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The Faithful Pastor.

A

SERMON

Preached before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

OXFORD,

At St. *MARY*'s,

On *Act-Sunday* in the Afternoon,

July 7. 1745.

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OXFORD,

Printed at the THEATRE; and Sold by *James Fletcher* in the *Turl*, *Oxon*, and *W. Innys* in St. *Paul*'s Church-Yard, *London*, *J. Ward* at *Nottingham*, *J. Rowe* at *Darby*, and *G. Hopkinson* at *Warwick*.

Imprimatur,

EUS. ISHAM,

Vice-Can. OXON.

July 26. 1745.

1 SAM. II. 35.

— I will raiſe me up a faithful Prieſt, that ſhall do according to that which is in mine heart, and in my mind.

THAT we of this nation have not only a bare liberty to profeſs the Goſpel, but that Chriſtianity is the Religion of the Kingdom, eſtabliſh'd by Law, and made a part of our Conſtitution; that we are not only not forced to ſculk in dens and caves, like the primitive Chriſtians, for the performance of ſacred rites, and to hold religious aſſemblies for the publick worſhip of Almighty God, but have Temples and Altars, ſtated times and places, and an order of men ſet apart to adminiſter in holy things; and, to complete our happineſs, have ſchools and ſeminaries of ſound Religion and Learning to perpetuate the Succeſſion; Theſe are bleſſings, that we ought always to acknowledge, and do acknowledge *with all thankfulneſs.* It is to be wiſh'd that theſe great advantages were ſuitably improv'd, and

and that the pious labours of the Clergy had better ſucceſs; and, as the people of this land have all the means of Grace that can be enjoy'd or deſir'd, that we were an holy nation, a nation as remarkably holy, as we are diſtinguiſh'd above all other nations by the Opportunities of being ſo.

The Church by Law eſtabliſh'd is primitive in it's diſcipline, as well as doctrine. The latter, however oppoſed, is (bleſſed be God) preſerv'd in it's native purity; but the former, however admirably contrived, has loſt it's force. Forms are, indeed, kept up, but they are not animated with the ſpirit and power of diſcipline. The Church of God ſhould be *holy and without blemiſh, without ſpot or wrinkle*, and every member of the ſame, if he can't be prevailed upon to ſerve God truly and devoutly, ſhould at leaſt be kept within the bounds of decency, or be driven out of it. Inſtead of this, notorious ſinners eſcape the cenſures due to their offenſive behaviour. Iniquity prevails among us, and it muſt pierce every pious heart to ſee the Chriſtian profeſſion diſgraced by lewdneſs and debauchery, and by every kind of corruption, in this age and nation.

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If it be alledged, as it has been alledged, that the times will not bear the diſcipline of the Church in it's full force and vigour, the Clergy have the greater reaſon to do every thing in their power to ſupply the want of it: to *labour more abundantly*, to watch with double vigilance, and to put forth all their ſtrength in the great and glorious work which they have undertaken, and which, by all the obligations that can be laid upon men, they are bound to be faithful in.

As all *Scripture was written for our learning* and the uſe of mankind in general, that remarkable portion of it from whence my Text is taken contains a leſſon of inſtruction for the Clergy in particular. It ſhould make us all hear and fear, and tremble to act with the preſumption of *Eli*'s ſons, or the negligence of the father.

As many, having finiſh'd their Education in this flouriſhing ſeat of learning, will now be called by God's Providence, into different parts of the Kingdom, for the work of the Miniſtry, I hope the Subject I have made choice of will not be thought improper for this Academical Anniverſary, and in the proſecution of this diſcourſe I ſhall take occaſion,

Firſt,

Firſt, To conſider this inſtructive part of ſacred hiſtory, the perſons therein mentioned and their Crimes. And

Secondly, Shall lay before you ſome of the principal ingredients in that moſt amiable Character, a faithful Paſtor, and ſo conclude. And,

Firſt, I am to conſider this inſtructive part of ſacred hiſtory, the perſons therein mentioned and their Crimes.

Eli, the principal perſon concern'd, was the Jewiſh high Prieſt, and, as ſuch, inveſted with the moſt ſacred character that man could bear, and placed in the moſt exalted ſtation that a mortal could be honour'd with. But, beſides this, he was over all perſons in all cauſes, civil as well as eccleſiaſtical, Supreme, becauſe at that time there was no one in chief Authority over the people but himſelf. But the high Prieſt wanted no honour of that kind or nature. To govern Kingdoms, to command Armies, and to conquer with them, are infinitely inferiour to the Prieſthood in intrinſic value, as well as uſe to mens moſt momentous concerns. He was the immediate repreſentative of Chriſt, and *miniſtred to Jehovah*

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in the name of Jehovah. He had HOLINESS inſcrib'd upon his ornaments, as he was a type of that Perſon who was to be abſolutely holy, and was to make his Church holy; and he bore the URIM and THUMMIM, Emblems of the Light and Perfection that were to be inconceivably in him. The high Prieſt, and he alone, once a year enter'd into the Holy of Holies with typical blood, and ſprinkled it before the Cherubim, the typical faces, as his Antitype, with his own, the true blood, that could really attone for, and take away, ſin, *enter'd into the holy places not made with hands*, and there before the real faces, or, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it, *Heb.* 9. 24. *in the preſence of God*, repreſents his merits in behalf of thoſe whom he has redeemed. Thus was the high Prieſt a type of Chriſt, and acted in a typical manner, what the perſon he repreſented was to do, and has done, and does, in reality.

From this eminent ſtation was *Eli* and his Family tumbled down, depriv'd and deſtroy'd. He fell under the diſpleaſure of God for iniquity not immediately his own: it was the tranſgreſſion of his ſons that he was rebuked and ſtricken for. We don't find that he was either negligent of his duty, or profligate in his life, or heretical in his principles. He broach-

broached no lewd notions that undermined the Religion that he profeſs'd, the holy Services that he performed, or the Eſtabliſhment under which he held. He did not, with ſome of his Succeſſors, believe or teach, that the typical Services were ſufficient, and that nothing further was requir'd. Leſs did he, like ſome in theſe days, enter into ſtill greater, more monſtrous abſurdities, and ſay, that ſhedding of blood was not neceſſary in order to forgiveneſs, that there might be remiſſion of Sins without it, and that none was wanted, typical or real, making at once both Law and Goſpel of no efficacy or uſe, and cutting up all Religion by the roots. He ought to have renounced his Religion, as well as abdicated his Office, if he had held ſuch opinions, and had taught any thing ſo inconſiſtent with the Religion of fallen man.

But his Sons were immoral in their lives, and, as, I believe, moſt immoral perſons are, Atheiſtical in their Principles. They could ſee nothing deſirable in the Prieſthood, but the perquiſites. They regarded nothing in the Services they performed, but to pamper themſelves with the chiefeſt and beſt parts of the ſacrifices and offerings, that either fell to their ſhare by the Law, or were inſolently taken.

taken. They, 'tis likely, to all their other crimes, made a jeſt of the Law, and, with aſſurance and ignorance equal to thoſe of the young profligates in theſe days, could *utter Blaſphemous words againſt Moſes and againſt God.* The Sons of *Eli* (v. 12.) were *ſons of Belial.* The crimes recorded of them were intemperance, inſolence and uncleanneſs. They brought a Scandal upon their Religion by their lewd and abominable converſation, and made men even *abhor the offerings of the Lord.*

This corruption of his Family was not owing to the Example, but the Connivance, of old *Eli.* As to his own particular, he ſeems to have been too good a man for his Sons to run theſe lengths in iniquity encouraged by any thing they had ſeen in him. They might ſafely preſume, as young perſons of Family and fortune are too apt to do, upon his wealth or power, and think that his Authority might give them a kind of licenſe to ſin with greater ſecurity, but they were far from having either his countenance or protection. Some way or other he was led and inſenſibly fell into a ſtrange omiſſion, that was his undoing. He ſeems to have had a reverential and aweful regard to the ſupreme Being. His

dutiful and ſubmiſſive behaviour under the heavy ſentence pronounc'd againſt him, and his concern for the Ark of God, when the news was brought to him of it's being taken, ſhew him to have been a man whoſe heart was in the main upright, and that had made an eminent proficiency in Religion. His neglect of his family may be accounted for from his induſtrious attendance upon the great duties of his high ſtation, and his crime may be charitably reſolved into the mildneſs of his diſpoſition. Some parents *provoke their Children to wrath* and into vice by an extragagant ill-judged Severity, but his fault was a weak fondneſs and too much indulgence. He did not check their enormities with that Authority that became him as a Prieſt, or a Parent; or in ſuch a manner as his place and ſtation requir'd, and their crimes deſerved: and it was this that provoked God to vindicate his honour by the deſtruction of the Family. He ſaw their behaviour with concern, and reaſoned with them upon it, and endeavoured to reform them by good advice and ſoft perſwaſion. But their crimes called for other ſort of treatment. When milder methods did not ſucceed, he ſhou'd have had recourſe to ſuch as were more ſevere; and upon ſuch an oc-

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caſion he ſhou'd have exerted the fulneſs of his power. His too eaſy animadverſion ſo provoked the Almighty, that he reſolved to make his name feared, and his power known, by the ſeverity of his Judgments upon thoſe that ſhou'd thus dare to blaſpheme his honour, and trample upon his Authority. When *he began he alſo made an end*; and the holy Father *periſhed in the gainſaying* of his Sons. It was look'd upon by the moſt high as a diſhonour to himſelf, that his Prieſt ſhould pay more reſpect to his Sons, than his God; and he was puniſhed for that wickedneſs, which he was not careful to prevent. *There came a man of God unto Eli*, and in the ſtrongeſt terms expoſtulated the caſe with him; after which, and the dreadful ſentence pronounc'd upon *him* and *his*, follow the words of the Text, *I will raiſe me up a faithful Prieſt:* the principal ingredients in which amiable Character I am in the ſecond place to lay before you.

Whether the words have not a double view deſerves to be conſidered. That they relate to him, in ſome ſenſe, that ſucceeded upon the tranſlation of the Prieſthood from *Eli*'s family, can hardly be deny'd; for 1 *Kings* 2. 27, we read, that *Solomon thruſt out Abiathar from*

from being Prieſt unto the Lord, that he might fulfill the Word of the Lord, which he ſpake concerning the houſe of Eli in Shiloh, and, v. 35. that *Zadock the Prieſt did the King put in the room of Abiathar:* --- but that they have an Eye to the *Apoſtle* and *high Prieſt* of our Profeſſion *Chriſt Jeſus*, who was *faithful to him that appointed him*, is more than probable. The manifeſtation of this glorious Perſon was always uppermoſt in the thoughts of the inſpir'd writers, and the expectation of the Church. The Prophets are frequently carry'd from what they are upon to make mention of *Him that was to come*. As to *Ahaz*, *Iſ.* 7. 14. *The Lord himſelf, ſhall give you a Sign, Behold, a Virgin ſhall conceive.* The expreſſion of *raiſing up* is apply'd to Chriſt in many places. *A Prophet*, ſays *Moſes*, *ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto thee of thy brethren*, *Deut.* 18. 15. And again, *Jer.* 23. 5. *I will raiſe unto David a righteous branch.* Whoever did, or could do, *all that is in Gods heart*, but him of whom it is ſaid, *Pſ.* 40. 7. *Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God?*

But to proceed in the particular I am upon --- The firſt thing that I ſhall mention as neceſſary in order to our being faithful in the dif-

charge

charge of our holy function, is, to have a competent ſhare of divine knowledge, and skill in the ſacred Scriptures. This book of books we are to be well acquainted with, to read, and ſtudy, and meditate in; to mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt. The Scriptures contain the divine Precepts we are to live by our ſelves, and to preſs others to the practice of. From this treaſury of Wiſdom and Knowledge we are to fetch the truths that we are to believe and teach; and 'tis this Armoury of God that muſt furniſh us with weapons to defend the faith againſt all oppoſers. From thence the ignorant are to be inſtructed, the doubtful to be reſolved, and the caviller to be confuted. If we carefully examine, and throughly underſtand, what is written, we ſhall be proof againſt all Oppoſition; be too wiſe to be deceiv'd by the Subtilty, and be too well defended to be hurt by the moſt furious attacks, of any Adverſary. We live in a diſputing age; and infidelity and hereſie have been propagated with ſo much induſtry and Succeſs, that there is not a corner of the land, hardly a Pariſh, tho' never ſo remote or ſmall, but what has ſome men of *perverſe* minds, ſome ſly crafty ſeducers, in it, that *lie in wait to deceive*. Bring but theſe poor Creatures, (for they

they are poor, and blind and ignorant to a degree from the higheſt to the loweſt,) bring them to the Text, and their Arguments vaniſh.

The Scriptures are a ſacred depoſitum committed to us by God; and, I am afraid, we ſhall neither be faithful to our truſt, nor anſwer our duty, nor uſe them as we ought, if we content ourſelves with tranſlations and comments, and will not ſee what God ſays to us in his own words. The Hebrew language has been a Proverb of reproach with ſome, and too much neglected by almoſt all. Let us take it as it came from God, and not as it has been pointed and managed, I may ſay, corrupted, tho' not alter'd, (Gods good Providence prevented that) by thoſe Enemies of God and man, the later Jews; and we ſhall find it the eaſieſt, the ſimpleſt, and the moſt expreſſive Language, that was ever amongſt men; and worthy of it's Author. Let it make it's own Grammar, fix it's own rules, and determine it's own conſtruction, as every dead language muſt do, and ought to do; and it will *lead us into all truth*, and end all controverſies, for the deciſive evidence is There; and it gives pleaſure to all, that ſincerely wiſh well to Religion and Learning, to ſee this neg-

neglected Study revive in, and ſo nobly encouraged by, this illuſtrious Body.

The beſt explication of the Sacred writings will always be their beſt defence, and the beſt proof of their Authority. As they are not to be heard, that ſay, that the Old Teſtament is contrary to the New, ſo are they much miſtaken, who think, that the New can be fully underſtood without the Old. They are both true, and Truth will always be conſiſtent, and we muſt underſtand both in order to explain either.

For want of due attention to what the holy Scriptures contain what abſurdities have learned men advanced! We have had *wiſe men*, and *Scribes* and *Philoſophers* and *diſputers*, but what have they done? *Vain men wou'd be wiſe*; and they *are altogether lighter than vanity itſelf*, that ſet up to be wiſer than God. Without looking into the word of God, without conſulting the ſacred Pages, without knowing the letters of the language that contains all truths mankind is moſt concern'd to know, and which, 'tis evident by the infinite gueſſes that have been made, and the inconſiſtencies that have been advanced, could not have been known without Revelation by the greateſt of men; ſome, whoſe Abilities, if properly employ'd,

ploy'd, might have made them uſeful in their generation, have only darkened matters more by *multiplying words without knowledge.* One accounts for the motions in the Syſtem by ſuch Principles, as, by his own confeſſion, have need themſelves to be accounted for; and by which the world can no more be continued than it could at firſt be framed by the Atoms of *Epicurus.* Had he *ſearched the Scriptures*, he might have there found a material mechanical Cauſe aſſign'd, and that Nature and Scripture meet and kiſs and tally with each other; a proof to demonſtration that both have the ſame Author. This amazing fluid, the Heavens, has, as God himſelf told *Job*, (Ch. 38. v. 33.) the *dominion in the Earth.* It rules and acts upon all matter, and every atom in particular. By this every motion in the Syſtem, from the leaſt to the greateſt, is perform'd, every plant grows, and every living thing breaths, *moves*, and has *it's being.* For theſe things it was taken for a God by the ancient heathens, and worſhip'd inſtead of Him who by his *excellent Wiſdom made the Heavens*, Pſ. 136. v. 5. Another ſays, that the Account we have from *Moſes* of the flood ſeems to be only ſome *imperfect remains.* If that Author had read in the Original, and underſtood,

derſtood, the deſcription *Moſes* has given of the Creation and flood, he wou'd have been ſenſible of it's perfection, and not have thus blaſphemed the ſacred Oracles of God. A third ſets up to make a God, and pretends to nothing leſs than Demonſtration, and, in his way, demonſtrates God to be infinitely extended; and this preſumptuous Aſſertion led him from one heretical Opinion to another. In a word, Metaphyſical Subtilties have paſs'd for depth of knowledge, for ſtrong reaſoning, and ſound Divinity: Some ſpend their days in the traſh of the heathens, who knew nothing; and others in that of the Apoſtate Jews, who had loſt all knowledge, and were judicially blinded. With the warmeſt purſuits, in ſuch methods, the moſt ſucceſsful may *toil all* their lives and *catch nothing*. They don't let down the net by God's direction, nor pull it up with his bleſſing. They can arrive only at a more pompous kind of ignorance; and thoſe that have attack'd, and thoſe that have defended, the Chriſtian Faith with ſuch weapons, have been *beating the Air*. There is a more excellent way to be taken, and it is to be hoped, that, tir'd with purſuing Learning, that is *Science falſely ſo called*; that, weary with wandring from Syſtem to Syſtem, thoſe that

are deſirous of divine knowledge will not any longer follow the vain fancies of men, nor *hew to themſelves Ciſterns, broken Ciſterns that hold no water*, but draw from the Original Scriptures, that inexhauſtible fountain of Truth and Perfection.

A Second thing, that I ſhall mention as a neceſſary ingredient in the character of a faithful Paſtor, ſhall be, an indifference to, and a contempt of, the things of the World. This is part of the condition of every Chriſtian's obtaining a better life; and as we can't be faithful to our baptiſmal vow, ſo neither can we be ſo to the duties of our holy function, if the good things of this World be ſuffer'd to enſnare our hearts, and too cloſely to engage our Affections. Ambition ſhould not diſtract, nor Covetouſneſs debaſe us. Our mind ſhould be reſign'd, and contented, confined and limited as to it's wants and wiſhes. Covetouſneſs is a vice that eaſily beſets men. It lurks in the heart, and influences the life without being ſeen. Money, notwithſtanding it has been the ſubject of raillery and ridicule of Poets, and Philoſophers, and writers in Proſe and Verſe, in all Ages, has yet ſuch bewitching Charms, that it blinds the eyes, and enſnares the affections of the wiſe and prudent; and

That

That heart muſt be well kept, where the love of it never enters. We, above all Men, ſhou'd in the *firſt place ſeek the Kingdom of God*, and not ſuffer earthly things to juſtle out the thoughts of what ſhou'd be our more immediate care, nor interrupt us in the proſecution of thoſe nobler ends to which we are dedicated. We can never do our duty as we ought, if we don't ſit looſe to, and taſt with indifference, worldly enjoyments; if we are not ſparing in our endeavours after them, and moderate in the uſe of them. It is to be wiſh'd that none went into holy Orders, but what had either a fortune to make them independent of, or, what is more to be deſir'd, a Spirit above, the World.

The proviſion made for the Clergy by the piety of former times, and the honours and preferments, that were deſign'd to give weight and ſucceſs to their holy labours, as well as dignity to their Office, have, as moſt other things, that are well intended, have, their uſe and abuſe. The Prieſthood is ſometimes fix'd upon by a parent as a Subſiſtence for his ſon, before he well knows whether he has begotten a wiſe man or a fool. A proſpect from ſome mighty patron, or a good Advowſon, is too often the principal inducement to both.

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The proper motives to induce any to undertake this tremendous charge, the Cure of Souls, are ſuch as theſe: becauſe a perſon loves Religion, and delights in that which will then be his more immediate duty, the ſtudy of God's Law: the hopes of being more uſeful in the World by having it more in his power to promote God's Glory, and the good of mankind; and an ambition for that diſtinguiſh'd Glory, with which they *ſhall ſhine for ever and ever* that *turn many to Righteouſneſs*. Preſent advantages have little or no place in his intention or purſuits, that is thus diſpoſed.

If any go into holy orders purely for preferment, to be ſupported by the bread, or to bask it in the dignities, of the Church; to live in delicacy and eaſe, upon a revenue, that was never intended for ſuch purpoſes, but for nobler ends; ſuch, 'tis too likely, muſt prove *falſe Apoſtles, deceitful workers:* they will be apt to purſue their baſe ends by as unwarrantable means. They will hardly ſcruple, in a corrupt and degenerate age, to fall in with, or to connive at, the follies or vices of the great, to applaud falſe principles and falſe Doctrine, and let a criminal complaiſance get the better of their duty. But thou, *O Man of God,*

God, flee theſe things, and follow after things that make for peace, and things whereby one may edifie another.

A Third thing neceſſary in order to a faithful diſcharge of the Paſtoral duty, is Zeal to rebuke vice, profaneneſs and immorality. A part of our duty this, as difficult in it's nature, as important in it's uſe; and what requires the niceſt addreſs, as well as the firmeſt reſolution. We ſhou'd take all opportunities that offer, to correct and reprove; and endeavour by private exhortation, as well as publick teaching, to make men ſenſible of their everlaſting intereſt. To tell a perſon of his faults is an ungrateful Service, and ſeldom meets with ſuch ſucceſs as ſuch an inſtance of friendſhip deſerves. It is dangerous as well as difficult, and too often produces nothing but angry reſentments. Notwithſtanding theſe difficulties and diſcouragements, reprove we muſt when it is our duty, and we have an Opportunity. We are not indeed to *caſt pearls before Swine.* Withdrawing from, and avoiding them is the rebuke proper for the profligate and abandoned, and the deſperately wicked. With ſuch we are not to aſſociate, or even *eat.* But when there is any proſpect of ſucceſs, we are *not to ſuffer Sin upon*

on our brother: no man ought to do it, but *we* eſpecially are not to be unconcerned Spectators. We muſt ſometimes reprove in ſecret, and ſometimes it may be neceſſary to *rebuke before all.* If it be poſſible, we ſhou'd avoid all aſperity, becauſe whether we attack vice, or error, if we ſet upon men with fury, they do but hold it the faſter. When we muſt do it with more authority, with the Authority that becomes a preacher of Righteouſneſs, we muſt, as much as may be, ſtill temper that authority with the civility of a Gentleman, and the meekneſs of a Chriſtian. If this will not do, we muſt *open hell and deſtruction*, ſet the *terrors of the Lord in array*, and in the moſt affecting manner deſcribe the dreadful vengeance, that, without a ſpeedy repentance, will undoubtedly overtake all the *workers of iniquity.*

One of the ſevereſt expreſſions in all the Bible is that of the Prophet, *Iſ.* 56. 10. *They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark.* Terrible are the threatnings denounced againſt us, if, thro' fear or favour, we *ſpeak peace when there is no peace*; if we are ſilent, when we ſhou'd *lift up our voice like a trumpet and ſpare not.* And *thou Son of Man*, ſays God to his Prophet *Ezekiel*, (Ch. 2. 6, 7.) *be not afraid of them,*

them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou doſt dwell among Scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be diſmay'd at their looks, though they be a rebellious houſe. Thou ſhalt ſpeak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. We *watch for the Souls of men as thoſe that muſt give an account*, and if any periſh through our neglect, if any are ſuffer'd to go on in ſin without our exerting the powers and the commiſſion we are inveſted with, for their reformation, we muſt anſwer for it at the bar of God's Juſtice. For He ſaid again to the forementioned Prophet, Ch. 3. 18. *When I ſay unto the wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely die, and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to ſave his life, the ſame wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.* We are bound therefore, under the ſevereſt penalty, boldly to deliver the meſſage, be it never ſo ungrateful. As no man's greatneſs, or power, or wealth, gives him a licence to ſin, ſo neither ſhould they ſcreen him from reproof. *John* the Baptiſt reprov'd *Herod* tho' it coſt him his head; and the *faithful Steward of the Myſteries of Grace* fears not the face of man

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and is above all hopes: he does his duty, takes courage in the cauſe of God, whoſe Meſſenger he is, and whom he ſerves, and, in his name, with all poſſible freedom, exhorts, rebukes, reproves, and that with all *long-ſuffering and doctrine.*

But as we are to diſcharge this great duty towards all that are committed to our care, and thoſe of our own houſe are more immediately ſo, the promiſe that we make at our Ordination, the reaſon of the thing, and the Example of *Eli*, ſhould make us diligent and ſtrict, by *correction* and *reproof*, to keep all under our roof, and eſpecially thoſe that ſprung from us, to the practice of their duty. Others we can only exhort and pray and preſs, but our own families we may compel. *Joſhua*, after the moſt pathetical exhortation to all the people, was forced to leave it to themſelves to *chooſe whom they wou'd ſerve*, but his *own houſe* he could more immediately anſwer for, becauſe them he could in a manner force to their duty. It is matter of grief and affliction to any Parent to *ſee his Children make themſelves vile*, but is doubly ſo to a Clergyman, becauſe their example has a more malignant influence, and beſides this, reflects diſhonour upon the Sacred function. For this

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reaſon under the Law the *daughter* of any Prieſt *that played the whore* was *to be burnt with fire*, Lev. 29. 1. Thoſe Parents, that can ſee or hear of their Childrens impiety, their Oaths, their intemperance, their uncleanneſs, and be unconcerned at ſuch a behaviour, ſeem to have loſt all natural affection to their offſpring, as well as all ſenſe of duty to God. A faithful Prieſt will ſet *Eli*'s Example before him; and ſince the bare omiſſion of this one duty was his deſtruction, he will be careful how he falls under the ſame condemnation. He will at leaſt *deliver his own Soul*, and, if his Children will be wicked, let the ſin and the puniſhment be all their own.

There is one more, and that a moſt neceſſary, ingredient in the Character of a faithful Paſtor, that I ſhall mention, and that is a holy and exemplary life and converſation. Without this, all other qualifications, the greateſt abilities, the moſt conſummate learning, and extenſive knowledge, are inſignificant and vain. No man was ever in earneſt and ſincere in his endeavours to ſave the Souls of others, that was negligent of his own; and whoever takes upon him the ſacred function, and undertakes to teach others before he has taught himſelf, and to direct others before

he has laid in proper principles for the conduct of his own life, is guilty of ſo much folly, as well as ſin, as it is not eaſy to deſcribe. The things that we are converſant about, the Services that we perform, the Place we officiate in, and the God that we ſerve before, are all holy, and ſhall the Prieſt be—not ſo? Shall we preach God's word with unhallowed lips? Shall we touch things ſacred, the tremendous Myſteries! with profane hands? Shall we *miniſter before the Lord in the congregation of his Saints* at the ſame time we ourſelves are *ſinners, ſinners above all men*? God forbid! The ſins of the Clergy have peculiar aggravations; and tho', as God's extraordinary Judgments are not now ſo frequent as in the days of old; tho' ſuch be not, like *Eli's* Family, *overtaken with a ſwift deſtruction*, yet the delay of the puniſhment will be abundantly made up by the ſeverity of the Execution.

Bleſſed be God, the Clergy of the Church of *England* are the moſt conſiderable body of men in the world; an honour to the Nation, as well as their Religion, and the defence of both: but, as one of the Apoſtles was a traytour, it is to be feared, nay to be confeſs'd and lamented, that all of us are not

ſuch

ſuch *as we ought to be in all holy converſation.* One bad example does more miſchief than many good ones can repair: it ſpreads deſtruction all about it: it ſhocks the Serious, offends the Weak; it ſinks the indifferent about Religion to a diſlike of it, and the doubtful into down-right infidelity.

The popular Argument of a good example is level to every capacity. The generality are better Judges of what they ſee than what they hear; and the impreſſion is deeper and more laſting. We ſhould therefore be as cautious, as we poſſibly can be, to *give no offence*, and let our deportment be grave, our behaviour ſolemn, and our lives pure as our holy profeſſion. Wiſe men indeed will overlook, and the good compaſſionate and conceal, many failings in us; but the greateſt, far the greateſt, part of the world, we know, are, neither wiſe nor good. Too many *ſeek occaſion*, and delight to find it, to ſpeak reproachfully of us, and 'tis well if we eſcape without being charged with what we never knew, nor ſaid, nor did, nor thought.

The beſt of us are men. We have *this treaſure in earthen veſſels.* The wiſe, the ſerious, and the faithful, are all encompaſs'd with infirmities. The Chriſtian, as well as the Jewiſh Prieſt,

Prieſt, muſt confeſs, and offer for, firſt *his own*, and *then the ſins of the People*; but we ſerve a gracious maſter, who was in all things *tempted like as we are, yet without ſin.* He *knows what is in man.* He will pity and pardon our weakneſſes and imperfections. He now ſurveys with pleaſure, and will hereafter amply reward, the faithful labours, the ſincere endeavours, of the laſt, the loweſt, and the meaneſt, of all that *wait at his Altar.*

To conclude: The Apoſtle ſays, that in *Stewards it is requir'd, that a Man be found faithful.* We are Stewards: the Truſt committed to us is the greateſt that can be conceived, the care of Souls made in the image, and redeemed by the blood, of God. Let us then be faithful, and *do all that is in God's heart.* He wou'd *have all men to be ſaved*; and let us, by doing every thing in our power, take care that none periſh by our neglect, and keep our *Selves pure from the blood of all men.* Let it be the great buſineſs of our lives to ſave our own, and the Souls committed to our Care, and Charge; that, when we have finiſhed our courſe, and exhauſted our ſtrength in the glorious work, we may follow thoſe that are gone, and we have ſent, before us, in the faith and fear of God, with the peace and

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aſſurance of thoſe that have made the Goſpel the rule of their lives, and expect the reward that it propoſes.

And, when we ſhall be no more, may God Almighty always have much people and a faithful Prieſthood in this Church and Kingdom! When we are ſummoned hence, may we be ſucceeded by (and may there never be wanting from this and it's Siſter ſeat of learning, to do *the Service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, a Succeſſion of) men eminent for their Abilities, orthodox in their principles, exemplary in their lives, and unweary'd in their labours, that the Church of *England* may continue the Joy and Glory of the Chriſtian World till *time ſhall be no more*. Amen.

F I N I S.

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