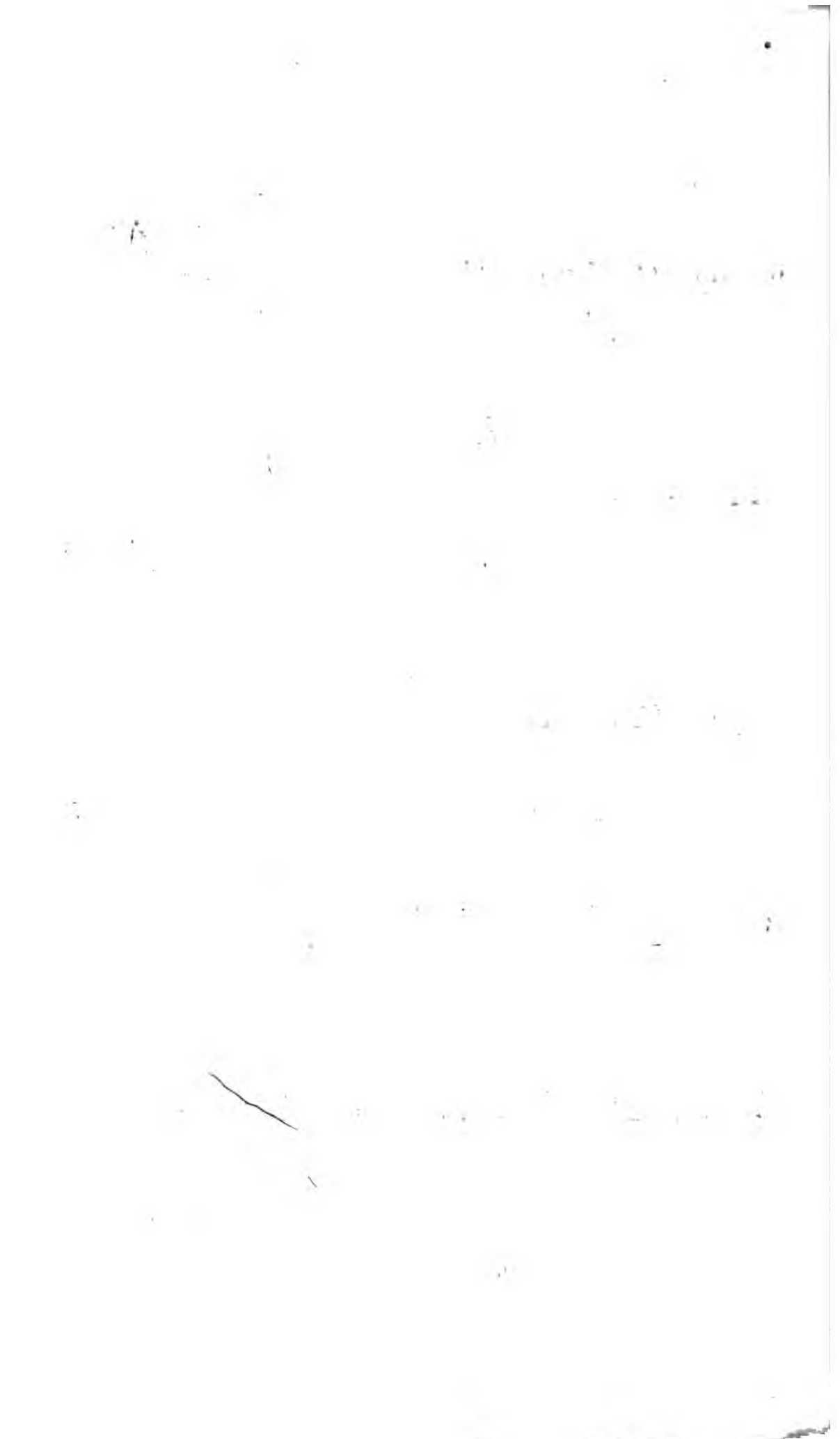
TRULY they have, and I shall not conceal it from you: They do imagine, that his Mother and his Kindred, having had some Inkling of the *Pharisees* conspiring against him, to do him mischief, desir'd to seakp with him in private, and to contrive some way to withdraw him out of Danger. This will seem the more probable, if we consider that which *St. Mark* saith, Chap. 3. 21. *That his Friends would fain have laid hold on him, saying, that he was beside himself;* which, in all likelihood, they said to make the *Pharisees* the less active in contriving any mischief to him, as conceiving him a fitter Subject for their  
Pity,

*St. Matthew's Gospel.* 123

Pity, than their Hate: but it seems Christ would not hearken unto them, nay would not know them, as appears by the three last Verses of this Chapter, which are so plain and easy, that I dare not suspect your Sense and Apprehension of them.









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T R A C T

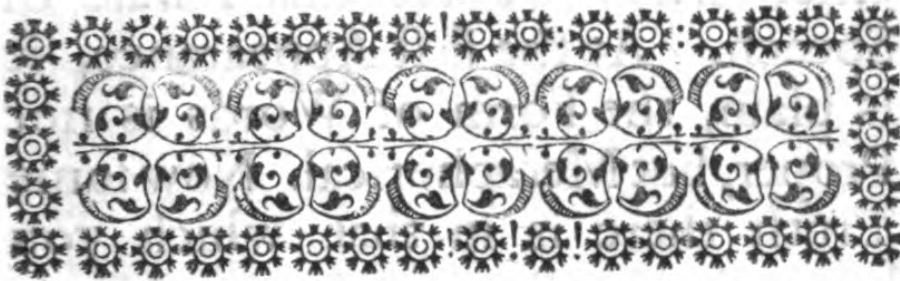
Concerning the  
Power of the KEYS,

A N D

*Auricular Confession.*



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*A TRACT concerning  
the Power of the KEYS,  
and AURICULAR CON-  
FESSION.*



IN opening the Point concerning the Doctrine of the *Keys* of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, I will follow those Lines, that Tract, which your self hath been pleas'd to set me. Yet first, e'er I come to your Particulars, I will discover, as far as Generality will give

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me leave, what it is which we intend, when we use this Phrase of Speech. At the first Appearance, it is plain, the Form of Words is not Proper, but Metaphorical. Now some Truth there is in that which you learnt in the Books of your Minority, from your *Aristotle*, πᾶν ἄσαφές τὸ κτ' μεταφορᾶν λεγόμενον: and indeed could we but once agree what it is which that Metaphor doth intimate, the greatest part of the Dispute were at an end. The natural way to discover this, is to see what the Use of *Keys*, properly taken, is; and after that, what Means they are, which in our Endeavours to attain to the *Kingdom of Heaven*, have something proportionable to the Use of *Keys*: and this being once discover'd, there can remain no Question, what are the *Keys*.

Now nothing is more known, than that the only Use of *Keys* is to open and shut, to admit us into, or exclude us from the Possession of  
 what

what we seek. Now since the *Kingdom of Heaven* is compar'd to a House, from which all the Sons of *Adam* by Nature are excluded; whatsoever then it is that gives us way, that removes all Obstacles which hinder us from Entrance of that House, that certainly must be understood by the Name of *Keys*. Now all these Means, or whatsoever else it is which doth further us towards the possessing our selves of *Eternal Life*, they were all laid down in the Gospel of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, committed by him fully and first of all to the Dispensation of the Blessed Apostles, to be reported by them, or their means, all the World over. So that, I think, I may safely lay thus much for the first Ground of the Question betwixt your self and me; *Claves Regni Cælorum sunt Doctrina Evangelii.*

Now since *Keys* are nothing without some Hand to manage them, we must, in the second place, discover

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into whose Hands they are committed. And for this purpose, first of all, it must not be deny'd, that principally and properly (I might well enough add only, if I list'd, but that I spare you) the Hand of God it is, that manages and applies these *Keys*; for of God and Christ it is written, *He hath the Keys, he opens, and no Man shuts; he shuts, and no Man opens.* Yet since it hath pleas'd God to use the Ministry of Men, to the saving of Men, and bringing them into the Kingdom of Heaven; in a secondary Sense the *Keys* of that Kingdom are said to be put into the Hands of Men: inasmuch as it hath pleas'd the Wisdom of God, not to use these *Keys*, at least as far as concerns the beneficial and opening part, some Act of Man not first premised. For since that Faith in Jesus Christ is the Sum of the Doctrine of the Gospel, and Faith cometh not but by Hearing, and Hearing cometh not but by Preaching, and Preaching is the Act of Men alone (for God employs

employs not Angels in that behalf;) it appears that this Preaching, or Manifestation of the Doctrine of the Gospel not perform'd, the *Keys* must needs be unprofitable. By the Manifestation of the Gospel of God, I mean not only the Labour of the Lip, in expounding, praying, reprov- ing, or the like; but the Administra- tion of Sacraments, the Acting (if any thing beyond this is to be acted) whatsoever the Manifestation of the Gospel requireth. So that I think I may set down for a second Ground towards the settling of the Point in question, thus much; That the Ma- naging or Application of the *Keys*, so far forth as Men are intrusted with them, is, *The Manifestation of the Doctrine of the Gospel*. Thus far have we open'd in general the Substance of the *Keys*, and the Use of them. I come now to your *Queries*.

1<sup>st</sup>, You ask of the Quality of the Apostles receiving this Power, whether they had it as Judges, *Au-  
thori-*



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*thoritative*; or as Messengers, *Declarative*, only to *propound*, or *denounce*? You manifest your self for the former, and Reasons you bring, such as they be. Your Reasons I shall consider in their place, but I must first tell you that you ask amiss; for your Question is concerning the whole Power of the *Keys*, but you answer only of a Part, that is, of Sacramental Absolution only, as if all the Power of the *Keys* resided there. So that here you use the Fallacy *plurium Interrogationum*; and I might well grant you, that indeed that part were *Judicative*, but yet contend that all the rest were only *Declarative*. To reduce you therefore, I must do with you, as Physicians, in some cases, deal with their Patients; e'er I can come to purge the Humour you are sick of, I must a little prepare you. The Power of the *Keys* is express'd by the Learned in three Yokes, or Pairs of Words.

I. To

1. To remit, and to retain.
2. To loose, and to bind.
3. To open, and to shut.

ON the one side, to *remit*, to *loose*, to *open*, which is the one half of the Power, agree in one, and signify the same thing; so do the other three, to *retain*, to *bind*, to *shut*, which contain the other half. To your Question then, whether the Power of the *Keys* be declarative only, I answer first; For this latter part or half, it is merely declarative, neither can it be otherwise: which, that you may see with your Eyes, I must request you to observe, That all shutting of the Kingdom of Heaven, is either common to all, or casual, befalling only some. The common Exclusion is that State of Nature, wherein we all are involv'd, as we spring from the first *Adam*: The second Exclusion is that which befalls Christians relapsing into Sin. The first shutting was at the Fall,  
and

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and was then prefigur'd unto us, by the barring up of the way unto the Tree of Life. What active, what judiciary part can any Minister of the Gospel have here? All that the Apostles could do here, was but to open to Men this their Misery; a thing, before the Death of our Saviour, either very sparingly or not at all reveal'd. Of this therefore you must needs quit your Hands, and so you must of the other, I mean Exclusion upon Casuality and Relapse. For when a Man, converted to Christianity, falleth estfoons into some mortal Sin, doth the Gate of Heaven stand open to him, till he fall upon some curs'd Priest, that used his Key to shut it?

THERE are in the World a kind of deceitful Locks with sliding Bolts; I have seen my self and others much deceiv'd by them, when the Doors have fallen at our Heels, and lock'd us out when we intended no such thing. *Sir, Heaven-door hath a sliding*

sliding Lock, upon occasion of mortal Sin; it will shut without any use of a Key.

PERCHANCE I do not well, παιζειν ἐν μὴ παικτοῖς, yet the sober Meaning of what I have spoke merrily, is but this; That either you must make the Ministry of the Gospel only Declarative, or else it will follow that every impenitent Relapser, that hath the good Fortune to escape the Priests being privy to his Sin, is like to find Heaven open at the last. So then it is apparent, that notwithstanding your heaping up of Interrogatories, and your pressing of *Ligaveritis & vos*, and telling me what I never knew, that *Solvere* and *Ligare* be Actives; yet in this part of our Power, all your Activity is lost, and there remains nothing for you but to report upon good Evidence, what you find done by your Betters to your hand.

HALF your Jurisdiction then is fallen: and if I had no other *Medium* but this, I might with good Probability conclude against you for the other part. For if the one half made in the same Form, in the like Phrase and Garb of Speech, yet enforceth no more but Declaration and Denouncing: then why should you think the other half (which in all likelihood is homo-geneal to the former) to be more? Nay, there is far more natural Equity that you should be here only Declarative, than in the other. Politicians tell us, That it is Wisdom for Princes, who desire to gain the Love of their Subjects, to administer themselves all Favours and Graces, but to leave Actions of Justice and Harshness to be perform'd by others.

SIR, No Prince can be so ambitious of the Love of his Subjects, as God is of the Love of Mankind; why then should I think him so ill

a Politician, as to make himself the Administrator of the rough, unpleasing, love-killing Offices of *Binding, Shutting, Retaining*; and then pass over to the Priest, the Dispensation of the fair, well-spoken, ingratiating Offices of *Remitting, Loosing, and Opening*? But I will leave this kind of Topick and Dialectical Arguing, because you are a Pretender to convincing Reasons: I will directly enter even upon that part of your Power of *Opening and Remitting*, being the other part of your Territory, and by main Strength, take all Activity from you there too. Give me leave to ask you one Question; you may very well favour me so far, for you have ask'd me very many:

*THE Conversion of a Sinner, is it an Act of the Keys, yea or no?*

By your Principles it is not; for you make the Power of the *Keys* to be judiciary, and therefore the Conversion of an Infidel pertains not to them:

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them: The Church of Rome will help you with a *Medium* to make this Argument good. *Do we not judg those that are within? for those that are without, God shall judg,* saith Paul. Whence she infers, That a converted Infidel, not yet admitted to the Church, is a Stranger to the Judiciary Power of the *Keys*; but being once admitted into the Church, he is now become the Church's Subject, and so fit matter for the Priest to work on, upon his next Relaple. What think you of this Reason? Do you take it to be good? Take heed, or else it will give you a deadly Stripe: For the Conversion of an Infidel, out of question, is a most proper Act of the *Keys*. For, since the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven is confess'd to belong unto the *Keys*; and Heaven, which was shut against the Infidel in time of his Infidelity, upon his Conversion, is acknowledg'd to be open'd unto him: certainly whoever converted him, used the *Keys*; or else he must pretend

tend to have either a *Picklock*, or the Herb *Lunaria*, which, they say, makes Locks fall off from Doors, and the Fetters from Horses Heels. If then the Conversion of a Sinner be an Act of the *Keys*, and by the Argument of the Church of *Rome* it be not Judiciary; it follows then, that all Acts of the *Keys* are not Judiciary; and if not Judiciary, then Declarative only: For betwixt these two, I know no Mean.

**BUT** because to dispute against a Man out of his own Principles, which perchance are false (for this we know oft falls out, that by the Power of *Syllogisms*, Men may and do draw true Conclusions from false Premises) because, I say, thus to do, in the Judgment of *Aristotle*, leaves a Man *πεπεισμενον μὲν ὠφελιμένον ἢ ἔ;* and I am willing not only to persuade you, but to better you: I will draw the little, which remains to be said in this Point, from other places.



1st, IN all the Apostles Practice in converting *Jews* and *Gentiles*, find you any thing like unto the Act of any Judiciary Power? They neither did nor could use any such thing. That they did not, appears by *Philip*, who having catechiz'd the *Eunuch*, and finding him desirous of Baptism, immediately upon Profession of his Faith, admitted him into the Church. That they neither did nor could, appears by *Peter* and the rest of the Apostles in the *Acts*, who could never in the space of an Afternoon, being none but themselves, have converted three thousand Souls, had they taken any such way, as you seem to misfancy. Again, imagine with your self all Circumstances you can, which are of force to make a Power Judiciary, apply them all to the Practice of the Apostles, in the Conversion of Infidels; and if you find any one of them agree to that Action, let me be challenged upon

upon it, and be thought to have abus'd you with a Fallacy.

To conclude then, since your *Ligaveritis*, which is the one half of your pretended Jurisdiction, pretends to nothing above Declarative; and since your *Solveritis*, in so great an Act as is the Conversion of Infidels, lays claim to no more: what Act of the Power of the *Keys* is it, wherein we may conceive Hope of finding any thing Active or Judiciary? I see what you will say; There yet remains a Part, you think, wherein you have hope to speed, and that is the reconciling of relapsing Christians. As you fancy that in every sinning Christian, there is a Duty binding him to repair, and lay his Sin open to the Minister of the Gospel; and in him a Power to consider of the Sins of such as repair unto him, to weigh Particulars, to consider Circumstances and Occasions, and according to true Judgment, either upon Penance impos'd to ab-

solve

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solve Sin (which you call remitting of the Sin) or to withhold him for a time, from Participation of Holy Duties with Catholick Christians, which you call retaining of Sins; supposing that God doth the like in Heaven, as it is written, *What you bind in Earth, is bound in Heaven, and what you loose in Earth, is loosed in Heaven.* Now the Rock on which you labour to found so extravagant a Conceit, is no other than the words which I have quoted out of Scripture; you press earnestly the *Ligaveritis & vos*, all which can yield you small Relief: for if they help you not at all in those weighty Parts of the Power of the *Keys*, which but now were laid before you; by what Analogy can you expect they should afford you any Assistance here? As is *Ligare*, so is *Solvere*; as is the Conversion of an Infidel, so is the reconciling of a relapsing Christian, for any thing you can make appear: either all is *Declarative*, which is very possible, and in  
many

many cases necessary; or all *Judicative*, which in some cases is impossible, and in none necessary: so that to fit the Scripture to your Fancy, you are constrain'd to distract and rend it without any Warrant at all. But you have found out in the Text a stronger Argument against the declarative Power I contend for: You espy an *Insufflavit*, a great, a solemn, and unwonted Ceremony, undoubtedly concluding some greater Matter than a poor Power declarative: *What! did our serious Master thus spend his Breath to no purpose, and, like a Hocus Pocus, with so much shew act us a solemn Nothing?* I pray whose Words are these? I should have thought them to have been *Porphyry's*, or *Julian's* (but that I know your Hand) for you subscrib'd not your Name to your Letters; Ἀφίστατο ἀκέρσεια λέλοσχε θάμινα κακὰ γόρωσ: they are the Words of your *Pindarus*, upon an Occasion not much unlike unto this.

SIR, you have no Skill to judge, or set a Price upon so Divine an Act; he lost not his Breath, when he spent his *Insufflavit*; he open'd their Wits, that they might understand the Scripture; he reveal'd to them the Mysteries of Jesus Christ, dying and rising again for the World's Salvation, the greatest News that ever was reported in the World, and till then conceal'd: he commanded them to be the first Bringers of this good News, and that they might the more undauntedly perform their Charge, he endow'd them with Infallibility, with infinite Constancy and Fortitude, with Power of working such Wonders as none could do, unless God were with them. *Apello Conscientiam tuam*: Were those things such Nothings, that they deserve to be thus jeered? But that befalls you which befalls the Stares that dwell in the Steeple, who fear not the Bells, because they hear them every day. These wonderful Benefits of God  
have

have every day founded in your Ears, and the Frequency of them hath taught you to forget your Reverence to them. Yet all this *Insufflavit*, this Ceremony was for no other end but to further a *Declarative* Power; their undaunted Fortitude, their Power of miraculing, their Infallibility did but add Countenance and Strength to their *Declarative* Power, by which they went up and down the World, to manifest the good Tidings of Salvation. So that even these which served thus to set off the Gospel, were nothing else but Means of the better Manifestation of it; therefore may they very well pass, if not amongst the *Keys*, yet amongst the necessary *Wards*. Whereas your Fancy of an active or judicative Power in the Priest, concurring with God in reconciling relapsing Christians, is neither one nor other, but is indeed like unto the Work of some deceitful Smith, who the better to countenance and grace his Work, adds to

his Key superfluous and idle Wards, which, in the opening of the Lock, are of no use at all.

To your second Query, Whether the *Keys* were confin'd to the Apostles only? The Answer is in no case hard to give, it may perchance in some case be dangerous; for there is a Generation of Men in the World, (the Clergy they call them) who impropriate the *Keys* unto themselves, and would be very angry to understand, that others from themselves should claim a right unto them. To your Question then, no doubt but originally none receiv'd the *Keys* from the Mouth of our Saviour, but the Apostles only; none did, nor ever could manage them with that Authority and Splendour as the Apostles did, who were above all most amply furnished with all things fitting so great a Work. For whereas you seem to intimate, that the Preaching Mission was communicated to others, as the seventy two  
Disci-

Disciples, as well as the Apostles; you do but mistake your self, if you conceive that the *Keys* of the Gospel were any way committed to them: for concerning the Mysteries of Jesus Christ, and him crucify'd for the Sins of the World (wherein indeed the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven did consist) they receiv'd it not, they knew it not. To be the prime Reporters of this, was an Honour imparted only to the Apostles: yet were they not so imparted, as that they should be confin'd to them. Every one that heard and receiv'd the Light of the saving Doctrine from them, so far forth as he had Understanding in the Ways of Life, had now the *Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven committed to his Power, both for his own and others use. Every one, of what State or Condition soever, that hath any occasion offer'd him, to serve another in the Ways of Life, Clergy or Lay, Male or Female, whatever he be, hath these *Keys*, not only for himself,



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self, but for the Benefit of others. For if natural Goodness teach every Man, *Lumen de Lumine, Erranti comitèr monstrare viam, &c.* then how much more doth Christian Goodness require of every one, to his Ability to be a Light to those who sit in Darkness, and direct their Steps, who most dangerously mistake their way? To save a Soul, every Man is a Priest. To whom, I pray you, is that said in *Leviticus, Thou shalt not see thy Brother sin, but thou shalt reprove, and save thy Brother?* And if the Law binds a Man, when he saw his Enemies Cattle to stray, to put them into their way; how much more doth it oblige him to do the like for the Man himself? See you not how the whole World conspires with me in the same Opinion? Doth not every Father teach his Son, every Master his Servant, every Man his Friend? How many of the Laity in this Age, and from time to time in all Ages, have by writing for the publick Good, propagated the

the Gospel of Christ, as if some secret Instinct of Nature had put into Mens Minds thus to do? I shame to dwell so long upon so plain a Theme; yet because I feel your Pulse, and perceive what it is that troubles you, I must say something to an Objection, which I know you make. You conceive that forthwith upon this which I have said, must needs follow some great Confusion of Estates, and Degrees; the Laity will straitway get up into our Pulpits, we shall lose our Credit, and the Adoration which the simple Sort do yield us is in danger to be lost.

SIR, Fear you not, the Sufficient and Able of the Clergy, will reap no Discountenance, but Honour by this: For he that knows how to do well himself, will most willingly approve what is well done by another. It is extreme Poverty of Mind to ground your Reputation upon another Man's Ignorance; and to secure your self, you do well, because you perceive perchance, that none can

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judg how ill you do. Be not angry then to see others join with you in part of your Charge. *I would all the Lord's People did preach,* and that every Man did think himself bound to discharge a Part of the common Good; and make account that the Care of other Mens Souls concerned him as well as of his own. When the Apostles took order to ordain some, upon whom the public Burden of Preaching the Gospel should lie, it was not their Purpose to impropriate the thing to those Persons alone; but knowing that what was left to the Care of all, was commonly worse look'd unto, in wise and most Christian Care, they design'd some, whose Duty it should be to wait upon the Gospel alone, the better to preserve the Profession to the World's end. It hath been the Wisdom of those, who have taken care of the Propagation of Arts and Sciences, not only to appoint Means, that Multitudes should study and make profession  
pri-

privately, but that some should be constituted publick Professors to teach *è Cathedra*, that so all might know to whom to repair, in the Doubts incident to their Faculties; and this hath been thought a sovereign way to preserve Sciences. Sir, we are the publick Professors of Christianity, we speak *è Cathedra*, which none can do, but such as are ordain'd. Let the private Profession and Practice of Christianity improve it self never so much, yet the private man, who is not ordain'd, does not deserve his place, and so I will not stand so long upon it. It grieves me to stand so long upon so plain, so unwelcome a Lesson, but I will ease my self and you, and reflect upon your third Query.

IN the third place, You require to know, what Necessity, or what Convenience there is of Confession: You mean, I think, that Confession, which is as foolishly as commonly called Sacramental, for it hath nothing of a Sacrament in it. Did I

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know your mind a little more in particular, what Form of Confession you speak of, whether as it is used in the Church of *Rome*, or in some refined Guise, as it seems some would, who have of late called for it in the Church of *England*; I should speak peradventure more appositely to what you desire. But since you have proposed Confession only in a Generality, my Answer shall be in like manner. And,

FIRST of all, Confession of Sins is a thing, not only convenient, but unavoidably necessary to Salvation; without which none shall ever see God: and thus far, I suppose, all Christians do agree. The main Difference is in the manner of practising it; the Question being, What Parties are to be interested in it? Natural Equity informeth us, that unto every Party, justly offended, Satisfaction some way or other is due.

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THE first Party wronged in every Offence is God, against whose Honour and express Command every Sin is committed. To him therefore, in the first place, Satisfaction is due, by Submission and Acknowledgment; since there remains no other way of Composition with God. But there are some Sins committed against God, some committed against God and Men: in the former it is sufficient if we pacify God alone; in the latter our Neighbour, against whom we have trespassed, must receive Satisfaction for the wrong done him at least, if it be in the power of the Trespasser. Your Primmer of *Sarum* will tell you, *That not to make Restitution, if you be able, and not to pardon, unavoidably exclude from the Kingdom of Heaven.* Now might the Doctrine of Confession and Acknowledgment in case of Offence given, have been permitted to run fair and clear, as it descends from God and good Reason,

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the first Fountains of it; there needed no more to be said in this Argument, than I have already told you. But I know not what intemperate foolish Ambition hath troubled the Stream, and it hath past now for a long time (till the Reformation altered it) for a general Doctrine in the Church, That in all kind of Sins, whether against God or our Neighbour, there can be no Reconciliation betwixt the Parties offending and offended, but by interposition of a Priest; a thing utterly besides all Reason and common Sense, that you should open your private Imperfections to one whom they concern not (for it is granted, that all Parties concerned in an Offence, must have reason at the hands of the Offender) and who can no ways help you: for he that is conscientious of his Sin (and without trouble of Conscience I think none would ever repair to his Confessor) knows very well, that there is no Sin so great, but upon submission  
God

God both can and will pardon it; and none so small, but Pardon for it must be fought, or else he hath been ill catechized. And more than this what can any Priest tell

him? Your *Pliny* somewhere tells you, \* *That he that is stricken by a Scor-*

\* *Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 10.*

*pion, if he go immediately and whisper it into the ear of an Ass, shall find himself immediately eased:* That Sin is a Scorpion, and bites deadly, I have always believed; but that to cure the Bite of it, it was a sovereign Remedy to whisper it into the ear of an [ ] a Priest, I do as well believe as I do that of *Pliny*. The Patrons of this Fancy, for defect of Reason and common Congruity, are fain to betake themselves to Scripture; and the mischief is, there is no direct Text for it, and therefore they are constrained to help themselves with a mere conjectural Consequence: for since it is taken for certain, that there is a power to remit and to retain Sins, how



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how shall they, who have this power given them, know how fit it is to remit or to retain a Sin, except they know the Sin; and know it they cannot, but by Confession? For answer to this,

1<sup>st</sup>, W E have found and proved, that the words of Scripture must receive such a Sense, as from whence no such Consequence can be inferred.

2<sup>ly</sup>, W E have endeavoured to prove, That the Dispensation or Application of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (being nothing else but the Duty of saving of Souls) is a Duty, which, *pro occasione oblata*, lies upon every Christian; which if it be true (as in good faith I think it) and the Clergy perceive it, I think they would never go about to urge that Text, altho we should yield it them in their own meaning. For they must needs see that it follows, that you may as well make your Muletteer (if you have one) your  
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Confessor, as your Parish-Priest. Tell me in good earnest, if you can, out of what good intent can this Desire to know another Man's Sin, which concerns you not, proceed? Is it to teach him that it is a Sin? He knew that, or else he had never repaired to you to confess it. Is it to tell him that he is to repent, to restore, to pray, to give Alms? &c. All this he knew, or else he hath had his breeding under an evil Clergy. Yea, but how shall the Physician cure the Disease, if he know it not? Suppose all Diseases had one Remedy (as all spiritual Diseases have) and what matters it, if the Patient be sick, to know whether it be an Ague, or the Meazles, or the Pleurisy, since one Potion cures them all? Yea, but if he know not the Particulars, how shall he judge of the Quantity of the Doses? for the same Disease, upon sundry Circumstances, may require *majus* or *minus* in the Physick. This is the poorest Scruple of a thousand; for  
in

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in the Regiment of Patients spiritually sick, there can be but one Mistake, that is, if you give too little. Be sure you give enough, and teach your Patients to think no Sin to be little (which in Men spiritually sick is *Error saluberrimus*) and you can never err: For natural Physick is only Physick, but spiritual Physick is both Physick and Diet, and may be indifferently administred both to the Sick and the Sound; Repentance perchance only excepted, of which, upon occasion, assure your self you can hardly take too much. What reason now can you give me, why you should desire to dive into any Man's Breast, & *scire secreta Domus*? except it be that which follows in the next words, *indè timeri*, as I must confess I suspect it is. The truth is, some mistaken Customs of the antient Church, the Craft and Power of the Clergy, the Simplicity and Ignorance of the Laity, these begat the *Tragelaphus*, of which we now speak. It may be  
you

*of the Keys, &c.* 159

you take the Practice of the antient Church, and the Point of Excommunication, to make somewhat for you : when those Cards shall come to be played (tho that of Church-Custom is not greatly material, which way soever it looks) I believe you will not find the Game you look for. Indeed I was once minded to have considered something of that ; but I think you look for a Letter, not for a Book, and I perceive my self already to have gone beyond the compass of a Letter. Another Parley therefore, if you please, shall put an end to those and other Scruples, if any do arise : And for the present give, I pray you, a little respite unto

*From my Study,  
this 8th Day  
of Mar. 1637.*

Yours,

*J. H.*

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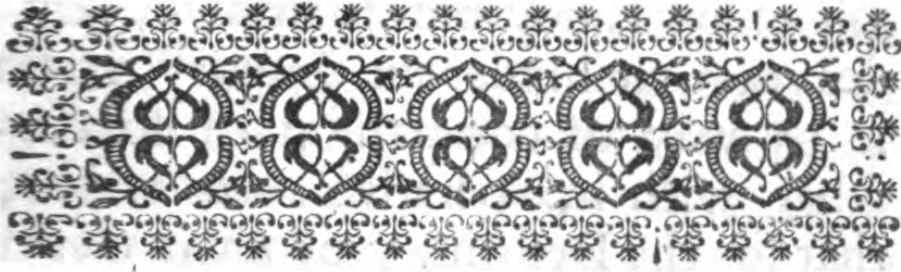
Concerning

*Schism and Schismatics:*

Wherein is briefly discover'd the  
Original Causes of all *Schism*.







## *A TRACT concerning Schism, &c.*



*H*ERESY and *Schism*, as they are in common use, are two Theological *Moorms*, or *Scarecrows*, which they, who uphold a Party in Religion, use to fright away such, as making Inquiry into it, are ready to relinquish and oppose it, if it appear either erroneous or suspicious. For as *Plutarch* reports of a Painter, who having unskilfully painted a Cock, chased away all Cocks and Hens, that so the Imperfection of his Art might not appear by comparison with Nature;



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ture; so Men willing for ends to admit of no Fancy but their own, endeavour to hinder an Inquiry into it by way of comparison of somewhat with it, peradventure truer, that so the Deformity of their own might not appear. But howsoever in the common Manage, *Heresy* and *Schism* are but ridiculous Terms, yet the things in themselves are of very considerable moment; the one offending against Truth, the other against Charity; and therefore both deadly, where they are not by Imputation, but in Deed.

IT is then a matter of no small importance truly to descry the nature of them, that so they may fear who are guilty of them, and they, on the contrary, strengthen themselves, who thro the Iniquity of Men and Times are injuriously charged with them.

SCHISM (for of *Heresy* we shall not now treat, except it be by Accident,

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cident, and that by occasion of a general Mistake, spread throughout all the Writings of the Antients, in which their Names are familiarly confounded;) *Schism*, I say, upon the very found of the word, imports Division; *Division* is not, but where *Communion* is, or ought to be. Now *Communion* is the Strength and Ground of all Society, whether *Sacred* or *Civil*; whosoever therefore they be that offend against this common Society and Friendliness of Men, and cause Separation and Breach among them; if it be in civil occasions, are guilty of Sediton or Rebellion; if it be by occasion of *Ecclesiastical* Difference, they are guilty of *Schism*: So that *Schism* is an *Ecclesiastical Sediton*, as *Sediton* is a *Lay Schism*. Yet the great Benefit of *Communion* notwithstanding, in regard of divers Distempers Men are subject to, *Diffension* and *Disunion* are often necessary: for when either false or uncertain Conclusions are obtruded for Truth, and

Acts

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Acts either unlawful, or ministring just scruple, are required of us to be performed: in these cases Consent were Conspiracy, and open Contestation is not Faction or *Schism*, but due Christian Animosity.

FOR the further opening therefore of the nature of *Schism*, something must be added by way of Difference, to distinguish it from necessary Separation; and that is, that the Causes, upon which Division is attempted, proceed not from Passion or Distemper, or from Ambition or Avarice, or such other Ends as human Folly is apt to pursue; but from well weighed and necessary Reasons, and that, when all other means having been tryed, nothing will serve to save us from Guilt of Conscience, but open Separation. So that *Schism*, if we would define it, is nothing else but an unnecessary Separation of Christians from that part of the visible Church, of which they were once Members. Now as in Mutinies

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nies and Civil Diffensions there are two Attendants in ordinary belonging unto them; one the Choice of one *Elect* or Guide in place of the General or ordinary Governor, to rule and guide; the other the appointing of some publick Place or Rendezvous, where publick Meetings must be celebrated: So in Church-Diffensions and Quarrels, two Appurtenances there are which serve to make a *Schism* compleat.

1<sup>st</sup>, THE Choice of a Bishop, in opposition to the former; (a thing very frequent amongst the Antients, and which many times was both the Cause and Effect of *Schism*.)

2<sup>ly</sup>, THE erecting of a new Church and Oratory, for the dividing Party to meet in publickly; for till this be done, the *Schism* is but yet in the Womb.

IN that late famous Controversy in *Holland*, *De Prædestinatione & Auxiliis*,

*Auxiliis*, as long as the disagreeing Parties went no further than Disputes and Pen-Combats, the *Schism* was all that while unhatched; but as soon as one Party swept an old Cloyster, and by a pretty Art suddenly made it a Church, by putting a new Pulpit in it, for the separating Party there to meet; now what before was a Controversy, became a formal *Schism*. To know no more than this, if you take it to be true, had been enough to direct how you are to judg, and what to think of *Schism* and *Schismaticks*; yet because in the Antients (by whom many Men are more affrighted than hurt) much is said, and many fearful Dooms are pronounced in this Case; will we descend a little to consider of *Schisms*, as it were by way of Story, and that partly further to open that which we have said in general, by instancing in Particulars; and partly to disabuse those, who reverencing Antiquity more than needs, have suffered themselves to be scared with  
impu-

Schism and Schismatics. 169

imputation of *Schism*, above due measure: for what the Antients spake by way of Censure of *Schism* in general, is most true; for they saw (and it is no great matter to see so much) that unadvisedly, and upon fancy to break the Knot of Union betwixt Man and Man (especially amongst Christians, upon whom, above all other kind of Men, the Tie of Love and Communion doth most especially rest) was a Crime hardly pardonable, and that nothing absolves a Man from the Guilt of it, but true and unpretended Conscience: yet when they came to pronounce of *Schisms* in particular (whether it were because of their own Interests, or that they saw not the Truth, or for what other Cause God only doth know) their Judgments many times (to speak most gently) are justly to be suspected. Which that you may see, we will range all *Schism* into two ranks.

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(1.) FOR there is a *Schism*, in which only one Party is the *Schismatick*: for where Cause of *Schism* is necessary, there not he that separates, but he that occasions the Separation, is the *Schismatick*.

(2.) THERE is a *Schism*, in which both parts are the *Schismaticks*: for where the occasion of Separation is unnecessary, neither side can be excused from the Guilt of *Schism*.

BUT you will ask, who shall be the Judg what is necessary? Indeed that is a Question which hath been often made, but I think scarcely ever truly answered: not because it is a Point of great Depth or Difficulty truly to assoil it, but because the true Solution carries Fire in the Tail of it; for it bringeth with it a piece of Doctrine which is seldom pleasing to Superiours. To you for the present this shall suffice: If so be you be *Animo defæcato*, if you have

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have cleared your self from Froth and Grounds ; if neither Sloth, nor Fears, nor Ambition, nor any tempting Spirits of that nature abuse you (for these, and such as these, are the true Impediments, why both that and other Questions of the like danger are not truly answered) if all this be, and yet you see not how to frame your Resolution, and settle your self for that Doubt ; I will say no more of you than was said of *Papias*, St. *John's* own Scholar, you are ἀνὴρ μικρὸς τὸν νοῦν, your Abilities are not so good as I presumed.

BUT to go on with what I intended, and from which that interloping Question diverted me : That you may the better judg of the nature of *Schisms* by their Occasions, you shall find that all *Schisms* have crept into the Church by one of these three ways ; either upon matter of Fact, or matter of Opinion, or point of Ambition. For the First ; I call that matter of Fact, when some-

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something is required to be done by us, which we either know or strongly suspect to be unlawful. So the first notable *Schism*, of which we read in the Church, contained in it matter of Fact: for it being upon Error taken for necessary, that an *Easter* must be kept; and upon worse than Error, if I may so speak (for it was no less than a point of Judaism forced upon the Church) upon worse than Error, I say, thought further necessary, that the ground for the time of our keeping that Feast, must be the Rule left by *Moses* to the *Jews*: there arose a stout Question, Whether we were to celebrate with the *Jews* on the fourteenth Moon, or the Sunday following? This Matter, tho most unnecessary, most vain, yet caused as great a Combustion as ever was in the Church; the *West* separating and refusing Communion with the *East* for many years together. In this fantastical Hurry, I cannot see but all the World were *Schismatics*; neither

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neither can any thing excuse them from that Imputation, excepting only this, that we charitably suppose that all Parties out of Conscience did what they did. A thing which be- fel them thro the Ignorance of their Guides (for I will not say their Malice) and that thro the just Judgment of God, because thro Sloth and blind Obedience Men examined not the things which they were taught, but, like Beasts of Burden, patiently couched down, and indifferently underwent whatsoever their Superiours laid upon them. By the way, by this you may plainly see the danger of our Appeal to Antiquity, for Resolution in controverted Points of Faith, and how small Relief we are to expect from thence: For if the Discretion of the chiefest Guides and Directors of the Church, did in a Point so trivial, so inconsiderable, so mainly fail them, as not to see the Truth in a Subject, wherein it is the greatest Marvel how they could avoid the sight of it; can we

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without

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without imputation of extreme Gross-  
ness and Folly, think so poor-spirited  
Persons competent Judges of the  
Questions now on foot betwixt the  
Churches? Pardon me, I know not  
what Temptation drew that Note  
from me.

THE next *Schism*, which had in  
it matter of Fact, is that of the *Do-*  
*natist*; who was persuaded (at least  
so he pretended) that it was unlaw-  
ful to converse or communicate in  
holy Duties with Men stained with  
any notorious Sin: (For howsoever  
*Austin* and others do specify only  
the *Thurificati & Traditores*, and *Li-*  
*bellatici*, and the like, as if he se-  
parated only from those whom he  
found to be such; yet by necessary  
proportion, he must refer to all no-  
torious Sinners.) Upon this he  
taught, that in all Places where  
Good and Bad were mixed together,  
there could be no Church, by reason  
of Pollution, evaporating as it were  
from Sinners, which blasted righ-  
teous

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teous Persons who conversed with them, and made all unclean. On this ground separating himself from all whom he list to suspect, he gave out that the Church was no where to be found but in him and his Associates, as being the only Men among whom wicked Persons found no shelter; and by consequence the only clean and unpolluted Company, and therefore the only Church. Against this St. *Augustine* laid down this Conclusion, *Unitatem Ecclesie per totum Orbem dispersa propter nonnullorum peccata non esse deserendam*: which is indeed the whole Sum of that Father's Disputation against the *Donatist*. Now in one part of this Controversy betwixt St. *Augustine* and the *Donatist*, there is one thing very remarkable: The Truth was there, where it was by mere chance, and might have been on either side, any Reasons brought by either Party notwithstanding; for tho it were *de facto* false, that *pars Donati*, shut up in *Africk*, was the only Ortho-

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dox Party, yet it might have been true, notwithstanding any thing St. *Austin* brings to confute it: and on the contrary, tho it were *de facto* true, that the part of Christians dispersed over the Earth were Orthodox; yet it might have been false, notwithstanding any thing St. *Austin* brings to confirm it. For where, or amongst whom, or amongst how many the Church shall be, or is, is a thing indifferent: it may be in any Number, more or less; it may be in any Place, Country, or Nation; it may be in all, and (for ought I know) it may be in none, without any prejudice to the Definition of the Church, or the Truth of the Gospel. *North* or *South*, Many or Few, dispers'd in many places, or confin'd to one; none of these either prove or disprove a *Church*.

Now this *Schism*, and likewise the former, to a wise Man that well understands the matter in Controversy; may afford perchance matter of Pity, to see Men so strangely distracted

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tracted upon Fancy; but of doubt or trouble what to do, it can yield none. For tho in this *Schism* the *Donatist* be the *Schismatick*, and in the former both Parties be equally engag'd in the *Schism*; yet you may safely upon your Occasions communicate with either, so be you flatter neither in their *Schism*: For why might it not be lawful to go to Church with the *Donatist*, or to celebrate *Easter* with the *Quartodeciman*, if occasion so require? Since neither Nature, nor Religion, nor Reason doth suggest any thing to the contrary: for in all Publick Meetings pretending Holiness, so there be nothing done, but what true Devotion and Piety brook, why may not I be present in them, and use Communication with them? Nay what if those, to whose Care the Execution of the publick Service is committed, do something either unseemly or suspicious, or peradventure unlawful? What if the Garments they wear be censur'd as, nay indeed be

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superstitious? What if the Gesture  
of Adoration be us'd at the Altar,  
as now we have learned to speak?  
What if the *Homilist*, or Preacher,  
deliver any Doctrine, of the Truth  
of which we are not well persuaded  
(a thing which very often falls out)  
yet for all this we may not separate,  
except we be constrain'd personally  
to bear a part in them our selves.  
The Priests under *Eli* had so ill de-  
mean'd themselves about the daily  
Sacrifice, that the Scriptures tell us,  
they made it to stink; yet the Peo-  
ple refus'd not to come to the Ta-  
bernacle, nor to bring their Sacrifice  
to the Priest. For in these *Schisms*,  
which concern Fact, nothing can be a  
just Cause of Refusal of Communion,  
but only to require the Execution  
of some unlawful or suspected Act:  
for not only in Reason, but in Re-  
ligion too, that Maxim admits of  
no Release; *Cautissimi cujusq; Præcep-  
tum quod dubitas, ne feceris.* Long  
it was e'er the Church fell upon  
*Schism* upon this Occasion, tho' of  
late

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late it hath had very many; for until the second Council of *Nice* (in which conciliable Superstition and Ignorance did conspire) I say, until that Rout did set up Image-worship, there was not any remarkable *Schism*, upon just occasion of Fact: all the rest of *Schisms* of that kind were but Wantonness, this was truly serious. In this the *Schismatical* Party was the Synod it self, and such as conspir'd with it. For concerning the use of Images *in Sacris*, first, it is acknowledg'd by all, That it is not a thing necessary: secondly, it is by most suspected: thirdly, it is by many held utterly unlawful. Can then the enjoining of the Practice of such a thing be ought else but Abuse? Or can the Refusal of Communion here, be thought any other thing than Duty? Here, or upon the like Occasion, to separate, may peradventure bring personal Trouble and Danger (against which it concerns every honest Man to have *Pectus bene preparatum*) further harm it cannot



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cannot do. So that in these Cases,  
you cannot be to seek what to think,  
or what you have to do.

COME we then to consider a little of the second sort of *Schism*, arising upon occasion of Variety of Opinion. It hath been the common Disease of Christians from the beginning, not to content themselves with that Measure of Faith, which God and Scriptures have expressly afforded us; but out of a vain Desire to know more than is reveal'd, they have attempted to discuss things, of which we can have no Light, neither from Reason nor Revelation: neither have they rested here, but upon pretence of Church-Authority, which is none, or Tradition, which for the most part is but Figment; they have peremptorily concluded, and confidently imposed upon others, a Necessity of entertaining Conclusions of that nature: and to strengthen themselves, have broken out into Divisions and  
Factions,

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Factions, opposing Man to Man, Synod to Synod, till the Peace of the Church vanish'd, without all Possibility of Recal. Hence arose those antient and many Separations amongst Christians occasion'd by *Arianism*, *Eutychianism*, *Nestorianism*, *Photinianism*, *Sabellianism*, and many more both antient, and in our time; all which indeed are but Names of *Schism*, howsoever in the common Language of the Fathers, they were call'd *Heresies*. For *Heresy* is an Act of the Will, not of Reason; and is indeed a Lye, not a Mistake: else how could that known Speech of *Austin* go for true; *Errare possum, Hæreticus esse nolo?* Indeed, *Manicheism*, *Valentinianism*, *Marcionism*, *Mahometanism*, are truly and properly *Heresies*; for we know that the Authors of them received them not, but minted them themselves, and so knew that which they taught to be a Lye. But can any Man avouch that *Arius* and *Nestorius*, and others that taught erroneously concerning  
the

the Trinity, or the Person of our Saviour, did maliciously invent what they taught, and not rather fall upon it by Error and Mistake? Till that be done, and that upon good Evidence, we will think no worse of all Parties than needs we must, and take these Rents in the Church to be at the worst but *Schisms* upon matter of Opinion. In which case what we are to do, is not a Point of any great Depth of Understanding to discover, so be Distemper and Partiality do not intervene. I do not yet see, that *Opinionum Varietas, & Opinantium Unitas*, are ἀδύνατα; or that Men of different Opinions in Christian Religion, may not hold Communion *in Sacris*, and both go to one Church. Why may I not go, if occasion require, to an *Arian* Church, so there be no *Arianism* express'd in their Liturgy? And were Liturgies and publick Forms of Service so fram'd, as that they admitted not of particular and private Fancies, but contain'd only such things,

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things, as in which all Christians do agree, *Schisms* on Opinion were utterly vanish'd. For consider of all the Liturgies that are or ever have been, and remove from them whatsoever is scandalous to any Party, and leave nothing but what all agree on; and the Event shall be, that the publick Service and Honour of God shall no ways suffer: whereas to load our publick Forms with the private Fancies upon which we differ, is the most soveraign way to perpetuate *Schism* unto the World's end. Prayer, Confession, Thanksgiving, Reading of Scriptures, Exposition of Scripture, Administration of Sacraments in the plainest and simplest manner, were Matter enough to furnish out a sufficient Liturgy, tho nothing either of private Opinion, or of Church-Pomp, of Garments, of prescribed Gestures, of Imagery, of Musick, of Matter concerning the Dead, of many Superfluties, which creep into the Churches under the name of Order and Decency, did  
interpose

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interpose it self. For to charge  
Churches and Liturgies with things  
unnecessary, was the first beginning  
of all Superstition; and when Scru-  
ples of Conscience began to be  
made or pretended, then *Schisms* be-  
gan to break in. If the spiritual  
Guides and Fathers of the Church  
would be a little sparing of incum-  
bring Churches with Superfluities,  
and not over-rigid, either in reviving  
obsolete Customs, or imposing new,  
there were far less Danger of *Schism*  
or *Superstition*; and all the Inconve-  
nience were likely to ensue, would  
be but this, they should in so doing  
yield a little to the Imbecillitys of  
Inferiors, a thing which *St. Paul*  
would never have refused to do.  
Mean while, wheresoever false or  
suspected Opinions are made a piece  
of the Church-Liturgy, he that se-  
parates is not the *Schismatick*; for  
it is alike unlawful to make profes-  
sion of known or suspected Falshoods,  
as to put in practice unlawful or sus-  
pected Actions.

THE

THE third thing I noted for Matter of *Schism* was *Ambition*: I mean *Episcopal Ambition*: shewing it self especially in two Heads; one concerning Plurality of *Bishops* in the same See; another the Superiority of *Bishops* in divers Sees. *Aristotle* tells us, That Necessity causeth but small Faults, but Avarice and Ambition were the Mothers of great Crimes. *Episcopal Ambition* hath made this true; for no Occasion hath produc'd more frequent, more continuing, more sanguinary *Schisms*, than this hath done. The Sees of *Alexandria*, of *Constantinople*, of *Antioch*, and above all of *Rome*, do abundantly shew thus much; and our Ecclesiastical Stories witness no less, of which the greatest Part consists in the factionating and tumultuating of great and potent *Bishops*. *Socrates* apologizing for himself, that professing to write an Ecclesiastical Story, he did oftentimes interlace the Actions of secular Princes and other civil

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civil Businesses, tells us that he did  
thus to refresh his Reader, who  
otherwise were in danger to be cloy'd  
by reading so much of the Acts of  
unquiet and unruly Bishops, ἐν οὖν  
καὶ ἀλλήλων ἐτύρευσαν, in which as a  
Man might say, they made *Butter*  
and *Cheese* one of another; for τυρέυ-  
ειν (that I may shew you a cast out  
of my old Office, and open you a  
Mystery in Grammar) properly sig-  
nifieth to make Butter and Cheese:  
now because these are not made  
without much Agitation of the  
Milk, hence τυρέυειν, by a borrow'd  
and translated Signification, signifies  
to do things with much Agitation  
and Tumult.

BUT that I may a little consider  
of the two Heads, which I but now  
specified; the first I mention'd was  
the *Plurality of Bishops* in one See.  
For the general Practice of the  
Church from the beginning, at least  
since the Original of Episcopacy,  
as now it is, was never to admit at  
once

once more than one Bishop in one See; and so far in this Point have they been careful to preserve Unity, that they would not suffer a Bishop in his See to have two Cathedral Churches: which thing lately brought us a Book out of *France*, *de Monogamia Episcoporum*, written by occasion of the Bishop of *Lan-gres*, who, I know not upon what Fancy, could not be content with one Cathedral-Church in his Diocess, but would needs have two; which to the Author of that Work seems to be a kind of spiritual Polygamy. It fell out amongst the Antients very often; sometimes upon occasion of Difference in Opinion, sometimes because of Difference amongst those who were interested in the Choice of Bishops, that two Bishops and sometimes more were set up; and all Parties striving to maintain their own Bishop, made themselves several Churches, several Congregations, each refusing to participate with others, and many times  
pro-



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proceeding to mutual Excommunication. This is that which *Cyprian* calls *Erigere Altare contra Altare*: to this doth he impute the Original of all Church-disorders; and if you read him, you would think he thought no other Church-Tumult to be a *Schism* but this. This perchance might plead some Excuse; for tho in regard of Religion it self, it matters not whether there be one or more Bishops in the same Diocess, and sometimes two are known to have sat at once, (for *Epiphanius* reckoning up the Bishops of *Rome*, makes *Peter* and *Paul* the first: and *St. Austin* acknowledgeth, that for a time he sat Fellow-Bishop with his Predecessor, tho he excuseth it, that he did so by being ignorant that the contrary had been decreed by the Council of *Nice*) yet it being a thing very convenient for the Peace of the Church to have it so; neither doth it any way favour of Vice or Misdemeanour; their Punishment sleeps  
not,

Schifm *and* Schifmaticks. 189

not, who unnecessarily and wantonly go about to infringe it.

BUT that other Head of *Episcopal Ambition*, concerning *Supremacy of Bishops* in divers Sees, one claiming Superiority over another, as it hath been, from time to time, a great Trespasser against the Church's Peace, so it is now the final Ruin of it; the *East* and the *West*, thro the Fury of the two prime Bishops, being irremediably separated without all Hope of Reconcilement. And besides all this Mischief, it is founded in a Vice contrary to all Christian Humility, without which no Man shall see his Saviour: for they do but abuse themselves and others, that would persuade us, that Bishops, by Christ's Institution, have any Superiority over other Men, further than of Reverence; or that any Bishop is superiour to another, further than positive Order agreed upon amongst Christians, hath prescrib'd. For we have believed him that hath told us,  
*That*

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That in Jesus Christ there is neither high nor low; and that in giving Honour, every Man should be ready to prefer another before himself: which Sayings cut off all Claim most certainly to Superiority, by Title of Christianity; except Men can think that these things were spoken only to poor and private Men. Nature and Religion agree in this, that neither of them hath a hand in this Heraldry of *secundum sub & supra*; all this comes from Composition and Agreement of Men among themselves. Wherefore this Abuse of Christianity, to make it Lacquey to Ambition, is a Vice for which I have no extraordinary Name of Ignominy, and an ordinary I will not give it, lest you should take so transcendent a Vice to be but trivial.

Now concerning *Schisms* arising upon these Heads, you cannot be for Behaviour much to seek; for you may safely communicate with all Parties, as occasion shall call you; and

Schism and Schismatics. 191

and the *Schismatics* here are all those who are Heads of the Faction, together with all those who foment it: for private and indifferent Persons, they may be Spectators of these Contentions as securely in regard of any Peril of Conscience (for of danger in Purse or Person, I keep no account) as at a Cock-fight. Where Serpents fight, who cares who hath the better? the best Wish is, that both may perish in the Fight.

No w for Conventicles, of the Nature of which you desire to be informed; thus much in general. It evidently appears, that all Meetings upon unnecessary Occasions of Separation are to be so stiled; so that in this sense, a Conventicle is nothing else but a Congregation of *Schismatics*: yet Time hath taken leave sometimes to fix this Name upon good and honest Meetings, and that perchance not altogether without good Reason; for with publick Religious Meetings thus it fares:

First,

First, it hath been at all times confessed necessary, that God requires not only inward and private Devotion, when Men either in their Hearts and Closets, or within their private Walls, pray, praise, confess and acknowledg; but he further requires all those things to be done in Publick, by Troops and Shoals of Men: and from hence have proceeded publick Temples, Altars, Forms of Service, appointed Times, and the like, which are required for open Assemblies. Yet while Men were truly pious, all Meetings of Men for mutual Help of Piety and Devotion, wheresoever and by whomsoever celebrated, were permitted without Exception.

BUT when it was espy'd that ill-affected Persons abus'd private Meetings, whether Religious or Civil, to evil Ends, Religiouſness to groſs Impiety, (as appears in the *Ethnick Eleufinia*, and *Bacchanalia*; and Christian Meetings under the Pagan Prin-

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Princes, when for fear they durst not come together in open view, were charged with foul Imputations, as by the Report of Christians themselves plainly appears; and Civil Meetings many times, under pretence of friendly and neighbourly Visits, shelter'd treasonable Attempts against Princes and Common-weals :) hence both Church and State joined, and jointly gave order for Forms, Times, Places of publick Concourse, whether for Religious or Civil Ends; and all other Meetings whatsoever, besides those of which both Time and Place were limited, they censured for Routs and Riots, and unlawful Assemblies in the State, and in the Church for Conventicles.

So that it is not lawful, no not for Prayer, for Hearing, for Conference, for any other Religious Office whatsoever, for People to assemble otherwise, than by publick Order is allow'd. Neither may we complain of this in Times of In Corruption; for why should Men desire

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to do that suspiciously in private, which warrantably may be performed in publick? But in Times of manifest Corruptions and Persecutions, wherein Religious Assembling is dangerous, private Meetings, howsoever besides publick Order, are not only lawful, but they are of Necessity and Duty; else how shall we excuse the Meetings of Christians for publick Service, in time of Danger and Persecutions, and of our selves in *Queen Mary's Days*? and how will those of the *Roman Church* amongst us, put off the Imputation of Conventicling, who are known amongst us privately to assemble for Religious Exercise, against all establish'd Order, both in State and Church? For indeed all pious Assemblies in Times of Persecution and Corruption howsoever practised, are indeed, or rather alone the lawful Congregations; and publick Assemblies, tho according to Form of Law, are indeed nothing else but Riots and Conventicles, if they be stained with Corruption and Superstition.

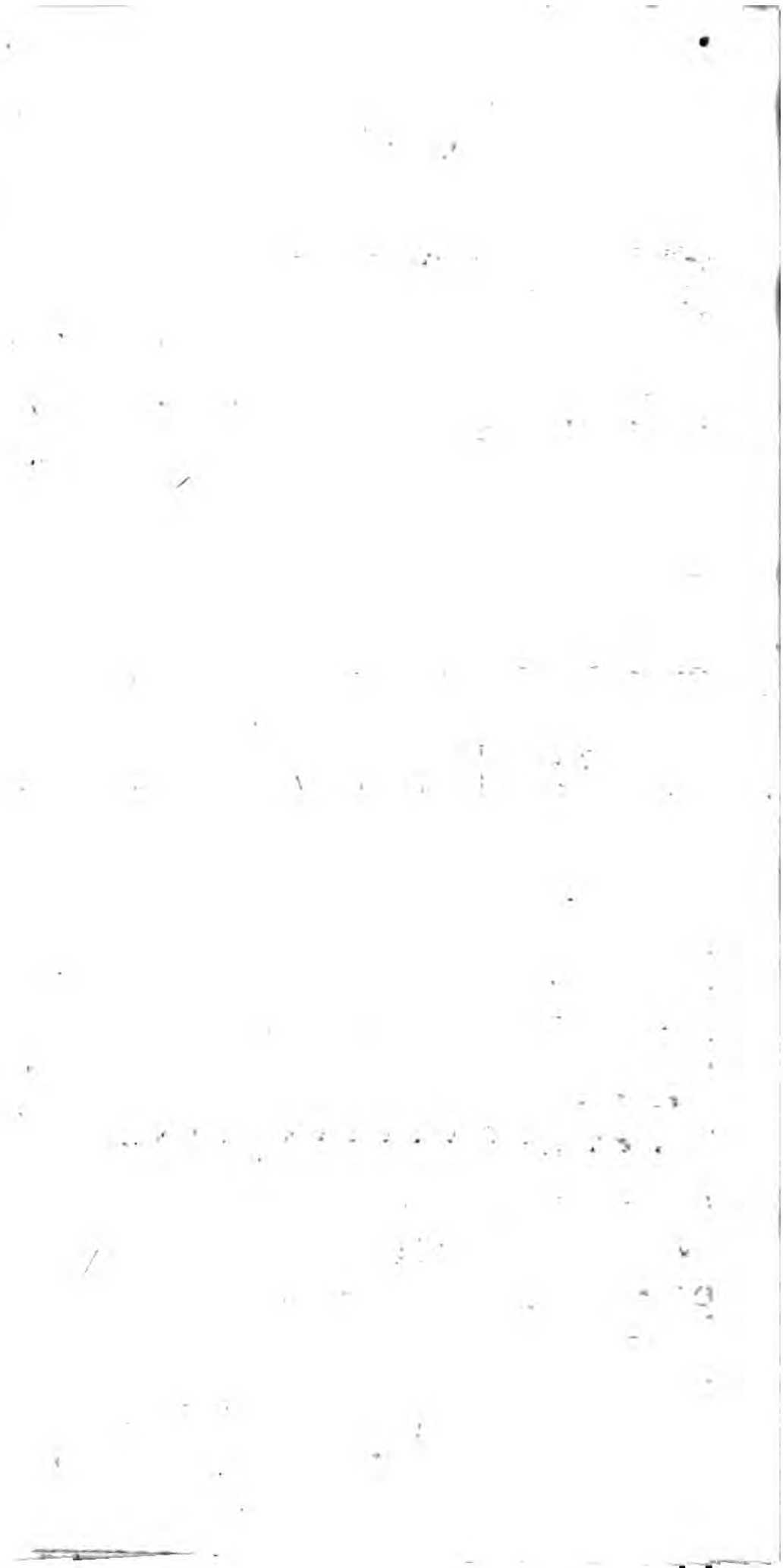
MIS-



# MISCELLANIES.







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## MISCELLANIES.

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*How to know the Church.*



**M**ARKS and Notes to know the Church, there are none, except we will make true Profession, which is the Form and Essence of the Church, to be a Mark. And as there are none, so is it not necessary there should be: For to what purpose should they serve? that I might go seek and find out some Company to mark. This is no way necessa-

ry, for glorious things are in the Scriptures spoken of the Church; not that I should run up and down the World to find the Persons of the Professors, but that I should make my self of it. This I do by taking upon me the Profession of Christianity, and submitting my self to the Rules of Belief and Practice delivered in the Gospel, tho, besides my self, I knew no other Professor in the World. If this were not the Author's end in proposal of the Title, it is but a mere Vanity.



### *The Description of the Church.*

**T**HE Church, as it imports a visible Company in Earth, is nothing else but the Company of Professors of Christianity, wheresoever dispersed in the Earth. To define it thus by Monarchy, under one  
visible

visible Head, is of Novelty crept up, since Men began to change the spiritual Kingdom of Christ to secular Pride and Tyranny ; and a thing never heard of, either in the Scriptures, or in the Writings of the Antients. Government, whether by one or many, or howsoever, if it be one of the Church's contingent Attributes, it is all ; certainly it is no necessary Property, much less comes it into the Definition and Essence of it. I mean outward Government ; for as for inward Government, by which Christ reigns in the Hearts of his Elect, and vindicates them from spiritual Enemies, I have no occasion to speak, neither see I any reference to it in all your Author's Animadversions.



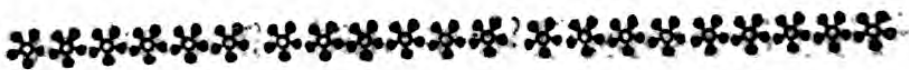


*How Christ is the Head of the  
Church.*

**F**ROM the World's beginning, till the last hour of it, the Church is essentially one and the same, howsoever perchance in Garment, and outward Ceremony, it admits of Difference. And as it was from the beginning of the World, so was it Christian; there being no other difference betwixt the Fathers before Christ and us, but this: As we believe in Christ that *is come*, so they believed in Christ that *was to come*; *Jesus Christ yesterday, and today, and the same for ever*. Reference unto Christ is the very Essence of the Church, and there neither is, nor ever was any Church but Christ's; and therefore the Church amongst the *Jews* was properly and truly *Christian,*

*Christian, quoad rem,* as we are. Now as this Church at all times is Christ's Body, so is Christ the Head of it: For it is as impossible for the Church, as for the Body to be without its Head; it is not therefore as your Author dreams. Christ came not to found a new Church, or to profess a visible Headship of it. That Relation to this Church, which we express when we call him the Head of it, is one and the same, from the Beginning to all Eternity; neither receives it any Alteration in this respect, because the Person, in whom this Relation is founded, is sometimes visible, sometimes not. 'Tis true indeed, the Head of the Church sometimes became visible, but this is but contingent and by Concomitancy: For Christ, the second Person in the Trinity, becoming Man to redeem this Church, and manifest the way of Truth unto it, it so fell out that the Head of the Church became visible. Of this Visibility he left no Successor, no Doctrine,

no Use, as being a thing merely accidental. I ask, Had the Church before Christ any visible Head? If it had, then was not Christ the first, as here our Teacher tells us. If it had none, why then should the Church more require a visible Head, than it did from the beginning? To speak the Truth at once: All these Questions concerning the Notes, the Visibility, the Government of the Church, if we look upon the Substance and Nature of the Church, they are merely idle and impertinent; if upon the End why learned Men do handle them, it is nothing else but Faction.



*Of Peter's Ministerial Headship  
of the Church.*

**I**N your Author's Paragraphs concerning the visible Increase, or Succession of the Church, there is no Difference betwixt us. As for  
the

the Proofs of *Peter's* Ministerial Headship, this first concerning his being the *Rock* of the Church, that cannot prove it: for *Peter* was the *Rock* then, when our Saviour spake; but then could he not be the visible Head, for Christ himself was then living, and by our Teacher's Doctrine, supplied that room himself. *Peter* therefore, howsoever, or in what sense soever he were the *Rock*, yet could he not be the visible Head, except we will grant the Church to have had two visible Heads at once.

2ly, THE Keys of Heaven committed to *Peter*, and Command to feed his Sheep, import no more than that common Duty laid upon all the Disciples, *To teach all Nations*; for this Duty, in several respects, is expressed by several Metaphors. *Teaching*, as it signifies the opening of the way to Life, so it is called by the name of *Keys*; but as it signifies the strengthening of the Soul of Man by the Word, which is the Soul's  
spiritual



spiritual Food, so is it called *Feeding*. Thus much is seen by the Defenders of the Church of *Rome*, and therefore they fly for Refuge to a Circumstance. It is observed, that our Saviour delivered this Doctrine to *Peter* alone (as indeed sometimes he did) in this it is supposed that some great Mystery rests: For why should our Saviour thus single out *Peter*, and commend a common Duty to him, if there were not something extraordinary in it, which concerned him above the rest? This they interpret a Pre-eminence that *Peter* had in his Business of Teaching, which they say is a Primacy and Headship; inforcing thus much, that all the rest were to depend from him, and from him receive what they were to preach. For answer, Grant me there were some great Mystery in it, yet whence is it proved that this is that Mystery? For if our Saviour did not manifest it, then might there be a thousand Causes, which Man's Conjecture may easily mis-

It

It is great boldness, out of Causes concealed, to pick so great Consequences, and to found Matters of so great weight upon mere Conjectures.

3ly, THE Prayer for Confirmation of *Peter's* Faith, whence it came, the Course of the Story set down in the Text doth shew : it was our Saviour's Prevision of *Peter's* Danger to relapse; which Danger he had certainly run into, had not our Saviour extraordinarily prayed for Confirmation of his Faith. And the Precept of confirming his Brethren, is but that charitable Office which is exacted at every Christian's hand, that when himself had escaped so great a Wreck, to be careful in warning and reclaiming others, whom common Frailty drives into the like Distress.

THESE Circumstances, that *Peter* is first named among the Disciples, that he made the first Sermon, and

and the like, are too weak Grounds to build the Sovereignty over the World upon ; and that he spake *Ananias* and *Sapphira* dead, argues spiritual Power, but not temporal. But that *Peter* called the first Council in the *Acts*, is a Circumstance beyond the Text ; for concerning the calling of the Council, there is no word : all that is said, is but this, *That the Disciples and Elders met* ; no Syllable of *Peter's* calling them together.

THAT *Peter* was 25 Years Bishop of *Rome*, is not to be proved out of Antiquity, before *St. Hierom*, who shuffled it into *Eusebius's* Chronicle, there being no such thing extant in his Story ; yea, that he was Bishop at all (as now the name of Bishop is taken) may be very questionable : For the Antients, that reckon up the Bishops of *Rome* until their times, as *Eusebius*, and before him *Tertullian*, and before them both *Irenaus*, never account *Peter* as Bishop of that See ; and *Epiphanius* tells

tells us, that *Peter* and *Paul* were both Bishops of *Rome* at once: by which it is plain he took the Title of Bishop in another Sense than now it is used; for now, and so for a long time upward, two Bishops can no more possess one See, than two Hedg-Sparrows dwell in one Bush. *St. Peter's* time was a little too early for Bishops to rise.



*Answer to the Bishop of Rome's Practice of Supremacy.*

**T**O the first, that so many of the Bishops of *Rome* were Martyrs, what makes that to the purpose? Is Martyrdom an Argument of the Supremacy?

To the second, That *Victor* endeavour'd to excommunicate the *Asiatick* Bishops, is true; but withal  
it

it is as true, that he was withstood for his Labour: for the Bishops of *Asia* themselves did sharply reprove him, *πληκτικότερον καθαπιόμενων*, the Words of *Eusebius*; and *Irenæus* wrote against him for it.

To the third, That the first four Councils were called by the Popes, is an open Falshood; for in the two first, the Bishops of *Rome* are not so much as mention'd, save only as Persons cited. In the two last they are mention'd only as Petitioners to the Emperor. There are extant the Stories of *Eusebius*, *Socrates*, *Rufinus*, *Theodoret*, *Sozomenus*, the *Acts of the Councils themselves*, at least some of them, the *Writings and Epistles of Leo Bishop of Rome*: In all these there is not one Word of the Pope, farther than a Supplicant, and the whole calling of the Bishops together is attributed to the Emperor: Take for Example but the last of them. *Leo Bishop of Rome* was desirous that some things done in a Meeting

Meeting of Divines at *Ephesus*, should be disannull'd; for this he becomes a Suitor to *Theodosius* the *Junior*, to have a General Council, but could never procure it of him. After his Death he continues his Suit to *Marcianus*, Successor to *Theodosius*, who granted his Request: But whereas *Leo* had requested the Council might be held in *Italy*, the Emperor would not hear him; nay which is more, the Pope, upon good reason, had besought the Emperor to put off the Day design'd for the holding of the Council, but the Emperor would not hear him: so that *Leo* could do nothing, neither for the calling the Council, nor for the Place, nor for the Time. And all this appears by *Leo's* own Epistles. If the Popes could do so little well near 500 Years after Christ, how little could they do before, when their Horns were not yet so long?

THE Plea of the Protestants concerning the Corruption of the Church  
of

of *Rome*, which by them is confessed sometimes to have been pure, is no more prejudicial to Christ's Promise to his Church, *That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her*, than the known Corruption of the Churches in *Asia* in *St. John's* time, or of other Churches after.

THE Close of all is a Demonstration. A Word unfortunately used by your Author, to bewray his Logick: For indeed a Reason drawn from so poor and empty a Sign, falls many Bows wide of demonstrative Proof. First it is false that all the rest of Patriarchal Sees are extinct. The See of *Constantinople* yet stands, and shews her Succession of Bishops from *St. Andrew* till this day, as well as the Church of *Rome* can from *St. Peter*: The See of *Alexandria* yet subsists, and the Bishop of that Place calls him  $\kappa\rho\iota\tau\eta\nu\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \omicron\upsilon\kappa\alpha\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta\varsigma$ , Judg of the World, (as my self have seen in some of his Letters) a Title to which he hath as good Right, as the Bishop of  
*Rome.*

*Rome* hath to be the World's Sovereign. If any reply they are poor, in Misery, in Persecution and Affliction: this can make no Difference, since with Christ there is neither *rich* nor *poor*, but a new Creature. And again, their Case now is as good as was the Bishops of *Rome*, under the *Ethnick* Emperors; for their Lot then was no other than those Bishops is now. But grant that it had lasted longest, what then? some of them must needs have consisted longer than the other, except we would suppose that they should have fallen all together. Peradventure the Reason of her so long lasting is no other but that which the *Cyclops* gives *Ulysses* in *Homer*, πύματον μὲν ἔτιν, *Ulysses should be eaten last of all*. However it be, this Vaunt seems but like that of the wicked Servant in the Gospel, *tardat Dominus venire*; and we doubt not but a Day of the Lord shall overtake him who now eats and drinks, and revels with the World, and beats his Fellow-servants.







A

LETTER

Written by the Ever-memorable

*Mr. John Hales of Eaton,*

TO

*Archbishop Laud,*

Upon occasion of his TRACT  
concerning Schism.





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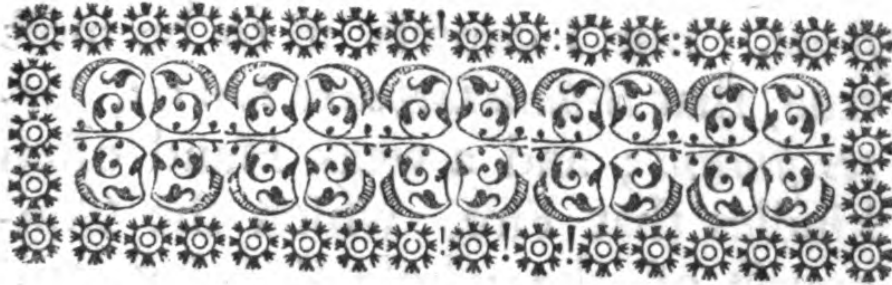
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## A LETTER, &c.

*May it please your Grace,*



HEREAS of late an abortive Discourse indited by me for the use of a private Friend, hath without lawful Pass, wandred abroad; and mistaking its way, is arrived at *Your Grace's* hands: I have taken the Boldness to present my self before you, in behalf of it, with this either Apology or Excuse indifferently, being resolv'd *in utramvis aleam*, to beg either your Approbation, or your Pardon. For my self, I have much marvel'd, whence a scribled Paper, dropt from so worthless, and inconsiderable a Hand

as

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as mine, should recover so much Strength, as to be able to give *Offence*. But I confess it to be most true, that *Bellum inchoant inertes, fortes finiunt*; and a weak Hand often kindles that Fire, which the Concurrence of the whole Vicinity cannot quench. If therefore any Fire can arise out of so poor a Spark, (which I can hardly conceive) I am my self here at hand to pour on Water, to prevent a farther Mischief.

WHATSOEVER there is in that Schedule, which may seem apt to give *offence*, consists either in *Phrase* and *Manner of Expression*, or in the *Conceits* and *Things themselves*, there press'd and insisted upon. For the *First*, Whosoever hath the misfortune to read it, shall find in it, for *Stile*, some things *over-familiar*, and *subrustick*; some things more *pleasant* than needed; some things more *sour* and *satirical*. For these, my *Apology* is but this, That *Your Grace* would be pleased to take in consideration,

ration, *First*, What the *Liberty of a Letter* might entice me to. *Secondly*, I am by Genius *open* and *uncautious*; and therefore some Pardon might be afforded to harmless *Freedom*, and *Gayety of Spirit*, utterly devoid of all *Distemper* and *Malignity*. *Thirdly*, Some part of the *Theme* I was to touch upon, was (or at least seem'd to me) of so small and inconsiderable a moment, and yet hath rais'd that Noise and Tumult in the Church, that I confess it drew from me that Indignation which is there express'd. When *Augustus* the Emperor was ask'd what was become of his *Ajax*; (for he made a Tragedy upon the Life and Fortunes of that Man) he answer'd, *Incubuit in spongiam*. For all these things which I have above touched upon, my Answer is, *Incumbant in Spongiam*. And I could heartily wish (for in the Case I am, I have nothing but good Wishes to help me) that they into whose hands that Paper is unluckily fallen, would favour me so much as to sponge them out.

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Now concerning the Things discuss'd in the Pamphlet, I humbly beg leave, before I come to Particulars, to speak for my self thus much in general. If they be Errors which I have here vented (as perchance they are) yet my Will hath no part in them, and they are but the Issues of unfortunate *Inquiry*. *Galen*, that great Physician speaks thus of himself, 'Εγὼ δὲ οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως εὐδύς, &c. *I know not how* (says that worthy Person) *even from my Youth up, in a wonderful manner, whether by divine Inspiration, or by Fury and Possession, or however you may please to stile it, I have much contemn'd the Opinion of the Many; but Truth and Knowledg, I have above measure affected: verily persuading my self, that a fairer, more divine Fortune could never befall a Man.* Some Title, some Claim I may justly lay to the Words of this excellent Person; for the Pursuit of *Truth* hath been my only Care, ever since I first understood the Meaning of the Word.

to Archbishop Laud. 219

Word. For this, I have forsaken all Hopes, all Friends, all Desires, which might bias me, and hinder me from driving right at what I aimed. For *this*, I have spent my Mony, my Means, my Youth, my Age, and all I have; that I might remove from my self that Censure of *Tertullian*, — *Suo vitio quis quid ignorat*. If with all this Cost and Pains, my Purchase is but Error; I may safely say, to err hath cost me more, than it has many to find the *Truth*: And *Truth* it self shall give me this Testimony at last, that if I have missed of her, it is not my Fault, but my Misfortune.

HAVING begged your Grace's Pardon for this περιαιυτολογια, (peradventure unseasonable) I will take liberty to consider of the things themselves discuss'd in the Pamphlet. And *first*, howsoever I have miscast some Parcels of my Account, yet I am most certain that the total Sum is right; for it amounts to no more



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than that Precept of the Apostle,  
— *As far as it is possible, have Peace  
with all Men.* For this purpose, ha-  
ving summon'd up sundry Occasions  
of *Schism*, and valuing them with  
the best Judgment I could; I still en-  
ded with Advice to all possible Ac-  
commodation and Communion, one  
only excepted. Now certainly there  
could be no great Harm in the Pre-  
mises, where the Conclusion was  
nothing else but Peace.

ONE of the antient Grammarians,  
delivering the Laws of a *Comedy*  
somewhat scrupulously, thought, *non  
posse Ferrum nominari in Comædia, ne  
transcat in Tragædiam*; that to name  
a *Sword* in a *Comedy*, was enough to  
fright it into a *Tragedy*. The very  
*Theme* I handled, caused me to fall  
on Words of Dissension, and Noise,  
and Tumult, and Stir: yet I hope it  
is but an unnecessary Fear, that the  
last Scene being Peace, the Discourse  
will prove any other than comical.

To

To touch upon every jarring String in it, were too much to abuse your Grace's Patience, of which once already you have been so extraordinary liberal unto me. All that may seem to lie open to *Exception*, I will comprife under two Heads; within compafs of which all other petty and inferior Matters will eafily fall. The *First* concerns my Carriage towards Antiquity; the *Second* towards Authority: Againft both which, I may be fupposed to trefpafs. For the *First*, I am thought to have been too fharp in cenfuring Antiquity, beyond that good Refpect which is due unto it. In this point, my Error, if any be, fprang from this; that taking Actions to be the Fruit by which Men are to be judged, I judged of the Perfons by their Actions, and not of Actions by the Perfons from whom they proceeded: For to judg of Actions by Perfons and Times, I have always taken it to be moft unnatural.

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Hence it is, that having no good Conceit (for I will speak the Truth) of our Rule by which we celebrate the Feast of *Easter*; (*First*, because 'tis borrow'd of *Moses*, without any Warrant, for ought I know: *Secondly*, because it is of no use; for which way is the Service of God or Man any jot more advanc'd by making that Feast wander betwixt Day and Day, than by fixing it on one known Day? *Thirdly*, because it is obscure and intricate, few Scholars acquainting themselves therewith, and there being nothing more ridiculous than *Difficiles Nuga*, useles Intricacies and Obscurities:) I could not with patience speak gently of those, who used so small and contemptible an Occasion, to the great Disturbance and rending of the Churches; and in Maintenance of a Toy and simple Ceremony, which it is no way beneficial to preserve, to fall into that Error, than which, themselves every where tell us, there can scarcely any be more dangerous.

WHEREAS

WHEREAS in one Point, speaking of Church-Authority, I bluntly added [*which is none* ;] I must acknowledg it was *uncautiously* spoken, and, being taken in a *generality*, is false ; tho as it refers to the *Occasion* which there I fall upon, 'tis (as I think I may safely say) *most true*. For *Church-Authority*, that is, Authority residing in Ecclesiastical Persons, is either of *Jurisdiction* in *Church-Causes* and *Matter of Fact*, or of *Decision* in point of *Church-Questions*, and *disputable Opinion*. As for the *First* ; in *Church-Causes* or *Matter of Fact*, Ecclesiastical Persons, in Cases of their Cognizance, have the *same Authority* as any others have, to whom Power of Jurisdiction is committed. Their *Consistories*, their *Courts*, their *Determinations*, stand upon as warrantable Evidence as the *Decisions* of *other Benches and Courts* do. I count, in point of *Decision of Church-Questions*, if I say of the *Authority of the Church*, that it was *none* ; I know no

*Adver-*

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*Adversary* that I have, the *Church of Rome* only excepted: For this cannot be true, except we make the *Church Judg of Controversies*; the contrary to which we generally maintain against that Church. Now it plainly appears, that upon this occasion I spake it; for beginning to speak of *Schism* arising by reason of ambiguous Opinion, I brought in nakedly those words which gave occasion of *Offence*; which if I had spoken with due Qualification, I had not erred at all. Again, whereas I did too plainly deliver my self, *De Origine Domini*, and denied it to be founded either in *Nature* or in *Religion*; I am very well content to put off the Decision of this Point till *Etias* comes. In the mean time, whether it be true or false, let it pass for my Mistake; for 'tis but a Point of mere Speculation, which we fall upon when we study *Aristotle's Politicks*, and in common Life and Use hath no place at all. For *Authority* is not wont to dispute, and it goes but lazily on, when

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when it must defend it self by *Argument* in the *Schools*. Whether Dominion in *Civilibus*, or in *Sacris*, be *uti-  
suis*, &c. or comes in by *Divine Right*; it concerns *them* to look to, who have Dominion committed to them. To *others*, whose Duty it is to obey (and to *my self* above all, who am best contented to live and die a poor and private Man) it is a Speculation merely useless. Our Saviour questions not *Herod's* or *Augustus's* Title, and confessed that *Pilate* had his Power *from above*; which yet we know came but by *Delegation* from *Tiberius Caesar*. Let Titles of Honour and Dominion go as the Providence of God will have, yet quiet and peaceable Men will not fail of their Obedience: no more will I of ought, so be that *God* and *good Conscience* command not the contrary. A higher degree of Duty I do not see how any Man can demand at my hands: for whereas the Exception of *good Conscience* sounds not well with many Men, because oft-times, under  
that

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that Form, *Pertinacy* and *Wilfulness* is suspected to couch it self; in this case it concerns every Man sincerely to know the Truth of his own Heart, and so accordingly to determine of his own way, *whatsoever* the Judgment of his *Superiours* be, or *whatsoever* Event befall him. For since, in case of Conscience, many times there is a necessity to fall either into *the hands of Men*, or into *the hands of God*; of these two, whether is the best, I leave every particular Man to judg: only I will add thus much, It is a *fearful thing* to trifle with *Conscience*; for most assuredly, according unto it, a Man shall stand or fall at the last.

ONE *Thorn* more there is, which I would, if I might, pull out of the Foot of him who shall tread upon that Paper: For by reason of a *Passage* there, wherein I sharply tasked *Episcopal Ambition*, I have been suspected by some, into whose hands that *Schedule* fell before ever it came

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to your Grace's View, that in my Heart I did secretly lodg a *Malignity* against the *Episcopal Order*; and that, under pretence of taxing the *Antients*, I secretly lashed at the *present Times*. What Obedience I owe unto *Episcopal Jurisdiction*, I have already plainly and sincerely opened unto your Grace; and my Trust is, you do believe me: So that in that regard I intend to say no more; and the very Consideration of the *Things themselves*, which there I speak of, frees me from all Suspicion of secret gliding at the *present*. For I spake of *Schisms* arising either out of *Plurality* of Bishops in one Diocess, or *Superiority* of Bishops in fundry Diocesses: *both these* are Strangers to ours, and proper to the *antient times*; the *first* arising from the Unruliness of the People, in whose hands in those times the Nomination of Bishops was; the *other* from somewhat (whether good or bad, I know not) in the Princes then living, who left the Bishops to themselves (among whom *some* there were



no better than other Men) and took no Keep of the antient Canons of the Church, by which the Limits, Orders, and Pre-eminences of all Diocesses and Provinces were set. But *our* Times have seen a prosperous Change; for the Nomination of Bishops (which was sometimes in the *People*) is now most happily devolv'd into the *Prince's* hand, together with the care of the Preservation of the Bounds of Bishops Sees, and antient Titles of Precedency. So that now, since that happy Change, for well near *one hundred* Years, we have had no Experience of any such Misorders, neither are we likely *hereafter* to fear any, so long as so *Good, so Moderate, so Gracious* a *Royal* Hand shall hold the Stern: Which God grant may be either in him, or his, till Times be no more.

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