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A  
**VINDICATION**  
OF THE  
**PROCEEDINGS**

OF THE  
*Lower House of Convocation,*

With Regard to the  
**KING'S SUPREMACY,**

On the 3<sup>d</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of *May*, 1717.

And some Thoughts concerning  
**RELIGION;**

*With the Occasion of their being made Publick.*

And a **POSTSCRIPT** to the  
Lord Bishop of **BANGOR.**

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By **ROBERT CANNON, D.D.**  
Arch-Deacon of **NORFOLK.**

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**The Second Edition, with a Preface.**

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**LONDON,**

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**C. KING,** all in *Westminster-Hall*; And  
Sold by *J. Morphew* near *Stationers-Hall.* 1718.





# THE P R E F A C E.

**B**Eing apprehensive, that what I said at the Close of my *Thoughts*, concerning the *Falsity* of what the Lord Bishop of *Bangor* has advanced, with relation to future Rewards and Punishments, and the Stress I there laid upon it, may not have been, by every Reader, so understood, as to be rightly taken; I write *this Preface* to explain and confirm, what I before only mention'd; and withal to set forth the Rise and Progress of the Argument, which the Bishop was pleased to draw from the Essentials of Religion.

His Lordship, in the *Preface* to his *Answer*, p. ix. has told us, that, in Defence of his Doctrines, “ He has not invented Principles, to support what he had said; but laid before the World those very Principles, which led him first to say, what he now defends. And that, so far he has been from finding Reason to *evade*, or to *draw back*, that he has found great, and,



“ and, to *Himself*, irresistible *Arguments*, to  
 “ *press forward*, and to open and unfold the  
 “ *Doctrines* flowing from those *Principles*,  
 “ much more widely, and unreservedly, than  
 “ he had before done.

And I do own, that I find his *Performance* answerable to his *Professions*, in that Part of the Controversy, wherein I am particularly concerned.

In the second Part of his Sermon, p. 17. his Lordship undertook to set forth the Nature and End of the *Laws of Christ*, and of those Rewards and Punishments, which are the *Sanctions* of them, in order to shew the Truth of what he had been teaching in the first Part.

As to the *Laws* of Christ, we are told, p. 17, 18. *They are Declarations relating to the Favour of God in another State after this: Declarations, of those Conditions to be performed in this World, on our Part, without which God will not make us happy in that to come. And they are almost all general Appeals to the Will of that God, to his Nature, known by the common Reason of Mankind, and to the Imitation of that Nature, which must be our Perfection. The keeping his Commandments is declared the Way to Life; and the doing his Will, the Entrance (it should have been the Condition of Entering) into the Kingdom of Heaven. The being Subjects to Christ, is to this very End, that we may the better and the more effectually perform the Will of God.*

From

## The P R E F A C E. v

From what the Bishop did not then decline saying, and that very justly, I argue, That, if the Will of God and his Nature were appeal'd to by Jesus Christ, as *known* by the common Reason of Mankind, who yet had not in virtue of that their common Reason the *Knowledge* of a Future State, and could not be said so to believe it, as to endeavour to do the Will of God, and to imitate his Nature, *entirely* upon the Motives of another World, and *found* their Obedience to God upon those Motives, (that Obedience which yet they were sensible was due from them to the Great God and to his Authority,) *then* the pious Labours of the good Servants of God, to perform his Will, and to imitate his Goodness, were *acceptable* to him, and in his sight truly *Religious*, while they were uncertain of a Future Life; those pious Labours were not *render'd Religion*, nor *turned into Religion*, by the *Belief of another World*; neither could they *cease to be Religion*, by not *flowing from that Belief*. Then, God could not but *delight in that Worship, Profession and Practice* which might *arise from a true Belief in Him*, tho' they were not *founded upon the Motives of another World*; nor could Jesus Christ *leave Religion entirely to be supported by the Sanctions of a Future State*; because (which is the Bishop's Reason) *it cannot otherwise be Religion*; neither, indeed, would He have offer'd so to do for any other Reason whatever;

To

To return to the Sermon. Concerning the Sanctions of Christ's Laws, the Bishop told us, *Serm. p. 19.* That "all the *Sanctio's* which "he thought fit to give to *his Laws* were "not of *this World* at all, but of another. And this was the ground of his Argument, drawn from the *Essentials of Religion*, p. 20. Which, that it may be seen and consider'd in its true and best Light, I will lay before the Reader, as it is set forth, explained, and supported in his *Answer*.

The Argument is now given us more explicitly, in these Words: "If the Practice of "what is called Virtue and Charity be not "truly Religion, unless it be *founded upon*, "and guided by, the Motives of another "World; if this inward Principle be that "alone which makes it Religion, *Ans. p. 151.* "Then to apply Force or Flattery, worldly "Pleasure or Pain, in the Case of *Religion*, is "to act contrary to its Interest. But *the Practice of Virtue and Charity is not truly Religion, unless it be so founded.* This *Assumption* is repeated in other Words to the same Effect, in that *Maxim*, which I have set down at the Close of my *Thoughts concerning Religion*, from *Ans. p. 152.* And again, p. 153. The Belief of another World, is said to be *that, which turns Virtue and Charity into Religion.* Once more, p. 158. Future Rewards and Punishments are said to *make a Man's Practice Religion, which, without them, it would not be.*

And

And thus we see, the Bishop has answer'd, in the Case now before us, one part of the *Profession* made in his Preface, by laying before the World, First of all, that very Principle, as we are to suppose, which led him to say, in his Sermon, what he now *Defends* in his Book: Nor has his Lordship stopt there; but has also made good the latter part of his *Profession*, by opening and unfolding the Doctrines flowing from that Principle more widely and unreservedly, than he had before done. He has press'd forward, and told us, 2dly. concerning God, that *He delights in no Worship, Profession or Practice, but what — is founded upon the Motives of another World*, p. 159. 3dly, concerning Christ, that *His Laws enjoyn a Profession and Practice to be made and perform'd entirely upon the Motives of another World*, p. 160. and that *he has left Religion entirely to be supported by the Sanctions of a Future State, and because it cannot be Religion otherwise*, p. 161. And the real Occasion, the Ground given him for all This, as far as I can discern, is no more, than this plain and most useful Truth, that God has thought fit, by Jesus Christ, to give Assurance of a Future Life, and a Future Judgment in Righteousness, whereby every Man shall receive according to his Behaviour in this Life; (to speak in the Bishop's Language, *Answer*, p. 161. " It has been thought " fit by Almighty God, that the Laws of " Christ, and Religion, truly so call'd, should " be



“ be accompanied and strengthened by the  
“ Sanctions of another World.” )

And in the Day of Judgment *every Man* will be supposed to have had a *Sense* of the Obligation he was under to do what is *Right in the sight of God*, and to avoid what is *Wrong in His sight*; and to have known, that, tho' the Care to do what is *so Right*, cannot be said to deserve a *Reward*, because it was no more than his Duty towards God, (i. e. his Religion) oblig'd him to; Yet it could not but be accepted with God, and well pleasing to Him; also, that, to act what he knew to be *Wrong and Offensive before God*, did deserve His Displeasure and his Vengeance; even tho' God had not *declared* his Appointment of a Day, in which He will Judge the World. Which *Declaration*, and the consequent *Belief* of Future Rewards and Punishments, will then appear to have contributed mightily to the *Habitual Piety* of many Men, (as the Laws and Sanctions of good Governments will then also appear to have contributed not a little to the same *Habits*;) and that *Piety*, which was real, will be esteem'd *Piety*, and accepted as such with God, by whatever *Simple Cause*, or *Concurrence of Causes*, it may have been produced. It cannot possibly be, that the *Worth and Value* (if I may so speak) of real *Piety*, can depend upon the *Belief* of Future Rewards and Punishments, or be estimated thereby; or, that the Religion of a  
Chri-

Christian can be to be perform'd *entirely* upon the Motives of another World. With regard to the Wicked and Impious, who shall then be doomed to Punishment, their Real *Habitual* Wickedness and Impiety, will be consider'd as such, and be displeasing to God, from whatever Causes it may have proceeded. The Iniquity and Malignity thereof cannot possibly depend upon their having believed, or not believed, Future Rewards and Punishments, or be estimated thereby; altho' such Belief or Disbelief, may, either of them, as circumstantiated, *aggravate* that Guilt, which neither of them could *create*. The Lord God hath said: *All Souls are mine: The Soul that sinneth, it shall die. But, if a Man do that which is Right, he is Righteous, he shall surely live; the Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon Him; and the Wickedness of the Wicked shall be upon him. The Ways of God are equal, and he will judge us, every one, according to our Ways.* Upon the Whole, those Future Rewards and Punishments, which are *now* consider'd as *Motives*, will, in the Day of God's Judging the World in Righteousness by Jesus Christ, be *a rendering unto every Man according to his Works*, and nothing else. For, *Mankind* shall not then be Judged, according to the *Apprehensions* they had of future eternal Rewards and Punishments; but, according to their *Deeds*, estimated by the Sense of Duty, which God had given unto them: Otherwise, the *Judgment* to be then

exercised, the *Sentence* then to be passed upon *all Men*, will not be *in Righteousness*.

I must now take the *Liberty* of professing more unreservedly than I did before, what I think, *of the Principle*, which led the *Bishop* to say in his *Sermon*, what he has lately defended in his *Book*; *Of the Doctrine* concerning *God*, flowing from that *Principle*, and *Of the Doctrine* concerning *Christ*, flowing from the same, that they, considered together, are, not only ill grounded; but also, first, *prejudicial* to the true and only *essential Principle* of *Religion*, by putting another *Principle* upon the same foot with *that*, making it *equally essential to Religion*: 2dly, Are *impious*, with respect to *God*, the *Common Father* and *Governour* of all *Men*, who has, antecedently to the *Declaration* concerning *Future Rewards* and *Punishments*, imparted to *All* a *Sense* of that *Duty* to *Him*, which is their *Religion*; And, 3dly, are highly *dishonourable* to *Jesus Christ*, who made that *Declaration*, as proper and useful to recover and restore *Men* to the *habitual Sense* and *Practice* of their bounden *Duty*, to do the *Will of God*, and to imitate *his Nature*, known by the *common Reason* of *Mankind*.

If these *Truths* can make their *Way* into his *Lordship's Mind*, then surely we may expect the *Christian Bishop* will hasten to withdraw the whole *Argument* taken from the *Essentials* of true *Religion*, with all that belongs to it, and rejoyce to have it buried in perpetual oblivion. Then



Then surely we shall no more be told, "St. James has declared, that pure and undefiled Religion is Virtue and Charity, under the Belief of a Supreme Governour and Judge." *Answ.* p. 145. *i. e.* as the Bishop has explained himself, "under the belief of a Future State," p. 152. Which cannot (we have his Lordship's Word for it) be left out in St. James's Description of Religion, and of *the Religion of a Christian.*

Whereas it is most certain, that St. James did not put it into his Description of Religion, and, as we may well suppose, for this natural Reason, because he consider'd *the Belief of a Future State* not as a Principle essential to the Religion of a Christian, but as a great Motive to it. Nor indeed are those Words, as they stand in the Book, St. James's Words, or expressive of his Meaning; tho' the Bishop had used Words which come nearer to the Original, *Serm.* p. 5. But we read them best in our Translation of *Jam.* 1. 27. thus, *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World.* And the Apostle's Intention was plainly no other than this, to declare that the Duties he exhorted to, were essential and main Parts of that Religion, *θενοχεια*, that Religious Service which is pure and undefiled in the sight of God, considered under the Character of a Father. The words *before God*, are to be joined to the word *undefiled*, which

the Bishop omitted, *Serm. p. 5.* and then, *Serm. p. 20.* as well as *Answ. p. 145.* chang'd the word *before*, which signifies *in the sight of*, into these words, *under the belief of*; and substituted *a supreme Governor and Judge* in the room of *God, even the Father*. And lastly, as the finishing Stroke, has declared, *Answ. p. 151, 152.* *That the sincere Belief of God a Supreme Governor and Judge*, is, in other words, *The Belief of a Future State*. By these Steps the Bishop has made the *Apostle* speak what was thought proper to serve as a Ground-work whereon to build his *Maxim*; which yet cannot be *thereby* supported, but stands in need of what still remains not only to be *open'd* and *unfolded*, but to be *invented*.

We have indeed been told by the Bishop, *Answer, p. 161.* " That the applying the *Motives of this World*, will not add to the Weight, but diminish the Force of *Christ's Motives*: What ever part the *Motives of this World* have in any Action or Profession, being so much, exactly in proportion, drawn away from the Influence of the *Motives of another World*." And he has often told us of its being certain, that what God will reward hereafter, cannot be *promoted* by *Present and Temporal Rewards or Punishments*. But if his Lordship be greatly mistaken in the latter Assertion; if *Religion* not only may be *possibly*, but *probably and naturally* is, *promoted* by the *Motives of this World*, then we shall not be like to hear any more of the Inconsistency or *Contrariety of Temporal and Eternal Motives*; and I cannot but think, that if the Bishop had consider'd *real and sincere Habits of Religion*, instead of having always in View *simple Actions*, and the outward *Profession of Opinions*, his Lordship is not such a Stranger to the Nature of Mankind, as not to have been led to see and conclude, that such *Habits* may be,

be, and are often, *promoted* by the Motives of this World.

The last remarkable Place, in which the Bishop has labour'd to maintain his Point, is, *Answ. p. 233.* And I will now, before I Conclude, be at the Pains of considering what is there said more distinctly, than I have done in my *Vindication.*

He begins, with saying, " That the *Magistrate* (I take the liberty of omitting the word *Civil*, for this reason, because I know of but one sort of Magistrates,) " has it not either in his *Office* as such, " or in his Power to promote *true Piety* by *temporal Sanctions*, because it ceases to be *true Piety*, in the Sense of the *Christian Religion*, if " it be procured by *Worldly Motives.*

In order to consider the Reason here laid down, we must first understand it. The Bishop saith of *Something* that *It ceases to be true Piety.* And if we look back to see what the *Thing* is, we can find nothing but *true Piety*; and how is it possible that what is *true Piety* can cease to be *so*? Why, perhaps it may be meant, that it does not cease to be *so* in the *natural* and the *proper* Sense, but in a peculiar Sense, which is *superinduced* upon the *Natural*; for it follows, *in the Sense of the Christian Religion*: If it had been said, *in the Sense of a Disciple or an Apostle of Christ*, which I suppose is meant, then it is not true; for St. James has described *Religion*, (that *Religion* which was certainly *True Piety* in his *Sense*, who was both a Disciple and an Apostle of Christ,) without any regard to the Motives of it. But upon what *Supposition* does this *True Piety* cease to be such, in any one's Sense? Why, when it is *procured* by *Worldly Motives.* But what did the Bishop pretend to prove by this Reason? Was it not, that the Magistrate has it not in his Power to *Promote True Piety*? Yes, it was; but *that the Reason given, does not*

not offer to reach. The Bishop proceeds, " If  
 " God himself has threaten'd *Temporal Judgments* ;  
 " the being moved by these, as they come from  
 " God, is still an *Act of Faith* in him, and no such  
 " worldly Inducement as God disapproves of." 'Tis  
 here supposed, that *Impiety* is threatned by God  
 with *Temporal Judgments*, and that Men are mo-  
 ved thereby to become *Pious*. And in this Case,  
 their *Piety* is not *only* an *Act of Faith in God* ; it  
 might have been added, that it is *accepted by God*,  
 as *True Religion*. And farther, that the *same Piety*  
 would have been *so accepted*, whether God had, or  
 had not, threaten'd *Temporal* or *Eternal Judgments* ;  
 if he had threaten'd neither. Their *Piety* would  
 not have been the less *so*, nor less *acceptable in*  
*the sight of God*, for not having been *Promoted* by  
*Threats* or *Promises* of any kind: Neither has God  
 given us Reason to think, that he disapproves of  
 any *Inducement* to *real Piety*, on account of its be-  
 ing *Worldly*.

The Bishop goes on, with saying, " But to be  
 " moved to *Piety* (supposing it possible) by *World-*  
 " *ly Motives* proposed by the *Magistrate*, can ren-  
 " der no Man acceptable to God, because *He* him-  
 " self is left out of the Supposition. For my own  
 " part, I cannot but think it *Impossible*, because it  
 " is the very *Essence* of *True Piety*, to be built  
 " upon a *Real Unforced Faith* in God, and a *Fu-*  
 " *ture State*.

I have said enough of this, *Vindic. p. 25.* and  
 therefore will only desire it may be observed, how  
 absurd it is to say, that, in the Case here supposed,  
 God is left out, when, that which Men are moved  
 to, is *Piety, i. e.* their Duty to God, and what  
 certainly does render them acceptable to him. To  
 go on to what follows ; " And *this* on the contra-  
 " ry, supposes it to be built upon *Man*, and the  
 " *Terrors* or *Allurements* of *This World*, that is,  
 " it



“ it supposes it Piety, and not Piety, at the same  
 “ time.

*This, i. e. to be moved to Piety by Worldly Motives proposed by the Magistrate, supposes, &c.* Here the Bishop takes it for granted, and would put it upon the Reader. that those who maintain, that *A Man, to whom God has imparted a Sense of his being obliged to Piety, may yet be, in some degree, moved to it, may have it Promoted in him, by Worldly Motives proposed by the Magistrate;* do in effect maintain, that Men, to whom no such Sense is imparted, who have no Notion of a God, having Authority over them, are moved *solely* by Motives from the Magistrate, to do that as their Duty, of which, being their Duty, they have no Sense. I need not trouble the Reader with the Repetition of the remaining Sentence, for I am only concern'd, that the Magistrate be not deterr'd from doing his Duty, from doing what he can, (without *Attempting* to do more than he can, or more than belongs to his *Office,*) *for the Maintenance and Promotion of Piety, and the Honour of God.*

To think, that *pernicious Errors and Irreligious Practices* are promoted by the *Motives* of *This World*, when there is an ill *Application* of them by those who have Power over others, and at the same time to think, that they cannot possibly be so *rightly applied* by those in Power, as to *promote the necessary Essential Truths and Practices of Religion,* is both Unaccountable and Fanatical.

It would much better become a Christian Bishop to teach, lead, and exhort Men to make a *right Use*, and *due Application*, of the Influence and Power they have over Others, and to guard against all that Use and Application thereof, which apparently is, or perhaps may be, wrong; than to say, as this Bishop has said, *Answ. p. 167.* “ That  
 “ the Rule being once laid down, that the Magi-  
 “ strate

“**strate is to add the Sanctions of this World to Reli-**  
 “**gion, ( i. e. to maintain and promote it, ) it becomes**  
 “**the indispensable Duty of every Magistrate to an-**  
 “**nex them to that, ( i. e. to promote that ) which he**  
 “**himself esteems to be the True Religion. If he**  
 “**be himself of a False Religion, he is obliged in**  
 “**Conscience, by this Rule, to promote it by his**  
 “**Worldly Sanctions.**

His Lordship may possibly, upon his own Recollection of Thought, which I have done my Part to raise in him, be sensible, that the Magistrate, who so Reasons and Concludes, makes a very wrong Use of that Light and Understanding, which God has given him in common with other Men, and does betray the Succours which Right Reason offers unto him. But whatever his Lordship may think fit to do, *This shall be the Labour of my Life ; This is what I have been contending for, what has been my principal Aim. And I will presume so far, as to hope, that I have, according to his Lordship's Desire, Answ. p. 260. though not with that Deference which he might expect, lent my helping-Hand to point out the Truth ; which Truth is not the less Important for being obvious and plain to common Understanding. There is wanted but little Argument, when we are upon the plainest Truths ; and his Lordship need not do his utmost to strengthen and confirm my arguments. A very little of his Ability will suffice, when employ'd on this Subject ; and the World will receive great Benefit, even without his Lordship's Labour.*

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Page 25, dele Lines 15 and 16. and instead of those two Lines read *It is.* Ibid. 4th Line from the Bottom, after p. 19. add these Words ; *and, Answer, p. 134.*

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A  
VINDICATION  
OF THE  
PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
*Lower House of Convocation, &c.*



HE Convocation was assembled and held *by Authority of the King's Writ, and in Obedience to it.*

All that Restraint, which it lay under, when first assembled, was taken off *by His Majesty's License*, by which “ full, free, and lawful Power, and Authority is given to the Archbishop of *Canterbury*, and the rest of the Bishops of the Province, or



“ the greater Number of them ; and the  
 “ rest of the Clergy of this present Con-  
 “ vocation, (that is, the Lower House) or  
 “ the greater Number of them, *from Time*  
 “ *to Time, during this present Parliament,*  
 “ to propose, confer, treat, debate, consult,  
 “ and agree, of, and upon, such Canons,  
 “ *&c. as they shall think necessary,* fit, and  
 “ convenient for the Honour and Service  
 “ of God, the Good and Quiet of the  
 “ Church, and the Government thereof,  
 “ as by Law established. And farther  
 they are authorized, “ To set down in  
 “ Writing, and exhibit to the King, all  
 “ such Canons and Things so by them,  
 “ from Time to Time, agreed upon ; *Pro-*  
 “ *vided* always that they be not contrary,  
 “ *nor tend to make any Alteration in the*  
 “ *Doctrine, Discipline, or Government of the*  
 “ *Church of England, as established, by any*  
 “ *Act of Parliament now in Force.*

This was the State of the Convocation,  
 with respect to their Capacity of acting :  
 What Obligations they were under to act,  
 as they did, particularly with Regard to  
 the King's Supremacy, ought also to be  
 considered ; in order to form a right Judg-  
 ment of their Proceedings.

By the first of the Canons of 1603, in-  
 titled, *The King's Supremacy over the*  
*Church of England, in Causes Ecclesiastical,*  
*to be maintained ;* it is decreed and ordain-  
 ed,

ed, " *As our Duty to the King's most excellent Majesty requireth, That the Archbishop of Canterbury, all Bishops, Deans, Archdeacons, &c. shall faithfully keep and observe, and (as much as in them lieth) shall cause to be kept and observed of others, all and singular Laws and Statutes, made for the restoring to the Crown of this Kingdom the ancient Jurisdiction over the State Ecclesiastical.*

The last Statute made for that Purpose in the Reign of *Henry VIII.* was in his 37th Year, Chap. 17. (repealed by the 1 & 2 of *Philip and Mary*, as made against the See Apostolick of *Rome*, and revived, every Branch and Article of it, by the 1 *Eliz.* Chap. 1. as made for restoring to the Crown its ancient Jurisdiction, &c.) And in the Words of this Statute it is declared, " That His Majesty is, by the Word of God, Supreme Head in Earth of the Church of *England*, and hath full Power and Authority to exercise all manner of Jurisdctions, commonly called Ecclesiastical Jurisdctions: And, that Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other Ecclesiastical Persons, have no manner of Jurisdiction Ecclesiastical, but by, under, and from His Royal Majesty.

By the 1 *Eliz.* Chap. 1. which restores the ancient Jurisdiction over the State Ecclesiastical and Spiritual, and abolishes all Foreign Power repugnant to the same, (by re-  
pealing

pealing the 1 & 2 of *Phil.* and *Mary*, and by expressely reviving King *Henry's* Laws,) it is likewise Established and Enacted,

§. 17. “ That such Jurisdctions, &c.  
 “ *Spiritual* and Ecclesiastical, as by any *Spi-*  
 “ *ritual* or Ecclesiastical *Power* or Authority  
 “ hath heretofore been, or may lawfully  
 “ be, exercised, or used, for the Visitation  
 “ of the Ecclesiastical State, and Persons,  
 “ and for Reformation, Order and Cor-  
 “ rection of the same, and of all manner of  
 “ Errors, Heresies, Schisms, Abuses, Of-  
 “ fences, Contempts, and Enormities, are  
 “ for ever united and annexed to the Im-  
 “ perial Crown of of this Realm.

These two Acts of Parliament, being the principal of those Laws and Statutes, which the Clergy in Convocation acknowledge it their *Duty to observe*, and cause to be observed, (and therefore in the 1st Canon have Decreed and Ordain'd, That they shall, by all Ecclesiastical Persons, be observed, &c.) do clearly shew and explain what the King's Supremacy is, which they are so bound to maintain. And in order to secure the Maintenance of such Supremacy, by the 2d Canon, intituled, *Impugners of the King's Supremacy censured*, it is ordained, That  
 “ whosoever shall impeach, in any Part,  
 “ his Regal Supremacy, in Causes Eccle-  
 “ siastical, restored to the Crown, and by  
 “ the Laws of this Realm therein Establish-  
 “ ed

“ ed, let him be Excommunicated, *ipso*  
 “ *facto*, and not restored, but only by the  
 “ Archbishop, after his Repentance.

The Convocation was under these Cir-  
 cumstances, and these Obligations, when,  
 on the 3d of *May*, with all decent Respect  
 due to the Person concern'd, it was laid be-  
 fore the Lower House, “ That the Lord  
 “ Bishop of *Bangor* had given great Offence  
 “ to the Body of the Clergy, as well as  
 “ other good Christians, by certain Do-  
 “ctrines and Positions by him lately pub-  
 “lished, partly in a Sermon, intituled, *The*  
 “ *Nature of the Kingdom, or Church, of Christ.*  
 “ The Tendency of which Doctrines and  
 “ Positions is generally conceived to be (with  
 “ respect to the Point here in View) to *Im-*  
 “ *pugn and Impeach the Regal Supremacy in*  
 “ *Causes Ecclesiastical*, and the Authority of  
 “ the Legislature to enforce Obedience in  
 “ Matters of Religion by Civil Sanctions.

No one Member of the House questioned  
 the Truth in Fact, that such Offence was so  
 taken, or shewed the least Doubt concerning  
 the evil Tendency of the Sermon, in Preju-  
 dice to the Regal Supremacy, or spoke a  
 Word in Vindication of it.

The Motion having been regularly made  
 and received in Writing, after a Debate,  
 it was resolved, “ That a Committee be ap-  
 “ pointed to draw up a Representation, fet-  
 “ ting forth, *That the Lord Bishop of Ban-*  
 gor



“ gor *had given Offence, &c.* inserting such Passages only, out of the Sermon, as were most pertinent, under two general Heads; one of which was, *Impugning and Impeaching that Regal Supremacy over the whole Ecclesiastical State*, which the Clergy are, as I have shewn, in the first place, under the strictest Obligations to assert and maintain.

May the 10th, the Chairman of the Committee acquainted the House, That a Representation had been prepared pursuant to the Direction of the House, which he had ready to report. He being order'd to do it immediately, read the whole Representation. And Mr. Prolocutor asked the House, 1st, If they pleas'd to receive the Report? and, 2dly, If they would have it enter'd in the Acts? To both which they readily agreed; and then were call'd away to the Upper House.—

If we were to form our Judgment concerning the present Temper and Disposition of the Clergy in the Convocation, from the reproachful Calumnies of some Writers, who are *not Members of the Lower House*, (one great Support of whose Cause lies in having that House thought, by one part of the Laity at least, to consist of violent and unreasonable Men) we should then think, it was impossible for the House to have done what is right.

But,

But when the World may be told by every Member, who was present at the Debates on the 3d of *May* last, that the House, after having received the Motion in Writing, was brought to depart from the principal Branch of the first Charge made on the Bishop's Doctrines and Positions; *viz. The Tendency of them to set at nought and make void the Institutions and Ordinances of Christ*, without the Contradiction of any one Member after the Debate was over, and with the express Consent of Those who made and supported the Motion; all Impartial Men will entertain more favourable Thoughts of the Convocation-Clergy, than suits to the Views of some among us; and will perhaps be persuaded, that it is not very improbable, but that the *Lower House*, which received the *Report* no otherwise than It received the *Motion*, might have laid the *Representation* before the *Upper*, on this Important Affair, in a Manner and Form unexceptionable to the good and considering Men of all Parties; which was evidently the general Desire of the House.

The *Temper* with which this Affair was transacted, appeared to be such as is proper to accomplish so just and reasonable a Purpose. But as no one can say what the House would have done, when they should have considered the Report Paragraph by Paragraph;



graph ; so it is hard to say, what it could have done less than was done, while it was in a Capacity of acting, *with respect to the Sermon*, (the Obligations they were under, and the Circumstances they were in, considered,) when the whole Tendency thereof so manifestly is, to weaken, make vile, and subvert, not only that Authority, with Regard to Religion, which flows from the Constitution of this National Church, and is necessarily exercised under it ; but That also, without which there cannot be any National Christian Church on the face of the Earth. For it may here be observed, that the Authority and Interest which the Magistrate has in Matters of Religion, is the only Ground of National Churches, subsisting both under the Institutions of the Gospel, and the Obligations of Natural Religion. That there should be such Churches, is the common Concern of all who are zealous for the Support and Success of Religion in the World. It is the Concern even of such as may think the Regal Supremacy, as described by some Words in our Laws, and as it is to be applied in some particular Cases, is carried too far.

There may be some Persons, who, after serious Examination, have come to conclude, That the Form of Worship in the Book of *Common Prayer*, is, in part, corrupt or superstitious ; yet, even these Men, as unhappily



happily and *wickedly erroneous* as they may be thought, might be ready to join in representing against such a Sermon, as the Lord Bishop of *Bangor's* is; moved by the Concern which they have for the Honour of G O D, and for the Maintenance of *that Religion*, which, under the Christian Institution, (as it relates to the Worship and Service of G O D, and to the Principles and Methods by which Men may obtain his Favour, and be accepted with him) is one plain, uniform Thing, which, according to these Mens Notion of Religion, there is no more real Reason to dispute about, than there is about the Law of Reason and Nature, in Moral Points: They may therefore well think, that it is proper for the Legislature of this Nation, to add the Sanctions of this World, for the Support of it; and that it is the Duty, as well as Right, of the King, and all who are in Authority under him, to use their Power to encourage and promote Obedience to G O D in the Essentials of Religion.

**H**A V I N G said what I judg'd proper to justify the *Lower House of Convocation*, for what they acted in Maintenance of the King's Supremacy; I am now to lay before the Reader some Particulars, which gave Occasion to the Publishing what follows, and without which I should not have published any thing with relation to this Affair.

The Report of the Committee was soon published, of which I thought my self obliged to send the Lord Bishop of *Bangor* a Copy; and judg'd it proper to send also a Letter, expressing, that *I agreed with the Judgment of the Lower House concerning the Tendency of the Sermon, with respect to both Heads of the Representation*; and intimating plainly, what that *Point* was, for which I was principally concerned. The Letter was in the Words following;

My LORD,

**I** Take the Liberty of sending to your Lordship a *Report*, in which you are concerned, having received from your Lordship the Favour of a Sermon which occasion'd it. I am one of those who conceive the *Tendency* of that Discourse to be such as is laid down in the Beginning of the Report; and *I am grievously offended at the Thought of excluding the Magistrate, from interposing with*

*with Rewards and Punishments, proper to promote the Practice of what is Essential in the Worship of God and Religion; from the Exercise of that Authority, which he hath from God, in asserting and vindicating his Honour.*

Your Lordship will be pleased to observe, that the Report, read in the House, was recieved, in order to be considered by the House. I am,

*My Lord,*

*Your Lordship's*

*Very Humble Servant,*

*Westminster,  
May, 14.  
1717.*

**ROBERT CANNON.**

Of this Letter it has never pleas'd his Lordship to take the least Notice. But in his Postscript to a Letter of Mr. Sykes, p. 88. he took occasion to mention *the Point relating to the Civil Power, as the main Point, and that which alone was said to have determined some Persons, or to have given them a happy Occasion to enter into the Condemnation of what he had preached: And in his Answer to the Representation, the 19th Section of the second Chapter, p. 257, is thus intituled, Two Questions relating to the Royal Supremacy, considered and answered.*

*swered.* The Questions are in the *Dean of Chichester's Considerations*, p. 57, introduced by these Words, "The Point your Lordship now will maintain, if I take you right, is, That the Motives of this World, particularly the Sanctions of humane Laws, are contrary to the Motives of the World to come. And, that to apply them in the Case, and on Account of true Religion, is to act contrary to its Interests, to do what tends to its Destruction. If so, my Lord, I desire to know first, Whether *That Supremacy which is inseparable from the imperial Crown of this Realm, &c.*

Here the Subject of the Questions plainly was, That Supremacy, which is inherent in all imperial Crowns, and therefore is inseparable from that of this Realm; for whatever does not belong to every Government, may possibly be separated from ours. But it pleased the Bishop, instead of those accurate Words, to put these, *the Royal Supremacy*; and then to affirm, that *all relates in the End, to those Acts particularly of the Legislative Authority, which confine the Offices of a Kingdom of this World, by Tests taken from a Kingdom which is not of this World.*

Having, after a sort, answered the two Questions, his Lordship plainly intimates, that they seem to have come from Me,  
by



by what is said by Dr. Sherlock. *Consider.*  
p. 58.

This is what no One could possibly see by what is there said; and no doubt his Lordship had other Spectacles on, than those which he only seems to wear. His Meaning was, that he thought so from something else than is to be seen in *Considerations*, p. 58. And the End his Lordship had to serve, in changing the Subject of the Questions, appears, p. 260. where he insinuates, that hitherto I had thought it sufficient to put Questions to him, the Difficulty of answering which I knew to arise *solely from worldly Considerations*; and desires I would do so no more. This, he well knew, was touching me in a tender Part. But, if he thought the Questions came from Me, he might have known from the Letter I had sent him, and had Reason to conclude, (even *without that Appearance of Charity*, which yet his Lordship has assured us he will endeavour to preserve,) from my whole Conduct, that I was the Man least apt to insist on, or take Advantage over any one from, what is particularly in our Constitution; and most likely to be concerned for that Supremacy, which is inseparable from this, and every other imperial Crown.

The Questions were attended with the following Words, " This is indeed *a main*  
" *Point* ;

“ *Point* ; in the Resolution of which, the  
 “ Civil Power, as well as Religion, is  
 “ greatly concerned: (Neither of these  
 “ Expressions look toward a particular Con-  
 “ stitution). “ And if you will uniformly  
 “ maintain what you have, first, in your  
 “ Sermon, and now in this your Post-  
 “ script affirmed, you will so justify one  
 “ Charge in the Representation, as will al-  
 “ so abundantly justify *That Person, who, as*  
 “ *your Lordship has heard, was thereby de-*  
 “ *termined to enter into, and be zealous for*  
 “ *the Condemnation of what you had preach-*  
 “ *ed.* And you will save Him at least, the  
 “ Trouble of contending with you.

I have the rather repeated these Words,  
 because the Bishop has from them taken  
 Occasion and some Pains to provoke me,  
 as one who has *Inclination* to shew his  
 Weakness, to contend with him; and for  
 my Encouragement has added, “ That he  
 “ has neither *Interest* nor *Pleasure* to  
 “ determin him against *my Arguments*.  
 Which Declaration was intended, in the  
 Bishop's Way, to insinuate, that I, *to whom*  
*an happy Occasion had been given, in his*  
*Sermon, of entering into the Condemnation of*  
*it, have still Interest or Pleasure to deter-*  
*min me against His, and thereby to pre-*  
*judice his Reader against those Arguments,*  
*which, if they shall appear good and con-*  
*vincing,*



*vincing, His Lordship will, no doubt, do his utmost to strengthen and confirm.*

He has been a Writer in Controversy near twenty Years ; and I only ask, Did ever one Argument of any Adversary against his way of thinking, appear to him good and convincing? As to my Part in this Affair, I do own, that before the Preaching of his Sermon, I was so far offended at his Conduct, as not to have the Opinion of him, nor the Concern for him, which once I had. Of this my Disposition, with Regard to his Lordship, I was then very sensible, and no less careful to guard against the Influence of it on my Actions.

I can say with Truth, That in every Step I took, as a Member of the Lower House, either in or out of Convocation, *my Design was to weaken the Cause of Superstition*; and that the main End I propose in publishing these Papers is the very same; of which, as I apprehend, no understanding Reader will doubt. I must leave it to be judged, whether he, who is aware of what may disturb his Judgment, or he, who would appear insensible of all Prejudice and Passion, is effectually influenced by them, in the Course of this Argument.

His Lordship, in my Opinion, has given great Advantage to *that Cause* by his Sermon, and by his Defence of it: The Sense of this has inclined me to send my Thoughts abroad, and add the little Weight I may have, to the *Cause of true Religion*, which I heartily wish,  
 C tho'



tho' with small Hope, may yet prevail. Were it not for that Concern, strong upon my Mind, all that his Lordship has said would not induce me to interpose in this Debate. No; his Method of writing Controversy forbids it.

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### *Thoughts concerning Religion.*

I Declared in the Lower House of Convocation, *May the 3d*, and on all Opportunities since, That what is to me most offensive in the Bishop's Sermon, is contained in the Passage produced in the Report out of the *20th* Page. It is now acknowledged by the Bishop, that *there* (in that Passage) is *an Argument drawn from the very Essentials of God's Worship, and of true Religion.* Answer, p. 149. In *that Argument*, as I take it, the Bishop asserted, That *to apply Flattery or worldly Pleasure, Force or Pain, in order to promote the Practice of what is essential in the Worship of GOD, and in Religion, is to act contrary to the Interests of true Religion; to do what is offensive to GOD and to Christ;* whereas, I think, thus to assert and teach. is to act contrary to the Interests of true Religion, &c, as well as to shake the Foundation of all Government. If the Bishop will yet own, he thinks so too, notwithstanding

ing



ing what he has preached, written and published of late; then, that which was to me most offensive, will be removed. I did also think, that, if the Bishop would persist in avowing that Assertion, it would appear so extravagant to all judicious and good Christians, when they should have viewed every Colour of Reason he had laid in his *Sermon*, and *Postscript*; or in his *Answer* might lay upon it, as to make it needless for me to contend with his Lordship about it.

And now, after having considered all that is said in the *Answer*, relating to this Point, it appears to me, that he does mean to avow and support that same Assertion.

As for the End it was intended to serve, or what his Lordship had in his Thoughts to oppose in so doing, it shall make no Part of my Concern; but I will lay down my Thoughts in opposition to it, in few and plain Words, which his Lordship may either neglect, or deal with, as he judges most for his Purposes.

I consider what is proper and fit for Men to do with Regard to the Worship of GOD and Religion, by Virtue of that Understanding or Sense which they have in Common. Men cannot perform the Duty they owe to GOD, *i. e.* be Religious, without believing, that he is their Governour, and they his Servants, so as to owe all Obedience and Duty unto him. A certain Persuasion concerning a future State is not necessary to a Man's be-



ing Religious. He who has a right Sense of his Duty to G O D, and is careful to perform it, cannot doubt of his being accepted by G O D; and if in the careful Discharge of his Duty to G O D, he puts his whole Trust and Confidence in Him, leaving the Issues of Life and Death in his Hand, and his own Concerns, as to the happy Continuance of his Being, without laying Claim to any Promises, or so much as having certain Expectations of future Rewards after Death, He, I say, is as truly Religious as a Man is capable of being.

The Sense of Duty to G O D naturally springs up, and grows in the Mind of Man, with the true Notion of G O D; but it must be remember'd, that disturbing Passions and evil Inclinations, are apt to rise also and increase, so as to pervert the Notion of G O D, and corrupt the Sense of Duty to him, or at least hinder the effectual Performance of it. And as we all come Infants into the World, we are at first destitute and void of that Understanding, which is to give us a Sense of our Duty, and guide us in the Discharge of it. Here then we are cast by Providence into the Lap of our Parents, whose Part it is to form our Minds as well as our Bodies, to cherish the Seeds of Religion, to instruct and discipline us into a right Sense of our Duty, and guard against the Growth of all evil Dispositions, which are apt to abound and gain Strength faster than the good, in tender Minds uncultivated.

It cannot surely be gainsay'd, that the kind Words and the severe, the Threats and the Promises, the Encouragements and the Discouragements, the Pains and the Pleasures, which Parents are able to apply to their Children, when they act prudently, contribute not a little, to form, and fix, and render habitual in the Minds of Children that Sense and Disposition, which is certainly right, and ought to have Possession there, as well as to keep off what may possibly be wrong, and root out the contrary to what is right ; nor is it less certain, that what is so produced, is acceptable to GOD.

The Mind and Conscience of those, who have been so happily educated, not only is not, but never can possibly be, uneasy or troubled, whenever it reflects upon the Sense and Disposition thus wrought up and perfected within itself.

We learn indeed from the Observation of past Times, that Superstitions, and false Religion have generally prevailed, and been propagated down from Parents to Children, by the Methods which they should have taken to propagate only True Religion ; and having by that Means gotten Possession, have often kept it, without occasioning uneasy Reflections of Mind ; but in any such Case the Conscience is perpetually liable, upon Reflection, to become offended, from which the well inform'd Mind is for ever secure ; which plainly points out and fixes the Essential Difference between an Education truly good, and that which is not so. We should therefore grow wise by Experience,  
and



and however we may ourselves possibly have deviated from the *plain strait Path of Duty to GOD*, (that Path, in which the common Sense and Understanding of all serious Men directs them to walk) we should be cautious, lest we lead others into *By-ways*, which we have Light and Sense enough, if we could but be brought to attend to it, to make us see and know *may* be wrong, even while we ourselves think they are right, and continue to walk in them.

The Natural Obligations of Duty to GOD, consider'd as a common Father and Governor of Mankind, are not, cannot be, Matter of our Choice: We find ourselves under them, and can never be free from them; and a conscientious, hearty Care in the Discharge of those Obligations, will certainly find Regard and Acceptance with GOD.

Whatever is in its Nature such as ought to be first propos'd to the Rational Man, the Man grown up to Maturity of Understanding, let it not be offer'd, or so much as mention'd to him, till he be actually capable of Reasoning and Consideration; but let every thing be done that can tend and contribute to an easy, habitual Discharge of our natural bounden Duty to GOD, even from our Infancy. All National Governments, (whose united Judgments, separating and laying aside all particular Ways of thinking about Religion, ought to direct and regulate the weak, and perhaps superstitious Fancies of many Parents) in the first place, ought to set up the publick solemn Worship of  
 GOD,

G O D, agreeable to the common Notions Men have of G O D ; set apart Places, wherein it may be exercised, and appoint Persons, as publick Ministers in G O D's Service, with all other needful Circumstances ; all which may certainly be so done, as that no Man, not even the Lord Bishop of *Bangor* himself, could find the least Blemish or Fault to complain of *in the Order for G O D's Worship*, tho' many Men might press for inserting, *what is not there*, agreeable to each of their particular Notions ; but the introducing and admitting of any such Partialities, it is the proper and natural Care of the Community, and especially of those who preside in it, to guard against ; and then they may put not only Negative, but Positive Discouragements on such as shall either affront or neglect that Unexceptionable Worship ; and make Laws with Sanctions or Punishments of this World on all Profaneness and Blasphemy, and gross Immorality, *as Offences against G O D*. And farther, since it is highly reasonable, not only to provide for the promoting and preserving that Sense of Religious Duty, which is implanted in us ; but also for restoring it, where it is impaired ; and for recovering Men to the Practice of that Piety, from which they have departed ; a Penitential Discipline may be instituted, *In Salutem Animæ*, for the Good of the Souls of Men.

And let them not doubt, but that, as in all this they are promoting True Religion, and the Reformation of Mens Manners, so they do  
what

what is acceptable to G O D, what is incumbent on them, as they are the Ministers of G O D, what is no more than the Duty they owe to him, requires of them ; and let them not be afraid of the *mere Outcries of that Man's Terrours*, who would make them to think, that in so doing, they are acting contrary to the Interests of True Religion, what tends to its Destruction, or is displeasing to G O D. Let them not be made so weak, as to imagine, or apprehend, they shall give Offence to JESUS CHRIST, as opposing any of his Maxims, or so much as attempting to alter any of his Sanctions, who, when he appear'd in this World, found Mankind, and their Governors, under such Obligations to G O D, as I have set forth, and had no Thought of dissolving them, or loosing them in any degree. The Magistrates then in Being had it in their Office, as Magistrates, and in their Power, to promote true Piety by Temporal Sanctions ; Men having naturally a Reverence for the Laws of their Country, which are, or are reasonably presumed to be, till the contrary appears, the Result of the common Notions, of the Wisdom and good Sense of Mankind, free from the Influence of private Passions or weak Imaginations ; and true Piety does not cease to be so, *in the Sense of Christian Religion*, (as far as I am capable of understanding those Words of the Bishop, p. 233,) if it be procured, as he speaks, in some measure, by *Worldly Motives*. To be moved to Piety, i. e. an habitual and real Disposition to do our Duty to  
 GOD,



GOD, by worldly Motives proposed by the Magistrate, may contribute to render a Man acceptable to GOD, because He himself is so far from being left out of the Supposition, that the Regard which Legislators have to GOD, is the principal Ground and Reason of proposing those worldly Motives.

The Bishop adds: *For my own Part, I think it impossible, because it is the very Essence of True Piety, to be built upon a Real, Unforced Faith in GOD; and a Future State.*

I say; True Piety is built upon a Real Faith in GOD, and, necessarily, upon nothing else; ~~and that which it is built upon, whatever it be, cannot be the very Essence of it.~~ Piety is neither the Effect of Force, nor yet of mere Choice: It flows as a proper Effect from Faith in GOD; but then, we are not, ought not to be, left to choose to Believe in GOD, till after we have arrived to Maturity of Understanding. That Faith is not then to be begun in us, upon Consideration, but to be strengthened and confirmed. This is in Opposition to what the Bishop has said, p. 233. And yet I do not suppose any thing to be Piety, and not Piety, at the same time.

To proceed; If the Magistrate be a good Christian, *who knows the Terror of the LORD,* not Terrors, as the Bishop reads it, *Sermon, p. 19, i. e.* believes, that we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of GOD, to receive Sentence according to our Works in this Life, whether Good or Evil (which is therefore cal-



led, *the Terror of the LORD*, because GOD declared this Future Judgment, and will also execute it, by *Christ our Lord*; then this good Christian Magistrate having, from GOD, the Terrors of this World in his Power, He adds the latter to the former, by applying them to the Minds of Men, where GOD has *unquestionably*, by our Lord Jesus Christ, apply'd the other; both which do equally, and are equally intended to terrify the Heart, tho' the Bishop supposes *a Willing Choice*, without which He allows of no Reward, *and a Terrified Heart* to be as inconsistent as *Sincerity and Hypocrisy*. *Religion and no Religion*. Sermon, p. 21. The Silence of Scripture (were it so in the Case before us) is a poor Argument, unless in Matters that depend on Scripture Evidence; where Reason and Nature speak, we have a plain Rule to go by. The Right and Obligation of the Magistrate to promote True Religion, is of older Date than the Books of the *New Testament*; and if our Saviour has not abrogated it, He has confirm'd it, by leaving it in the same Strength and Vigour in which He found it. Those good Christian Magistrates, who are, by the Disposition of GOD, invested with Authority in this World, *all the Authority and Power that mortal Men are capable of having and exercising*, do use Worldly Terrors and Rewards, Discouragements and Encouragements, to influence and dispose the Mind of Men, as far as may be, to an habitual good Conduct of their Actions here, so as to become  
thereby

thereby acceptable to the Lord, and be admitted by Him to enter upon the Enjoyment of Life Eternal, at the Great Day of Judgment in Righteousness.

To speak properly ; The *Worship* that Men are bound to pay to G O D, is not to be distinguish'd from *Religion*, because it is included in it. *Religion* imports the whole Duty of Man to G O D ; and all those Obligations Men are under to one another, as they arise from those Relations, which G O D has constituted by making us what we are, they also are included in *Religion*. All that Sobriety, Temperance and Purity of Mind, which, in our calmest Thoughts and Reflexion, we cannot but discern and feel to be lovely, becoming and excellent, are also part of the Duty we owe to G O D, who has enabled us to see the Beauty of them, and expects we should make a right Use of the Light, which He placed within us. If then the common Sense and Understanding of Men had been, in the Name of G O D, exerted by the Legislators of this World, in recommending this pure Religion, and laying Discouragements and Penalties on all plain Breaches of it, as being Offences against G O D, instead of departing from the Simplicity of this Natural Religion, by recommending and establishing Superstition and false Worship ; the Generality of Men, who are not only weak and slow in Understanding, but have the Seeds of evil Inclinations, and irreligious Practices within them, would have reaped great Benefit and

Improvement in true Religion themselves, and have given their Children a right Education, under such Government, and such pious Laws; nor is this more, or other, than what the common Sense of Men directs them to put in Practice.

I know of no Maxims of our Lord Jesus Christ contrary or disagreeable to any thing of all this. His Design was to recover and promote *this Religion*, and no other. *This was his Religion*: Whatever he found in the Laws of the Place where he lived, tending to promote this Religion, he greatly approved; whatever Maxims he found in vogue, which tended to corrupt or destroy it, those he freely declared against. There were Laws then in being among the *Jews*, which inflicted severe worldly Punishments upon the great Offences, against GOD; there were many negative and positive Discouragements upon smaller Offences, against none of which did he object, or shew himself in the least offended. We read, that he taught the Multitude, and his own Disciples, to observe and do, what the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who then sat in the Seat of *Moses*, had them observe, and for that Reason, because they sat there; but not to do after their Works; for they said, and did not, *Matt. xxiii.* and he himself practis'd accordingly.

'Tis true, that pure Religion being corrupted among the *Jews*, and almost perished among the *Gentiles*, GOD was pleas'd, for the Recovery of it, by Jesus Christ, and his  
Apo-



**Apostles, to give far more assured Hope of a blessed Immortality after this Life to the Righteous, or truly Religious, and more certain Expectations of the contrary to the Unrighteous, or the Irreligious, than Mankind had before.** And because, what GOD judg'd necessary to be preached to Men, for accomplishing that End, seems no-where, in the Books of the New Testament, to be more strictly set forth, than in the latter part of the 17th Chapter of the *Acts* of the Apostles, (a Book written on purpose to shew the Rise and earliest Progress of the Gospel) I will here take the Liberty of enlarging a little on the Account there given of *St. Paul's* Behaviour and Discourse at *Athens*.

That Apostle, in all his Intercourse with the *Jews*, constantly profess'd himself to be a Servant and Worshipper of the very same GOD whom they serv'd and worshipp'd, and he with them, while he was one of them; nor do we find that they ever accus'd him, or any of the first Christians, of worshipping any other, either as superior, or equal, or inferior to the GOD whom they worshipp'd; no, nor of paying any religious Worship or Honour to a Man. But we read, that at *Athens* certain Philosophers, having heard *St. Paul* discoursing in the Market concerning Jesus whom GOD had rais'd from the Dead, look'd on him to be a Setter forth of strange Gods, and therefore desir'd expressly to know from himself what this his new Doctrine was. Here  
we



we have such an Objection started, such an Enquiry made, as we could wish, in order to be satisfied, what there was new in the Doctrine of an Apostle of Jesus Christ. And what *St. Paul* saith in Answer to these inquisitive Philosophers, does fully come up to the great Enquiry, as well as the Objection which occasion'd it; which, tho' it had not the Effect it ought to have had with them, can't fail of giving Satisfaction to every godly Christian, who will attend and consider. *Verse 15*, we find our Apostle conducted by the Brethren to *Athens*; and his Spirit was stirred up in him, upon observing how that famous City was given up to Idolatry. It was indeed so godly a City, so full of Idol-Gods, that it might be call'd the Country of the Gods; yet the Apostle contained himself, restraining his Spirit; he did not meddle with their Idolatry, nor make any Application to the Idolaters; but spent his Time in discoursing to the *Jews*, and those pious Gentiles who had renounced all Idolatry, and serv'd the One GOD, either in the Synagogue, where they assembled for Divine Worship, or in the Market-place, as any of them came in his way there, *Ver. 17*. His Discourses to them were concerning Jesus, and how GOD had raised him from the Dead; and these Gentiles having devoted themselves to the Service of the True GOD already, the Apostle had no more to do, but to preach to them, what was properly the Gospel, the new Doctrine or  
De-

Declaratiou from GOD. Upon his discourſing  
 thus, the *Epicureans* and *Stoicks*, who were by,  
 laid hold ; and of them ſome ask'd, *What this*  
*Babler meant to ſay?* Others answered, *He*  
*ſeemeth to be a Setter forth of ſtrange Gods,*  
*Ver. 18.* Then they took him, and brought  
 him to *Areopagus*, where was the Concourse  
 of the buſie Enquirers of the World, and  
 call'd on him to let them know, what this  
 his new Doctrine indeed was? *Ver. 19, 20.*  
 Thus provoked, *Paul* gave way to the eager  
 Spirit within him, and would not impart to  
 them the new Doctrine they call'd for, till he  
 had reproach'd them for having apoſtatized  
 from the True GOD, and the old Catholick  
 Doctrine, to Idolatry and Corruption ; they  
 had given him the faireſt Handle, by ſuppo-  
 ſing he was for introducing in ſome foreign  
 ſtrange Gods, yet unknown even to that moſt  
 ſuperſtitious City, and had made it natural for  
 him, in the firſt place, to ſpeak to that Charge.  
 They expected he would ſet forth the Title to  
 Divinity of the Gods he was ſo devoted to,  
 and why the People of *Athens* ſhould receive  
 them ; it being indeed no very unuſual thing, in  
 thoſe Days, for Cities and Countries, by pub-  
 lick Authority, to give a Place in their Tem-  
 ples to foreign Gods, when they could be  
 made to think they were on good Grounds  
 well recommended to them. But they were  
 greatly diſappointed by the Apoſtle's Answer ;  
*Ye Men of Athens,* ſays he, *I perceive that in*  
*all things, in every reſpect, ye are too ſu-*  
*perſtitious.*



*perfitious*, διείσδαίμονες ἔστες, you have already  
 Gods, too many, whom ye fear and worship;  
*for as I passed by, and beheld your Devotions,*  
 ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν, as I looked about,  
 and took a View of your Altars, and the fe-  
 veral Deities to whom they belong; εὗρον ἔ-  
 βωμόν, I found, among the Number, an Altar  
 with this Inscription, *To the unknown GOD.*  
 This shews your Disposition to multiply Gods,  
 of whom you think you cannot have too ma-  
 ny. This Disposition to Polytheism is your  
 great Fault, and 'tis none of my Business to  
 gratify it, by pleading for the Admission of any  
 more Gods. Far be that from me. I would  
 reduce and confine you to the Service and  
 Worship of One GOD, that GOD, ὃν ἀγνοοῦντες  
 εὐσεβείδε, whom without knowing him, ye may be  
 said already to worship, under the Title of the  
*unknown GOD*; nor do I offer at giving him a  
 Name, which you may expect from me: yet  
 I declare him unto you by his Character; Him,  
*who made the World, and all things therein,*  
 who being Lord of Heaven and Earth, *dwell-*  
*eth not in Temples, &c.* This GOD has all along  
 required of all Generations of Men, in all  
 Places, *whom he hath made of one Blood,* that  
 they all should seek him, and come unto him  
 with pure Hearts and Minds; and what he re-  
 quired, was, in truth, a most natural, easie  
 Duty, *for he is not at any Distance from any*  
*one of us*; 'tis in Him, *that we all live, and*  
*move, and have our Being*; yet the Generality  
 of Mankind, instead of attending and adhering



to him only, have more or less apostatiz'd from him, looking out far and wide for Idols, who have no Divinity, to pay their Devotions to: instead of serving and loving, with all dutiful Affection, Him, who alone is G O D, whom it is hardly possible for them not to know, they have vainly sought out Gods whom they cannot know, and made to themselves Gods who are not.

Thus the Apostle reprov'd them for their Apostacy from the True God, and the Catholic Religion; set forth the absurd Extravagance of their superstitious Devotions, and minded them of their religious Duty to G O D, the Author of their Being; that natural Duty, which the Sense of every Man's Mind, while undisturb'd and uncorrupted, directs him to pay; which is, was, and ever will be, True Religion. *However*, added he, *G O D is so gracious, that passing over the Times of Ignorance, under which the Generality of Men have labour'd for many past Ages, he, from this Time, commandeth all Men every-where, who have departed from him and his Service, to Idolatry or Will-worship, to Repent, by returning to him, and doing what the Sense of their Minds tells them is Religion, what they cannot but know to be acceptable to Him, and will render them Accepted with Him; forasmuch as He hath appointed a Day, in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, rendring unto every Man according to his Works:* and moreover, has declared, He will execute this solemn Judgment by

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that



that Man whom he hath ordain'd, whereof he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead. Thus our great Apostle first revived and declared the old true Catholic Religion, setting it in the strongest and clearest Light; and then in the Close of his Discourse, added what G O D had been pleas'd now *first* to publish, what was *indeed* new Doctrine; and the great Evidence he had given of its being certainly true.

Now what there was in all this, which G O D has done, or intends hereafter to do, by Jesus Christ, contrary or disagreeable to what is above set forth, I profess my self unable to discern.

That *Shelter* which the Bishop says, *p. 155*, he took, in some Scripture Words and Expressions, and under a sacred Name; *as his greatest Defence*; without Authority from Him whose Name he abuses, is, to say no worse of of it, a mere Shadow; and his Lordship must excuse me from fighting with it; how great soever the Number may be of Those, who take to the same *Shelter*, or are imposed on, and led blindfold under his Lordship's *Shadow*.

I leave it with every sensible Reader, to determine the *Difference* between the Bishop and Me, *in our Thoughts concerning Religion*, upon the Truth or Falshood of the following *Maxim*, which is laid down by his Lordship, *Answer, p. 152.* in such accurate Words, as render it incapable of more Senses than one,  
and

and impossible to be misunderstood, when read with Attention:

“ The Belief of Another World, is what  
“ alone renders our best Actions *Religion*, as  
“ it is the Principle within Us, from whence  
“ They flow ; and from whence, when they  
“ do not flow, They cease to be *Religion*.

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P O S T.

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# POSTSCRIPT,

TO THE

*Lord Bishop of Bangor.*

*My LORD,*



INCE I sent my Papers to the Press, I have consider'd, that having, in my former Letter, now publish'd, express'd my Agreement with the Sense of the Lower House of Convocation, concerning the *Tendency of the Doctrines and Positions in your Sermon, to subvert all Government and Discipline in the Church;* it may be expected, perhaps, by your Lordship, I should point out the Ground of such Agreement; which I will choose to do, by shewing how I conceive, *They tend to subvert the Government and Discipline of this particular Visible Protestant Church of England;* which are the material Words made use of by your Lordship, in giving what you would have thought a more distinct State of this Part of the Charge, than was given in the *Representation, Answ. p. 6.* I do therefore lay hold of the present

sent Opportunity of offering to yourself, and to others, what follows, in Answer of that Expectation.

The *Result* of what is said in the Sermon, under the first general Head, which is peculiarly Doctrinal, from p. 11. to p. 17. I take to be this:

*When any Christians, in what Station soever they be, claim or exercise any more Authority, than every Christian hath, either to make new Laws, or to impose a Sense upon old ones; or to judge, censure or punish others in Matters relating purely to Conscience or Salvation; They assume to themselves that Authority which Christ alone hath. See Sermon, p. 16. Edit. 4to.*

Now, my Lord, not to enter into that *Body of Canon-Law*, which was received in this Kingdom, and stands confirmed by a Provision in the 25th of *Henry VIII. Ch. 19.* I would only crave Attention, if it may be had, to the Principal of those *Canons* of 1603; which have now been the main Standard and Rule of our Protestant Church-Government for above an hundred Years; that *They* may be fairly compared with the *Result of your Doctrine*, in order to form a right Judgment concerning the *Tendency of the One with regard to the Other*; and *That*, consider'd only as a Matter of Speculation, or a *Question of Fact*.

Your Lordship may depend upon it, as a certain Truth, that the very *Essence* of our Eccle-

Ecclesiastical Government and Discipline by the old Canon-Law, is in Nature and Kind, the very same ; the Principles proceeded on are the same in both ; and the Spirit of our *Modern* Rules flows from that of the more *Ancient*, with this only, most material, *Difference*, that *now* nothing can be a Rule or Canon, which is not made so by the King's Authority.

In 10 of the 12 first *Canons* of 1603, under so many several Heads, there are a great Number of Affirmations, which, by a Synod of this Nation, assembled in the Name of Christ, and by the King's Authority, ( See the 3 last *Canons* concerning the *Authority of Synods*) are declared and adjudged to be wicked and impious Errors, such Errors, that those who affirm any of them, are to be Excommunicated, *ipso facto*, and never restored till they Repent and Revoke such their Errors, as wicked and impious. These *Canons*, together with the 65th, which enjoyns, “ That those  
 “ who for such notable Crimes stand lawfully  
 “ Excommunicate (unless within three Months  
 “ immediately after Sentence of Excommuni-  
 “ cation pronounced against them, they re-  
 “ form themselves, and obtain the Benefit of  
 “ Absolution) be, every Six Months ensuing,  
 “ by the Minister in the Church, and in time  
 “ of Divine Service, upon a Sunday, Denoun-  
 “ ced and Declared Excommunicate, *for these*  
 “ *Ends*, that others may be thereby both ad-  
 “ monished to refrain their Company, and  
 “ excited



“ excited to procure out a Writ *de Excommuni-*  
 “ *cato capiendo*, thereby to reduce them into  
 “ due Order and Obedience”: *These*, I say,  
 are *Sanctions of what is Established in Matters of*  
*Religion*; and upon a Perusal of them, it will  
 soon be discerned, That *the Establishing such a*  
*Form of God's Worship as is contained in the*  
*Book of Common-Prayer, such a Body of Do-*  
*ctrines as is contained in the 39 Articles of Re-*  
*ligion, with several other Establishments; and*  
*then Censuring and Treating all those who shall*  
*affirm so or so, in Prejudice or Contradiction of*  
*any thing contained in any of them, as wicked,*  
*impious Criminals, though there be no Inqui-*  
*sition in all this, is Claiming and Exercising not*  
*a little more Authority than every Christian*  
*hath, either to make New Laws for Christians,*  
*or to impose a Sense upon Old ones, or to judge,*  
*censure or punish Christians in Matters relating*  
*purely to Conscience or Salvation.*

Let then your Lordship and others judge,  
 whether, or no, your *Doctrines and Positions*  
 tend to subvert the Government and Discipline of  
 this particular *Visible Church*; And pray, my  
 Lord, as to the Question in Convocation, how  
 could I possibly withhold my Consent to the  
 plain Truth of the *Affirmative*? I do assure your  
 Lordship, that if the same Question was now  
 to be put, concerning the *Doctrine and Positions*  
 in the first Part of your Answer in Defence of  
 your Sermon, I could not refuse to give my  
 Consent.

I would



I would farther observe to your Lordship, upon the 9th *Canon*, (which could not be well consider'd in conjunction with those above mention'd, because it concerns Actions, rather than Words,) that it affords no little Light towards understanding the true Nature of our Ecclesiastical Constitution. It is Intituled, *Authors of Schism in the Church of England, censured*. And by virtue of it, (I might say, without it) if the main Body of our Clergy, whatever their Quality and Stations may be, either in Convocation, or out of it, should separate themselves from that Communion, which is approved in the Church of *England*, and combine themselves together in a new Society, accounting those Christians (perhaps of the lowest Order) who remain conformable to the Doctrine, Government, Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, to be profane, and unfit for them to join with in Christian Profession; even this Body of Clergy, all and every of them, would be censur'd, as Authors of Schisms in the Church, and be Excommunicated, not to be Restored, until they Repent and Revoke such their wicked impious Errors. And the 65th *Canon* would lay hold of them.

I have done, when I shall have taken the Liberty of laying before your Lordship my Thoughts concerning the *Authority and Extent of the Particular or National Church of England*.

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The whole Frame and Constitution of our Church is built upon this *Foundation* ; That *the Church and Realm of England is one and the same Body, under one and the same Head and Authority* ; that every Man here is so far consider'd as a Member of that Body, both in its Civil and Christian Capacity and Character, as to be subject and liable, not only to Civil Punishments, but also to Ecclesiastical Censures. All Recusants, of all kinds, though they declare themselves not to be Members of the Church of *England*, tho' they were not Baptiz'd, and should profess Infidelity, are so liable, as much as those who join in publick Communion with us. It is indeed impossible that there should be a *National Church*, under any common Authority, Order and Regulation, upon any other foot : And the Whole of our Ecclesiastical Discipline is founded upon this *Ground*, That *our Religious Constitution is certainly and evidently good and unexceptionable* ; consequently, that It is the plain Duty of every one here to conform ; and the Duty of such as are not yet sensible of that Obligation, to remove all Obstacles, whatever they be, to their Conformity, as being faulty and *Criminous*, while they do not.

There were in this Nation, upon Political Reasons, even in the Days of Popery, Relaxations of Ecclesiastical Discipline, with regard to some sort of Persons ; and of late Years the Relaxations have been far extended ; but the



Principles and Rules of Duty to All, and the Obligations upon All, continue the very same still; and the Exercise of that Discipline, as far as it is permitted to operate, proceeds still upon the same Ground, and the Consequences of it. So that those who distinguish the Church from the Realm of *England*, (if we may so speak, since the Union with *Scotland*) supposing that there are two distinct Authorities in any respect, must not mean the *Church Established* any where, but in their own *Fancy*. And, if any of our Clergy do claim, and say that they have, a Right to exercise Jurisdiction under any Denomination whatsoever, otherwise than by, under, and from the Regal Authority, they do undermine that Supremacy, which they ought to maintain.

That those who added the last Clause in *Art. 34.* (wherein only express mention is made of a *National Church*) to that *Article*, as it stood in King *Edward's* Reign, meant the Realm by that Church, must plainly appear to those who are versed in the publick and private Writings of those Days; and we have particular Evidence of it preserved, by the Care of Archbishop *Parker* in *Corpus Christi* College in *Cambridge*, in an Original Paper (of which Mr. *Strype* has given a Copy, in his *Append. to the History of the Reformation under Queen Elizabeth*) intituled, *The Protestant's Discourse, prepared to have been read in the Publick Conference at Westminster, upon the second*

*cond Question*; The Proposition to be maintained by the Protestants, was almost in the very Words of the Clause added soon after to the Article; *viz. Every particular Church hath Authority to institute, change, and abrogate Ceremonies and Rites in the Church, so that it tends to edify.* And the Paper begins with declaring what is meant by the Words of the Proposition, for avoiding Ambiguity of Terms. "By these Words, every Particular Church, we understand, every particular Kingdom, Province or Region which by Order maketh One Christian Society or Body, according to Distinction of Countries and Orders of the same." So that by the National Church of *England*, they could mean nothing else, more or less, than the Kingdom of *England*; which, by the Order thereof, had made itself a Christian Society or Body. This Disputation, at the Motion of *Hetbe* Archbishop of *York*, was, by the Queen's Order, to be carry'd on by Writing; but after the first Question had been handled in that Way, the Popish Disputants made Exceptions; and the second Day's Conference broke up in Confusion, without entring on the second Question; and so the Discourse prepared by the Protestants was not publickly read: But when they came in Convocation to review the Articles, they took Care to add, in effect, the very Proposition, to the Article, *Of the Traditions of the Church*, as the most proper Head they could place it under, inserting the Explanative



cative Words, or *National*. [See the last Clause of the 34th Art. of Religion.] And therefore *Whitgift*, in his *Defence against Cartwright*, p. 180. says, "It cannot sink into my Head, that He should  
" be a Member of a Christian Common-wealth,  
" that is not also a Member of the Church  
" of Christ, concerning the outward Society.  
And p. 702. "I make no Difference between  
" a Christian Common-wealth, and the Church  
" of Christ: Wonder you as much at it as  
" you will: I have shewed my Reasons before,  
" and you have not as yet used any to the con-  
" trary: Wherefore, if you think no otherwise of  
" this Cause, than I have in these Words taught  
" you, the Civil Magistrate shall be much more  
" beholden unto you, than he is.

I am,

My LORD,

Westminster,  
Decemb. 11.

1717.

Your Lordship's

Very Humble Servant,

ROBERT CANNON.

F I N I S.

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Page 6. line 13, 14. instead of *are for ever*, read *shall for ever be*. p. 29. l. 27. after the word *But*, insert these words, *in this Chapter*. p. 31. l. 18. dele *in*.