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can exempt themselves; you are all therefore, in this way summon'd to the *Help of the Lord, to the Help of the Lord against the mighty*; 'tis at your Peril if you disobey the Summons.

I hope I speak to a *praying People, that make Conscience of Prayer, that make a Business of Prayer, that dare not live without Prayer, for those that do, live without God in the World*; that would not live without Prayer, for it is their *Delight to approach unto God*: I hope I speak to those that *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*, preferring it before their *chief Joy*; you are not *Israelites indeed*, if you are not of the *Generation of them that seek God, and wrestle with him*; if you do not seek him and wrestle with him for the Welfare and Prosperity of *Israel*: Let me therefore press it upon you with all Earnestness, to take this Concern of the *Reformation of Manners*, into your daily Prayers alone, and in your Families, as those that have sincerely espoused this righteous Cause, have laid it near your Hearts, and keep it there, and have an entire Dependance upon the Almighty Grace of God to make it successful.

My Text is a Prayer, and will be of Use to direct us herein; it puts Words into our Mouths; not many to burthen our Memories, but very proper, and suited to our purpose, for we are here taught to pray *against all Sin, and for all Saints*.

1. We are here taught to *pray against all Sin*, to pray it down, to pray it, if possible, out of the World. O let the *Wickedness of the Wicked come to an End!* And in praying *against the Sin* we pray for the Sinners, for whatever makes *against the Disease* makes for the Patient.

Observe with what a *pathetical Strain of Devotion* the Psalmist breaths out this Petition, and teaches us to do so; *Oh! let it come to an End! when shall it once be?* In Prayer, as there should be a *Fixedness of Thought*, and a *Firmness of Faith*, so there should be a *Flame and Fervour of pious and devout Affections*. Cold Desires do but beg Denials; and lifeless Wishes  
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are fruitless ones ; but it is the *effectual Fervent Prayer of a righteous Man that avails much*. When Jacob wrestles with God he commenceth *Israel*, a Prince with God. The Original Word here *אין* us'd to express the Emphasis laid upon this Request, sometimes is translated *Now* ; O that the Wickedness of the Wicked might *speedily* come to an end ; the sooner the better ; sometimes 'tis translated *Obsecro, I pray thee*, let the Wickedness of the Wicked come to an end ; This is that for which I would be very importunate ; O that I might have my Request, and that God would grant me *this thing which I long for !*

Pfal. 34.  
21.  
2 Theff.  
2. 8.

Some of the Criticks read it, *Evil shall consume the Wicked* ; and so it is a Prediction of the *gradual and final Destruction* of all impenitent Sinners : They that will not be reclaim'd shall be consumed ; *Evil shall slay the Wicked*. Their Sin will be their Ruin if they repent not. The *Man of Sin, that wicked one, shall be consum'd* ; and we are to pray for the hast'ning of the Day when God will do this, as the Day of the *Revelation of his righteous Judgment*.

But it is rather to be taken as we read it ; 'tis a Prayer not that the *Wicked may come to an end*, but that their *Wickedness may* ; that that may be *consumed* ; let it not only be restrain'd and curb'd, and driven into Corners, but let it be utterly *abolished*, that we may not see it, or hear it, or hear of it, any more. God is calling to Mankind from Heaven by his Word, *O let the Wickedness of the Wicked come to an End*. O that Sinners would *cease to do evil, and learn to do well ! Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts ; He saith to the Fools, deal not foolishly ; Let him that stole steal no more : This is the Burthen of every Song, Turn ye, Turn ye ; Now we must, by our Prayers concur with him herein ; as those that are of God's Mind ; Amen, so be it ; O let the Wickedness of the Wicked come to an End*. God commands that Men *forsake their Sins* ; we pray, that he would by his Grace *turn them from it*, as those that are of his Mind, and say in Sincerity, *Thy Will be done*.

2. We

2. We are here taught to pray for *all Saints*, for all good People; But *establish the Just*. Lord, let not those that are *filthy* be *filthy still*, but let those that are *holy* be *holy still*: Let the *Bad* be made *Good*, and let the *Good* be kept so, and *made better*; Let the *same* Grace that first made them *just*, and wrought Righteousness in them, *secure* and *carry on* that good Work in their Souls; as the *same Word of Power* that first made the World still *upholds* it.

The *Conversion* of Sinners, and the *Confirmation* and *Edification* of Saints are the two great things Ministers are to aim at in their *Praying* and *Preaching*; to bring Souls to Christ, which will effectually *bring their Wickedness to an End*; and then to build them up in him, which will be an effectual *Establishment of the Just*.

Or, by the *Just* here we may understand those that are not only just themselves, but like *Phineas*, *execute Judgment and Justice* upon daring Criminals, for the staying of the Plague. Lord, *establish* them in their good Purposes, and strengthen their Hands.

This is the Prayer which *we* at a distance in the Country, have many a time put up to God for you here, and those in other Places, which have set their Hands to this good Work. St. Paul, in his Epistles, often tells his Friends what it was which he asked of God for them, *making mention of them always in his Prayers*, that they might know what to ask for themselves, and might be encouraged to hope for all that Grace from God which one that had so great an Interest at the Throne of Grace, as Paul had, pray'd for, for them; This is that which we desire of God for you, that God would *spirit* you for your Work, by *establishing* your Hearts, and that he would *succeed* you in it, by *bringing the Wickedness of the Wicked to an End*. And we desire that all praying People would frequently put up this Prayer to God for you.

It is easy to gather from these Words:

That *it is and ought to be the Desire and Prayer of all Good People, That God by his Grace would put an End to the Wickedness of the Wicked, and establish the Just.* Doct.

Now,

*A Reformation Sermon.*

Now, 1. This supposeth that there are two contrary contesting Interests in the World, visibly appearing in most Places, that of the *Wicked* and that of the *Just*; the Children of God that bear his Image, and do his Will; and the Children of the Devil, *in whom he works*, and that are *led Captive* by him, as all the Children of Disobedience are. This is a Distinction which is as old as *Cain* and *Abel*, and will last as long as *Heaven* and *Hell*.

Look abroad into the World, and you will see Persons of very *different* Characters, the *Reverse* to each other; one would wonder how those of the *same* Nature, Education and Converse, should be so *unlike* one another. When *Solomon* is observing how in the Course of Providence there is *one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked*, yet at the same time he *industriously* and very *particularly* shews, that notwithstanding that, there is a *vast difference between them*, in the Temper of their Minds, and the Tenor of their Lives; for one is *clean*, and the other *unclean*; one *sacrificeth*, and the other *sacrificeth not*; one *swears*, and the other *fears an Oath*. Some make conscience of what they say and do, are in care to do right, and afraid of doing amiss; while others live at large, and *walk at all Adventures*. Some are sober and temperate, and keep their Appetites in subjection to Religion and right Reason, while others *run to an Excess of Riot*, and wallow in all manner of Uncleanness. Some are *honest* and *just* in their Dealings, while others are *false* and *deceitful*, and there's no Confidence to be put in them. Some speak the Language of *Canaan*, others the Language of *Ashdod*. Some take time every day to call upon God, and converse with him, and sanctify the Lord's Day to his Honour, while others *cast off Fear*, and *restrain Prayer*, and make no difference between Sabbath-time and other time. Now which of these two will we recommend our selves to, herd our selves with, and *cast in our Lot* among? Which of these will we take for *our People*, will we associate with of choice, and will we study to conform our selves to? As our *Choice* is, so  
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will our *Doom* be; and to them whom we take for our People, *Death* will *gather us*, which if we duly consider, it will be our Prayer, *Gather not my Soul with Sinners.* Psal. 26. 9.

Abundance of wicked People there are in this World; it is therefore said to *lie in Wickedness*, the *whole World* doth so. 'Tis strange, 'tis sad, 'tis very sad, 'tis very strange, that among Men that are *reasonable Creatures*, and *depending* upon their Creator, there should be so many *wicked*, that act in a constant Contradiction to the right Reason of Man, and a constant Rebellion against the rightful Authority of God: But as saith the *Proverb of the Antients*, so saith the *Observation and Experience of the Moderns*, *Wickedness proceedeth from the Wicked*; for do Men gather *Grapes of Thorns*? or do they expect *good things* in the Life from an *evil Treasure* in the Heart? No; tho' some Mens Sins are so artfully *conceal'd* and *disguis'd*, that it must be left to the *Day* to *declare them*, and it is only the *Heart-searching God* that can say, *It is Iniquity*, it is *Hypocrisy*, even the *solemn Meeting*; and to him the *Judgment* of such Sins must be left; yet there are others whose Sins are *open beforehand*, going before to the *Judgment*; of which any one may say, as the *Angel* to the *Prophet*, *This is Wickedness*; and *Wickedness* of this kind we may and must in our Places witness against. Do I need to tell you what that *Wickedness of the Wicked* is which we must endeavour in our Places to *put a stop to*? Your own Hearts will tell you; some of the *Instances* of it even the *Heathen* were *convinc'd* of by *Natural Conscience*. You know it is *Wickedness* for Men to *profane the Holy Name of God*, and by their *ludicrous* or *passionate Appeals* to him to make him *altogether such a one as themselves*; or to *abuse themselves*, their own *Bodies*, and the *Gifts of God's Providence*, and by their *Drunkenness* and *Uncleanliness* to make themselves altogether such as the *Beasts*, and more vile. Do I need to tell you who the *Just* are? Your own Hearts tell you: They are

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Acts 10.  
35.

not those of this or that dividing Name or Party; no, far be it from us to monopolize the Character; for *in every Nation*, and under every Denomination of Christians, those that *fear God*, and *work Righteousness* are accepted of him, and must be so of us. The *Just* are they that live in the Fear of God, and make conscience of rendring what is due to him, to themselves, to all with whom they have to do: These are they whose *Establishment* we should seek.

2. This directs us which of these two Interests to *espouse*, and *side with*, and make *our own*, as those that are convinc'd which is in the *right*, and which in the *wrong*, which will make us happy, and which will ruin us; particularly we are directed which of these to *serve* with our Prayers. If we would be found *on the Lord's side*, in the Day of Enquiry we must by our Prayers act *in concert* with the *Just*, and in Communion with them, and help to *establish* them; and in contradiction to the *Wicked* and their Wickedness, which we must do all we can to *bring to an End*.

For the opening of this I shall endeavour to shew, (1.) *What it is* we are directed in the Text to *desire* and *pray for*. (2.) *Why it is* and ought to be the Desire and Prayer of all Good Christians. And then *make Application*.

*For the First*: That which we are to desire and pray for, is in short this, That *Wickedness*, that Root of Bitterness, may be rooted out of this World, and that Righteousness, that *Plant of Renown*, may be planted and rooted in it. This I say we must *desire* and *pray for*; it is not enough in Word and Tongue to *pray for it*, but we must sincerely and in Heart *desire* it; nor is it enough in heart to *desire* it, but we must by Prayer offer up our Desires to God in the Name of Christ, for the *plentiful Effusions* and *powerful Operations* of that Grace upon the Minds and Spirits of Men, which are necessary to the effecting of these *good Works*, and the attaining of these *good Ends*; that that Grace may be sufficient.

*First,*

## A Reformation Sermon.

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*First, We must desire and pray, That God by his Grace would bring the Wickedness of the Wicked to an End, to a full End; That by his Spirit he would counterwork and over-rule that evil Spirit which works and rules in the Children of Disobedience.*

This *Charity must begin at home*; we must in the first place pray, that God by his Grace would bring the *Wickedness* that is in our own wicked Hearts *to an End*; that our Corruptions may be mortified and subdued, and the Power of our inordinate Appetites and Passions crush'd and broken, and that we may be kept from every evil Work and Way.

But tho' it must *begin at home*, it must not *end there*; we must pray that the *Wickedness* of other wicked People may *come to an End*, in the Places where we live, in the City, in the Nation, all the World over.

It must be our Heart's Desire and Prayer,

1. That *wicked Principles may be exploded and abandon'd*, and that Men may be *set right* in their Judgments concerning Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, God and themselves, this World and the other; that the *Beast may be wounded in the Head*, and that will be a *deadly Wound*; that a Blow may be given to the *Root of Wickedness*, by rectifying the Mistakes of the Understanding; that *Salt may be cast into the Springs*, and so the *Waters may be healed*; for this is God's way of gaining the Will and Affections, by opening the Understanding; and it is the regular way, 'tis coming in *by the Door*. Till the peccant Humours in the Blood be purged out, in vain is Application made to the external Eruptions of the Disease. Those that are bad, are so upon some bad Principles, with which the *God of this World hath blinded their Minds*, and till those are *conquer'd and laid aside*, the *Wickedness of the Heart and Life will not be brought to an End*.

O that Men may be made to see the Folly and Falshood of those *Atheistical Notions* and Schemes, by which their Fear of God, and their Dread of Sin, and the fatal Consequences of it are abated, and by de-



A Reformation Sermon.

grees worn off, that they may no longer, as they have done, call Good Evil, and Evil Good, put Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes. O that Sinners may be convinced of the Absurdity of that with which they support themselves in their sinful Ways, and are encouraged to say, They shall have Peace tho' they go on, and that they may see their Mistake before it is too late to have it rectified: O that God's Grace would open Mens Eyes before the Flames of Hell do it! That the Fallacy of that which pretends to Wit may be discover'd, and made contemptible by that which is real Wisdom. The Word of God, which is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart hath intimated to us what the Principles are that Sinners go

Pfal. 14. 1. upon; they say in their Heart, *There is no God*; or,  
 —94. 7. *the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob re-*  
 —10. 11, *gard it; he hideth his Face, and he will not require it.*  
 13. Nay, they have the Impudence to say, *Every one that*  
 Mal. 2. 17. *doth Evil is good in the sight of the Lord*; Or, *why doth*  
 Rom. 9. *he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his Will?* O that  
 19. Men might be beaten off from these strong Holds, and that the Hail might sweep away this Refuge of Lies; and these high Thoughts might be captivated and brought into Obedience to the Power of Divine Truth. These corrupt Principles are commonly conceal'd, and those that are fond of them are ashamed to own them; I wish the Sinners you deal with could be brought to discover them, and to confess what the Tempter suggested to them when he drew them into his Snares; that some Course might be taken to inform them better; to give them right Thoughts of the Differences between Good and Evil, of the Holiness and Justice of God, the Strictness of his Law, and to convince them, that for

Eccl. 11. 9. *all these things God will bring them into Judgment.* O that Men were brought to shake off the loose Thoughts they have of the Scriptures, the low Thoughts they have of Religion and Godliness, and the slight Thoughts they have of Sin, and to receive the Truth in the Light and Love of it.

O that

O that *Popery*, which is so great a Friend to Sin, might be known to be, what really it is, a *Mystery of Iniquity*, Sin in disguise, which when it is *reveal'd*, <sup>2</sup> *Theff. 2.* and set in a true Light, is soon *consum'd*, by the *Breath* <sup>8.</sup> *of Christ's Mouth*, his Word and Spirit, and the *Brightness of the Coming* of his Truth into the Soul. Idolatry was always an Inlet to Immorality and all Impiety; and therefore 'tis necessary to the *Reformation of Manners*, that the Principles upon which we *reform'd from Popery*, be closely and faithfully adher'd to, by which the Honour of Christ, the Authority of the Scriptures, and the Strictness of the Divine Law, are supported. These will help to *reform the Manners* of the Nation, and in return thereof, the more the Manners of the Nation are *reform'd*, the better fortified it will be against Popery: for the *Mystery of Faith* is <sup>1</sup> *Tim. 3.* best held in a *pure Conscience*: Our Enemies know, <sup>9.</sup> that Profaneness paves the Way to Popery.

2. We must desire and pray, *That wicked Persons may be converted and chang'd*, by the Grace of God. Hath God given us his Grace, and have we experienc'd the Benefit of it? O let us be earnest with him to give it to those that are yet in Sin; that thus the *Wickedness of the Wicked* might be brought to an end by <sup>Psal. 51.</sup> the *teaching of Transgressors the Ways of God*, and the <sup>13.</sup> *Conversion of Sinners* unto him: That the publick Preaching of the Word may be effectual for this purpose, and mighty through God for the turning of the *Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just*; that in the Chariot of the Everlasting Gospel the Great Redeemer may ride forth *conquering and to conquer*.

O let us be humbly earnest with God in Prayer, that the *Eyes of the Blind* may be open'd, and the *Ears of the Deaf* unstopped; that wandering Sheep may be sought and sav'd, and Prodigal Sons brought to themselves first, and then to their *Father's House*; that God would translate those into the *Kingdom of his Dear Son*, who have been long Subjects in the *Kingdom of Darkness*. O that they who are Satan's Slaves may be the Lord's Freemen, and that God would *bring their Souls out*

Pfal. 114. *out of Prison.* O that the *Sea* might fly, and *Jordan* might be driven back, and the *Rock* turned into a *Fountain of Waters* at the Presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the God of Jacob. O that the *Ethiopian* might be made to change his *Skin*, and the *Leopard* his *Spots*, and that they might yet at last be brought to do good who have been accustomed to do Evil.

We must not despair concerning the worst; for while there's Life, there's Hope, and room for Prayer: The Repentance of *Manasseh* and the Conversion of *Paul* tell us that nothing is too hard for the Almighty Grace of God to do. The *Corinthians* were many of them as bad as the worst, and as vile as the vilest; such were some of you, and yet ye are washed, and sanctified, and justified. Let us therefore apply our selves to Christ for those who have been long under the Power of Sin and Satan, as the Father of the possessed Child in the Gospel, *If thou canst do any thing, have compassion upon them, and help them:* O snatch them as Brands out of everlasting Burnings! O that Drunkards and Harlots might be made sober and chaste, that those who so passionately curse and swear may be brought as affectionately to pray and praise; that Sabbath-breakers might be Sabbath-sanctifiers. O that Satan may be dispossess'd of his Strong-holds, that the Prey may be taken from that Mighty One, and the unlawful Captive may be deliver'd; that Christ's Throne may be set up there where the Usurper's Seat has long been: *With Men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible, even this.* Nay, the worse any are, the more earnestly we should desire and pray for their Conversion, not only because otherwise their Ruin will be the greater, but because there will be so much the greater Joy in Heaven for their Repentance, more for one of them than for ninety nine just Persons that comparatively need no Repentance. How earnest would we be herein, did we consider, that the converting of a Soul from Sin is the saving of a Soul from Death.

Those whom you reprove and inform against for their Wickedness, it should be with a strong Desire  
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of their *Conversion*, and that the Trouble you give them may contribute to it; that the Uneasiness you put them to may make them *weary and heavy laden* under the Burthen of Sin, and willing to get clear of it by coming to Christ. O that the *punishing* of them might prevent their *perishing*, and that when they are *holden in the Cords of Affliction*, their *Ear* may be *open to Discipline*: Let your Prayers always accompany your Endeavours to reclaim and reform them, that while you are making them *Examples of your Justice*, God by his Grace may make them *Monuments of his Mercy*. When you *prosecute* them, pray that God would *pardon* them: *Father forgive them*, and qualify them for Forgiveness. And if God forgive them, and let them know that he has forgiven them by a *saving Change* wrought in them, they will not only *forgive you this Wrong*, but will thank you, and *thank God* for you, as *David* for *Abigail*, and for the seasonable Stop you gave them, when they were hastening apace to their own Ruin.

3. We must desire and pray, *That wicked Practises may be prevented and restrained*; That tho' the *Root of Bitterness* be not pluck'd up, yet it may not *spring up* Heb. 12: to *trouble us*, and *thereby many should be defiled*; and 15, 16. that whatever may *lie hid*, yet there may not appear *any Fornicator or profane Person among us*, as *Esau*. Let us pray, that if the *Stream* be not *turn'd*, yet it may be *check'd* and *dam'd up*, and may not become an *overflowing Deluge*; that tho' the *Lion* be not *turn'd* into a *Lamb*, yet he may be *chain'd up*, and kept within *Grates*; That tho' the *unclean Spirit* be not *cast out*, yet he may be *silenc'd*, and not *suffer'd to speak*, not *suffer'd to tear*. *Est aliquid prodire tenus, si non datur ultra*. O that God by his Grace would *restrain the Remainder of the Wickedness of the Wicked*, would set *Bounds* to the *breaking out* of it, as he doth to the *Waves of the Sea*, *Hitherto it shall come, and no farther*: That tho' *Balam* be still the same he was, yet he may not be *suffer'd to curse Israel*: That tho' *Sennacherib* hath still an *inveterate Rage* against *God*, yet he may

Isa. 37.  
28, 29.

may be made to feel that God hath a *Hook in his Nose*, and a *Bridle in his Jaws*. And O that the Magistrate who bears the *Sword* might be, as the Scripture calls him, an *Heir of Restraint*, a *Terror to Evil Doers*, and that the proper Means us'd for the suppressing of Vice and Profaneness may attain the End; so that tho' Sin hath *blossomed* and *budded*, yet it may not *rise up into a Rod of Wickedness*, to oppress the *Lot of the Righteous*.

Ezek. 7.  
10, 11.

We should desire and pray, that *thus far* at least the Wickedness of the Wicked may come to an end, that it may not be *committed openly*, and that the *Infection* may not *spread*.

(1.) O let not Wickedness be committed *publickly* and *openly*, and in the *Face of the Sun*, as it were by *Licence*, and *with Allowance*. Let those that will not be perswaded to *hate Sin*, and that cannot *blush* for it, yet be *compell'd* to *forbear* it before Men, and since they will be *as the Horse and the Mule that have no Understanding*, let them be *held in*, as they are, *with Bit and Bridle*: Let those that will not by fair Reasoning be made *asham'd* of the Sin they have committed, by a due Correction be made *afraid* to commit it again; and if they will not tremble at the *Wrath of God revealed from Heaven against them*, let them be *afraid of the Civil Powers*, which *bear not the Sword in vain*.

Pfal. 107.  
42. Let all *Iniquity* be made at least to *hide her Head*, and *stop her Mouth*, that if Men will not be wrought upon by *Ministers preaching* to break off their Sins, yet by the *Magistrates acting* they may be driven into *Corners*, and if they do *things that are not right*, they may do them *secretly*, and so the Nation may not bear the *Guilt and Blame* of it.

Rom. 13.  
4.

Pfal. 107.  
42.

2 Kings  
17. 9.

Dan. 12.  
10.

If the *Laws of God and Religion* prevail not to be *obey'd* and *submitted to*, yet let them not be *impudently affronted* and *bid Defiance to*: If the *wicked* will still *do wickedly*, and will not be made to *understand*, yet let them not pass without *Rebuke*, and a *Testimony* born against their *wicked Ways*: Let them not be able to make their *Sin fashionable*, nor to bring it *into Reputation*; but let it be made to appear, as it is, *odious* and *scant*.

scandalous, and that which all wise and good Men have a Dislike of. If the Idols of Iniquity be not driven out of the World, and quite abolish'd, yet let them be cast to the Moles and to the Bats. If Men will be drunk, *Isa. 2. 20.* let them be drunk in the Night, and let the Works of *1 Theff. 5.* Darknes know and keep their Place, but let those that are of the Day be sober, and walk honestly, and as becomes them. O that the Wickedness of the Wicked might thus far at least come to an end, that they may not dare to declare it as Sodom, so as to vex the righteous Souls of those about them from Day to Day, *Isa. 3. 9.* with their filthy Conversation. Let the Sin be the Ruin *2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.* of the Sinner, as certainly it will be, if it be not repented of; But let it not, by going bare-fac'd and undisturb'd, be the Reproach of the Nation. Let not the Fathers of our Country be such as Eli was to his Family, *1 Sam. 3.* whose Sons made themselves vile, and he restrain'd them *13.* not; But let it ever be said, to the Honour of our Land, to the Honour of your City, that tho' there be found those who boldly bend their Tongues like their Bow for Lies, yet there are found those likewise who are valiant for the Truth in the Earth. And tho' there are Horns, four Horns, that attempt to scatter Judah, *Zech. 1.* Israel, and Jerusalem, to run down all that's sacred and *19, 21.* just, yet there are those that lift up the Head against them, there are four Carpenters that come to break these Horns, and to cast them out; that the Horns of the wicked being cut off (tho' their Heads be not) the *Pf. 75. 10.* Horns of the righteous may be exalted.

(2.) O let not the Wickedness of the wicked be propagated, so as to infect others! Let this Plague die with those that are dying of it, because they will die; But O let the Contagion be kept from spreading! Though Multitudes drop into the Pit daily, yet let not the Bills of this Mortality rise; tho' things are bad let them not grow worse. If the Sinners themselves will not be perswaded to leave, yet let not those about them be perswaded to learn their pernicious ways. They have erred, but let their Error remain with themselves, and let not others be tainted with it, nor carried away

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*A Reformation Sermon.*

by it. O let not this Leprosy over-spread the whole Body; let it never be said, that *from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot, there is no Soundness, nothing but Wounds and Bruises.*

We know that *Sinners are enticing*: The wise Man supposeth this, *My Son, if Sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* They that have the Plague are willing to infect others. The Devil was no sooner an Apostate himself but he became a Tempter to Man; and they that are of that wicked one thus do his Lusts. Those that are bad, I fear are more industrious to debauch others, and to make them *as bad as themselves*, than those that are good are to invite others to the Ways of Religion and Virtue, and to make them *as good as themselves.*

We know also by sad Experience, that *Sin is an enticing thing*; it has its Baits with which it allures the unthinking and unstable into the Net; and there is in the corrupt Nature of Man a Proneness to follow bad Examples, and to go into the Measures of those that take their Measures from the World and the Flesh; and to follow them straitway, without any Consideration, as

Pr. 7. 22. *an Ox goes to the Slaughter.* We should therefore earnestly desire and pray, as we are taught to do every Day, that God would not lead either us, or others, into Temptation, but out of it, and would deliver us, and them from Evil. O pray that the Tongue of the Tempters may be tied, and they may be ashamed to do the Devil's Work, and that the Force of the Temptation may be broken: Pray that the Ear of the Tempted may be stopped, and that they may be enabled with the Shield of Faith to quench all the fiery Darts of the wicked one. Let us stand with our Center like Aaron, between the Living and the Dead, between the Sick and the Sound, and endeavour, by our Intercessions, to stay the Plague. Let us desire and pray that in wicked Families, the Entail of Sin may be cut off, that there may not rise up in the Fathers stead an Increase of sinful Men, to augment yet the fierce Anger of the Lord, the thing Moses

Ezek. 18. 14. dreaded, Num. 32. 14. But that the Son, when he sees all his Father's Sins, may consider and not do like him, nor

nor tread in his Steps, that so the *next* Generation, at least, may be better than *this*. Pray, that in *wicked Places*, where there are *many* Sinners, there may be *no more*; that Men may be so *wise* for themselves, as well as *just* to the Cause of Virtue and serious Godliness, as not to make Friendship, or keep Company with the vicious and profane, lest they *learn their Way*, and get a *Snare to their Souls*.

O let us be earnest with God in Prayer, that he would give more, and yet more of *that Grace* which is necessary in order to the *putting* of this *full Stop* to the course of Sin. Pray for *Grace* for those that do not, yet desire it, or pray for it for themselves; it might do well, when we are alone with God to be *particular* herein; Lord give Grace to such a Sinner, that is very provoking both to God and Good Men, preventing Grace, restraining Grace, renewing Grace, victorious Grace. Let *Saul* become *Paul*, that it may appear, that *Pattern* of Divine Mercy, which was of old *set* <sup>1 Tim. 1.</sup> *forth to them which should afterwards believe*, may yet <sup>16.</sup> *be copied out* again, in answer to Prayer, as that was in answer to *Stephen's* Prayer; God's *Arm* is not *shortned* that it cannot save the greatest Sinner, nor is his *Ear* heavy, that it cannot hear the weakest Prayer, that is offer'd up in Faith, the *Prayer of the destitute*.

*Secondly*, We must desire and pray that God by his Grace would *establish the Just*; that Religion and Godliness may get *Ground*, as Vice and Profaneness lose *Ground*. Let us pray,

1. That the Just may be *established in their Integrity*, and may ever retain that. It is the Duty of the Watchmen to warn not only the Wicked that they go not a *Step further* in their wicked Ways, but the righteous <sup>Ezek. 3.</sup> also, that they turn not a *Step back* from their righteous Ways, that they do not so much as *look back*; and our Desire and Prayer must be accordingly, as those that are afraid lest a *Promise* being *left us of entering into Rest*, not only we our selves, but *any other of us* should <sup>19, 21.</sup> so much as *seem to come short*. O that good People may <sup>Heb. 4. 1.</sup> be *establish'd* in their good Principles, and good Reso-



lutions, and may faithfully adhere to them ; that the Righteous may still *hold on their way*, and those that have *clean Hands* may be *stronger and stronger*. O that tho' the Stream be strong, the Righteous may be enabled to *swim against it*, and may never be *carried down* by it ! but that like *Job*, in difficult trying Times, they may *still hold fast their Integrity* ; may keep themselves pure in Times of common Iniquity, and may, like *Fish*, be fresh in salt Water ; as *Noah*, in the old World. Nay, we should desire and pray, that the Just may be like *Springs of Water*, which, by *Antiperistasis*, are *warmest* when the Air is *coldest*, that the *worse* others are the *better* they may be ; that the more others *profane* the Name of God, the more they may abound in *praising* it ; the more *loose* others are in their Conversation, the more *circumspect* they may be ; as *Noah* and *Lot*, who were both better in the midst of Temptation, than when they were out of the Way of it.

We should especially be earnest with God in Prayer for *young People*, that are *setting out* in the World, that by the Grace of God they may be *preserv'd* from the *Corruption that is in the World through Lust* ; that that may not be a Spark to the Tinder of the *Corruption that is in their Hearts*. Commit them to the Conduct and Custody of the Divine Grace. *Keep, Holy Father, keep through thy Name those that we commit unto thee, keep them from the Evil of this present World, keep them to the End.* Those that have been blest with a good Education, that have *begun well*, and promise fair, and are *number'd* among the Just, O that they may be confirm'd in the Choice they have made, and may always abide by it ! that when they come to the *turning time* of Life, such a right *Turn* may be given to their Thoughts as that they may be *stedfastly resolved* for *Heaven* as their End, and *Christ* and *Holiness* as their way. Satan and his Agents have a particular Spite at such, and are industrious to draw them aside ; O let us help them by our Prayers, that they may be fortified against the Temptations the World is full of, and  
 2 John 8. may never *lose the Things they have wrought*, the things they

they have gain'd ; but may obtain a full Reward. That the *Holy Seed* may be the Substance of our Land, and never the *Shame* of it, by *mingling themselves with the* *Isa. 6. ult.* *People of these Abominations* ; that they may appear to be a Seed which *the Lord has blessed* in answer to Prayer, and which we shall bless him for ; that the Branches of the Families of God's People may continue Branches of Righteousness.

2. That they may be establish'd in *their Comfort and Hope*. In troublesome threatening Times good Men are apt to be *shaken in Mind*, and to fear lest the Cause and Interests of Religion should be sunk and run down : When they see how *Iniquity abounds*, and how cold the *Love of many* is, how bold the Factors for Hell are grown, and how *bashful* the Advocates for Christ and his Gospel are, they are ready to give up all for gone ; ready to say, when they see the *ungodly prosper in the World*, that they have *cleansed their Hearts and Hands* *Pf. 73. 12.* *in vain*. We have, therefore, need to pray for them, that they may be establish'd in the Belief of the Promise that the *Gates of Hell shall never prevail against the Church*, and may encourage themselves and one another with it, and may never *cast away their Confidence* in it. O that the Just may be establish'd in the Assurance of this, that God will plead his own Cause, will own his own Interests, will do his own Work, and will be *exalted in his own Strength*. Tho' his Truths be oppos'd and ridicul'd, yet they are *great*, and shall *prevail*. Tho' his Name be profan'd, yet he has *glorified it*, and will *glorify it yet again* : He will *magnify his* *Isa. 42. 21.* *Law*, and make it *honourable*, tho' Men villify it, and make it contemptible. *These are the true Sayings of God*.

Now, Lord, give to the Just to *believe in the Lord* *2 Chr. 20.* *their God*, that so they may be *establish'd*, and not be *20.* *afraid of evil Tidings*, nor *despair* of their Cause, no, nor so much as *distrust* it ; for it is not the Cause of a *Party* that they espouse and embark in, but that of *Catholick Christianity*, pure Religion, and *undefiled before God and the Father*, which we are sure will keep its  
Ground,

*A Reformation Sermon.*

Ground, and carry the Day; 'tis the Kingdom of God among Men, which *cannot be destroy'd*. O that the Just may rejoice and glory in this! that this may keep their Resolutions *firm*, and their Hopes *flourishing* in the worst of times; that they may rejoice in God, and glory in him, and their Feet being set upon this Rock, they may have a *new Song put into their Mouths*.

3. That they may be establish'd in their Undertaking to do what they can to bring the Wickedness of the Wicked to an end; Lord, by thy Grace strengthen their Hands in their Opposition to the Interests of Sin and Satan in the World. O that they may be confirm'd in the Principles they go upon therein, and may not be shaken by any Doubts or Jealousies, concerning the Equity and Goodness of the Cause they are engag'd in, but may be abundantly satisfied in their own Minds, that in bearing their Testimony against, and giving Check to Immorality and Profaneness in their Places, they are doing a *good Work*, and if they sincerely aim at the Honour of God in it, he will graciously accept it, as Honour done to him.

O that they may not be shaken by any Discouragements they meet with, any Difficulties they find in their Way, but that their Zeal and Resolution may be rather the more animated thereby; that they may not be driven off from it, or made to drive on heavily in it, either by the Heat of those that own themselves Enemies to it, or by the Coldness of those that yet own themselves Friends to it; pray for them, that God by his Grace would help them over these Discouragements, that when upright Men cannot but be astonished at this, astonished that so good a Work should be so much oppos'd and so little further'd, yet they may not sit down astonished, as Ezra, in a like Case, despairing to bring anything to pass: But that the innocent may stir up himself so much the more against the Hypocrite, because as Ezra was then told, *there is yet Hope in Israel concerning this thing*; the Case is bad, but not desperate.

We ought to pray for Magistrates, for the Queen, and all in Authority, for the Judges and the Justices of  
Peace

Job 17. 8.

Ezra 10.

3.

Peace in the several Counties and Corporations, that they may be establish'd in a holy Zeal against Vice and Profaneness, and a Resolution to do the utmost they can in their Places to suppress it; That God would give them *his Judgment and his Righteousness*, that according Ps. 72. 1. to the Trust repos'd in them they may be *for the Punishment of evil Doers, and for the praise of them that do well.* 1 Pet. 2. 14. We are doing our own Work when we are praying for *Kings and all Authority*, for if they be establish'd in their Duty, we shall live quiet and peaceable 1 Tim. 2. 2. Lives under them in all *Godliness and Honesty*; the Restraint of the vicious will be the Repose of the Virtuous, and a Defence of their Virtues.

We ought to pray for *Ministers*, for all the Ministers of the Word of God, that they may be full of Mic. 3. 8. Power, by the Spirit of the Lord, and of Judgment and of Might, both Wisdom and Courage to declare unto *Jacob his Transgression, and to Israel his Sin*, that they may see their Face as a Flint, in a holy Zeal against Profaneness; and that the Spirit of God may work with them and by them to convince the World of *Sin, of Righteousness, and of Judgment.* John 16. 8. Pray that Ministers may be establish'd, and their Hands strengthend in their Work, tho' they are sometimes tempted to say, *They have labour'd in vain.*

We ought to pray for *Masters of Families*, that their Endeavours may be blessed in the Education of their Children and Servants, and they may be establish'd in *Joshua's Resolution, that they and their Houses will serve the Lord*; Pray that they may be Reformers in their own Families, may prevail to drive out the Foolishness that is bound up in the Heart of those under their Charge, and to principle them with an Antipathy to that which is evil betimes, and then the Work of Magistrates and Ministers would be very easy.

And for all that in their Places are striving against Sin, let us strive in our Prayers, that they may be establish'd in their Resolution not to draw back their Josh. 8. 26. Hand wherewith they have stretched out the Spear against those Vices that are the common Enemies of our Israel, (as

(as is said of *Joshua* in his Battle with the Men of *Ai*) till they have *utterly destroy'd* and suppress'd them, or at least done their utmost towards it; that having an Eye to him who in striving against Sin *endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself*, they may not be weary, nor faint in their Minds. And in order to this Establishment of the Just, and the Progress and Success of that righteous Cause wherein they are engag'd, the great thing, and indeed the *one thing needful* we have to ask of God, is, That the Spirit may be poured out upon us from on high, a Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, of Counsel and Might, of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord, and then the Wilderness shall become a fruitful Field; then the Work will go on and prosper, till there shall be no more occasion for it: And there is no Petition we can present at the Throne of Grace with more Hope of speeding than this, for the pouring out of the Spirit; for, if earthly Parents being evil know how to give good Gifts unto their Children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

Heb. 12.  
7.

Isa. 32. 15.  
Isa. 11. 2.

Luke 11.  
13.

For the second Thing, I come next to shew why it is and ought to be the Desire and Prayer of all good People, That the Wickedness of the Wicked may come to an End, and the Just may be establish'd in their Opposition to it.

1. All good People have a holy Concern for the Name and Honour of God, and the Lord Jesus, and for the Reputation of that holy Religion which we make Profession of, and therefore they cannot but desire that that may come to an End, by which God is dishonour'd, his Name is profan'd, the Lord Jesus crucified afresh, and Religion wounded in the House of her Friends. All the Children of God having his Glory in their Eye, as their highest End, have it upon their Hearts as their chief Care, and it is dearer to them than any Interests of their own; nothing grieves them so much as the Injury done to the Honour of God by the Wickedness of the wicked; and the great Occasion thereby given his Enemies do blaspheme. Horror takes hold of their Hearts,

Psal. 119.  
53, 136.

Hearts, and Rivers of Tears run down their Eyes, because of this: Every Good Man should be able to say as David, *The Reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me*: I take them as cast upon my self, and therefore *the Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up*, hath made me forget my self, and all Interests and Concerns of my own, that I might be wholly swallow'd up with Resentments of the Dishonour to God, and that worthy Name by which I am called.

Let that therefore *come to an End*, let it be wholly extirpated, which is such a daring Affront to God's Majesty, such an impudent Contempt of his Sovereignty, such a direct Contradiction to his Truth, and such an open Violation of his Law, which grieves the Spirit of his Grace, and bids defiance to his Strivings, which supports the Kingdom of Satan, that Kingdom of Darkness and Malignity, and is a constant Opposition to that Kingdom of Light, Holiness and Love, which the Lord Jesus came to set up in the World. Will not all those then that rightly understand the thing, and lay it to heart, earnestly pray that that may *come to an End*, which hath all this Mischief in it; and that those may be *establiſh'd*, who are doing what they can to *bring it to an End*. And we may come the more boldly to the Throne of Grace on this Errand, because we can plead God's Interest in the Case; Lord, *Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory*, and therefore *let the Wickedness of the Wicked come to an End*, that thy Kingdom may be advanc'd, thy Power submitted to, and that *Glory* given to thee, which thou hast by it been rob'd of. How may we wrestle with God, and hope to speed when our Prayer is, *Arise, O God*, plead *thine own Cause*; and our Plea is, *Lord, what wilt thou do unto thy Great Name?*

Pfal. 69. 9.

Pfal. 74.

22.

Josh. 7. 9.

2. All good People have a tender Love to the Souls of Men, and a true Desire of their Welfare, here and for ever, and therefore they cannot but desire and pray, that that may *come to an End*, which is the only thing that ruins Souls. Brethren, I hope you are convinc'd of the Worth of Souls, you know what they were

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*A Reformation Sermon.*

*made for, and in whose Image they were made ; what they were bought for, and with what Price they were bought ; what Service for God they are capable of doing, what Happiness in God they are capable of enjoying.* You have made your Conviction of this to appear by the Concern you have for *your own Souls*, and will you not make it further to appear by your Concern for the *Souls of others*? Shall it not be your Desire, and Care, and Prayer, that none of those may perish *for whom Christ died*. Did Christ shed his Blood for them, and shall we think much to drop a Tear over them?

1 Cor. 8.  
11.

When you see a poor Sinner *running to an Excess of Riot*, think with your selves, Here's a precious Soul, more worth than all the World, alienated from its rightful Lord, and sold for a *Mess of Pottage*, for the Gratifications of a base Lust, into the Hands of its sworn Enemy, and made a Prey to the roaring Lion. Here's one made a *Cage of unclean and filthy Birds*, that's capable of being made a *Temple of the Holy Ghost*; A Drudge to Satan that might have been a Servant of God; an Instrument of Unrighteousness, that might have been a Vessel of Honour: O that the opposing Interest may be *overturn'd* in this Soul, and that he may come *whose Right it is*, and it may be *given him*. Here's a miserable Creature *running headlong* into everlasting Burnings, upon the Brink of Ruin, and not aware of the Danger: O that the Grace of God would snatch this *Brand out of the Burning!* for it is yet capable of being made use of in the Building. Tho' it is spoken of but with a *peradventure* that God will *give them Repentance*, yet that's Encouragement to pray for it, and we should be earnest for it, because it is the only way of their being *recover'd out of the Snare of the Devil*. If you saw any of those about you that you have the *least Concern* for, thus *destroying* their own Bodies, you would *interpose* and do what you could to *prevent* it; and are not their Souls of unspeakably more value than their Bodies? Is not Eternal Death more dreadful than temporal Death? If therefore  
you

Ezek. 21.  
27.

2 Tim. 2.  
25, 26.

you can do nothing else towards their Recovery, pray for them; O pray that their *Sins* may come to an End, before their *Lives* do.

3. All good People have a great *Value* for the *Grace of God*, and are convinc'd of the *Sovereignty* and *Power*, the *Necessity* and *Efficacy* of that *Grace*; and therefore they pray for that *Grace*, both for the *Reformation* of *Sinners*, and for the *Establishment* of the *Just*. They know how much they are themselves *indebted* to that *Grace*, what *Favours*, what *Wonders* have been done for them by it; that 'tis purely by that *Grace* that they are what they are that's good: And 'tis that *Grace* that *made them to differ* from the *Wicked*, that begun the good *Work* in them, and carries it on. They know there is a *Fulness of Grace* in *Christ*, enough for *all*, tho' never so *many*, enough for *each*, tho' never so *bad*; and therefore they are still for having recourse to that *Grace*, and fetching that in for themselves and others. They know nothing can be done without it, not a *good Thought* started or pursued; not a *good Word* spoken, or a *good Work* done, by themselves, or any other; and therefore whatever *Good* they wish may be *effected*, either upon *Sinners* or *Saints*, they depend upon that *Grace* for it, and its *powerful Influences*.

They know also that this *Grace* is promis'd to the *Church*, this *clean Water* to *cleanse it from all its Filthiness* and *from all its Idols*, yet God will for this be *enquir'd of by the House of Israel*, to do it for them: *We must ask*, and then we shall *receive*. Having therefore such an *Esteem* for *God's Grace* to do the *Work*, and for the *Duty of Prayer* to obtain that *Grace*, this is their *Petition*, this is their *Request*, *Lord, bring thou the Wickedness of the Wicked to an End*. After all the pains we have taken to prophesy upon the *dead and dry Bones*, they are *dead and dry* still, and therefore we look upwards: *Come, O Breath*, and *breath upon these Slain*, and then they shall live. They know that the *Filth of Zion and Jerusalem* can never be *washed away*, unless *God himself* do it by the



Isa. 4. 4. Spirit of Judgment and the Spirit of Burning; and therefore to him they apply themselves, Lord, take the Work into thine own Hands; *be thou exalted in thine own Strength, the Strength of thine own Grace, and thou shalt have the Glory.*

4. All Good People are hearty Well-wishers to the Land of their Nativity, and are in care for the Prosperity of that, because it is a Christian Nation, 'tis their own, and in the Peace thereof they shall have Peace, and in the setting up and keeping up of Religion among them they have Joy and Satisfaction, and therefore they seek the Good of Jerusalem for their Brethren and Companions sake, as well as because of the House of the Lord their God, and the Interests of that.

Psal. 122. 3, 9.

It cannot but grieve them to see this pleasant Land polluted, and all its Beauty sully'd and stain'd by the Filthiness of its Inhabitants, so that it is become odious in the Eyes of him that cannot endure to look upon Iniquity; to see a Land, that God has dealt favourably with, expos'd to his Judgments, and ready to be made as like to Sodom and Gomorrah in Ruin, as it has been in Sin; for shall not God visit for these things, which are to be found among us? Shall not his Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this? Do we not see how fast the Measure of the Nation's Sin fills? How near full it is, and how ready to overflow in a Deluge of Wrath? Do we not see our Plenty forfeited by the Abuse of it? Nay, the Word of God, and the Means of Grace, which are more than our necessary Food, forfeited by the Contempt cast on them; the Blessings of the Government forfeited by the Inefficacy of the Endeavours us'd by it to suppress Profaneness; and the Honours and Advantages of our Religion ready to be taken from us by the sworn Enemies of it abroad, because they have been so tamely yielded to the Destroyers of its Powers and Vitals at home?

And is it not the Concern of all Good People then to stand in the Gap, to turn away the Wrath of God, and by their Prayers to empty the Measure, which so many

many are *filling* by their Sins? To be earnest with God to *bring that to an End*, which otherwise will bring our Nation to an End, and deprive it of all its Glory, and to *establish and strengthen* those whose Piety and Zeal is the *Strength and Stability* of our Times. When there was a general Corruption of Manners, *Transgressions were multiplied, Truth failed*, and there was no Judgment, it was such a Presage of Destruction coming, that God *wonder'd there was no Intercessor*: But I trust there are and will be many Intercessors that cry Day and Night to God, not only against the *threaten'd Calamities*, but against the *threatning Iniquities*, the provoking Cause of them, that those may be brought to an End; for as Queen *Esther* pleaded with her self, *How can we endure to see the Evil that shall come upon our People, and the Destruction of our Kindred?*

IIa.59.16.

And now that which remains is to make *Application* of what has been said; 'tis what we are all concern'd in, and therefore should each of us apply to our selves.

*First*, Let us set our selves by earnest Prayer and Supplication to God for his Grace, to promote and advance the Reformation of Manners in our Land, and particularly in *this City*, the Reformation of which would have a good Influence upon the Nation. You will all say, it is a *desireable thing* that the Manners of the Nation should be *reform'd*, now that which I am pressing you to contribute towards it, is, that which I am sure no one can *except against* in others, no nor plead that they are *excus'd* and *exempted* from themselves. It will be no *Expence* to you, the poorest of the Flock of Christ may do as much in this part of the Service as the Rich. It will not *expose* you to any *Hazard* to *weep in secret* for the Wickedness of the Wicked, and to pray against it; and I hope we shall not again see the Day when it will be penal to pray publickly against it: Nor will it expose you to any *Blame* or *Censure*, as some of your Endeavours for Reformation perhaps may: In this I am sure you can never be charg'd

*A Reformation Sermon.*

charg'd with going out of your Sphere, or meddling with that which doth not belong to you; so that the most *timorous*, the most *cautious* may thus help forward this Good Work. All that have any Interest at the Throne of Grace (and miserable is the Case of those that have not); All that know how to pray (and those that do not are concern'd to learn) are this Day in God's Name summon'd to this part of the Service. The Daughters of my People, tho' we cannot expect they should do *Deborah's* part against this *Sisera*, this common Enemy, lead the Forces into the Field against him; (yet blessed be God we have a *Deborah*, that by her pious Proclamation doth that :) Tho' we cannot expect they should do *Jael's* part, that laid her Hand to the *Workman's Hammer*, to nail this *Sisera* to the Earth; yet we expect and require that they do the part of *Anna* the *Prophetess*, who served God with *Fastings and Prayers Night and Day*, and let them make this the Matter of their daily Prayers; that in such a Day of Distress, such an Hour of Temptation as this, they do the part of *Esther and her Maids*. And when there are Daughters of *Belial*, Daughters of *Moab*, that contribute to the *debauching* of the Nation, let the Daughters of *Israel*, the Daughters of *Sarah*, be glad that they can any way contribute to the reforming of it. Let Masters of Families take this Matter into their Family Prayers, that they may bring down a Blessing not only on *their own Houses*, but on the Houses of *their Neighbours*, and thus may be themselves Blessings to the Places where they live.

Luke 2.  
37.

Esth. 4. 16.

Let me recommend it especially to my Brethren in the Ministry, whose Business it is to give themselves to Prayer, let them lead those they pray with to the Throne of Grace on this Errand: *O let the Wickedness of the Wicked come to an End, but establish the Just.* We are as *Moses* upon the Mount, 'tis our Work to lift up our Prayers against *Amalek* with *the Rod of God in our Hand*, whilst others in the Vally are doing *Joshua's* Work: Ours is the safer and easier Province, 'tis a Shame for us then if we be wanting in our Work,  
and

and it may be of ill consequence; for when *Moses lift* Exod. 17.  
*up his Hands* and kept them steady, *Israel prevail'd*: 11.

If we continue instant and constant in Prayer, the Attempts for Reformation it may be hoped will be the more successful; but when *Moses let down his Hand*, *Amalek prevail'd*. If we grow cold and remiss in Prayer, the Work is in danger of *going back* and *losing ground*. We pray for the Success of *our own* Endeavours, for the Conversion of Sinners, and the Confirmation of Saints; I hope we dare not omit it; And should we not pray also for *their Success*, who in a different way are pursuing the same Design?

Let those that are engag'd in the Societies for Reformation look upon themselves as bound to further *their own* Undertaking by their Prayers, for others must Rom. 15.  
*strive together with you* in their Prayers to God for you. 30.

Your associating in this good Work obligeth you in *this way*, as well as in *other* Instances, to give mutual Assistance, and to strengthen the Hands *one of another*. You cannot but find what need you have of the continual Supply of the Grace of God to furnish you for this Good Work, and to fortify you against the Temptations and Difficulties you meet with in it; let that therefore drive you to the Throne of Grace, for *Grace sufficient*. You *lack Wisdom* for it, that Wisdom which in the critical Cases that often occur is *profitable to* Jam. 1. 5.  
*direct*; you must therefore *ask it of God* in Christ's Name, and you may expect, that if you sincerely aim at his Glory in it, he will give it you, will give *liberally*, and *will not upbraid*; will give a *Mouth and Wisdom*, such as all your *Adversaries* shall not be able to *gainsay or resist*. Let your Prayers *go before* all your Undertakings in this Work, and *accompany* your Consultations about it; and let your Prayers *follow* what you do, that it may answer the End, the *Reformation* of the Offenders themselves you convict, and the deterring of others from doing the like. You would prosper the better in this good Work, if you had it more upon your Hearts in Prayer; and it would be a Token for good that you shall *carry your Point*;  
for

Zech. 12. for then when God seeks to destroy all the Nations that  
9, 10. come against Jerusalem, as a Preface and Introduction  
to that he pours out a Spirit of Prayer and Supplication.

To stir you up all to be earnest with God in Prayer  
for the Success of all pious Designs to suppress Profane-  
ness and Debauchery. Consider,

1. *How much depends upon the carrying on of this good  
Work.* If there were a general Reformation of Man-  
ners in our Land, what a *happy Turn* would it give to  
all our Affairs, what a *blessed Change* would it *pro-  
duce!* what a *Beauty* would it put upon the Nation,  
upon this City, and render them amiable in the Eyes  
of God and all Good Men! What a *Security* would it  
be against the Judgments that threaten us, and what  
a *Preparative* for the Blessings we wait for! How  
would the Lord then delight to do us good, and to  
dwell among us!

Nay, tho' the desired Reformation should not be  
*effected*, yet while it is *endeavour'd* it turns to us for a  
Testimony, and helps to save the Guilt of the Sin of  
Sinners from being *National*. The Reigns of the Re-  
forming Kings of *Judah* were *blessed* of God, tho' none  
of them made a *complete* Reformation.

But if the Work should now be *let fall*, if the For-  
ces that have for many Years past been *drawn into the  
Field*, and have *acted successfully* against Vice and Pro-  
faneness, should now be *withdrawn*, you not only lose  
all the Points you have gain'd, but it is to be fear'd  
all Iniquity will take Encouragement to be so much  
the more *daring*; as when the Dam that stop'd the  
Current for a while is broken through, the Stream  
runs so much more violently. We are therefore con-  
cern'd to *pray the more earnestly*, that the Wheels of  
this Good Work may be *kept a going*, and that tho' it  
should not *get ground*, it may not *lose ground*. A good  
Man said long since, He fear'd the Sins of the Land  
*more than the French*. If Iniquity were subdued, how  
soon would all our other Enemies be subdued! Would  
you therefore help to save a sinful Nation from Ruin,  
be Intercessors for it now, that the unclean Spirit that  
\* has

has met with a Rebuke for some time may not recover Possession; for if he do, it is to be feared 'twill be with seven other *more wicked than himself*, then will our *last State* be worse than the first.

2. Consider, *What Difficulties yet lie in the way of this Good Work*, which nothing less than the Power of Almighty Grace can help us over, and that Grace must be obtain'd by Prayer. I doubt you find the Work goes on *heavily*, and meets with many Rubs; many things *retard* it and clog its Wheels; and perhaps the Reason is, because it wants *praying Hands* to help it forward. Our Complaint is the same with *Hezekiah's*, *This Day is a Day of Rebuke and Blasphemy, for the Children are come to the Birth, and there is not* Isa. 37. *Strength to bring forth*; we must therefore take the 3, 4. Course he then took, *lift up our Prayer for the Remnant that is left, the little Remnant*. We may plead as *Jehoshaphat* did, *Lord, we have no Might against this great Company that fights against us, these Troops, these Legions of Iniquities that invade our Land, neither know we what to do, but our Eyes are up unto thee, and* <sup>2 Chron.</sup> on thee do we depend. <sub>20. 12.</sub>

When you meet with any Difficulties in this Work, follow the Example of *Nehemiah*, that Great Reformer, that did such eminent Service to the Church of God in his Day, and was *famous for this*, that upon every Occasion he had recourse to God by Prayer, made himself easy, and carry'd his Point by *lifting up* an Ejaculation to Heaven. When he was waiting at Table, *afraid* to ask what he *hoped* to have, and the King bid him speak his Mind, he *pray'd to the God of* Neh. 2. 4. *Heaven*, spoke to God in the silent Language of the Heart before he ventur'd to speak to the King. When the Enemies of the Work he was about *ridicul'd* it, as a foolish Attempt, and *made a Jest* of these *feeble Jews*, he appeal'd to God, went and *told him* of the Contempt put upon them: *Hear, O our God, for we are de-* Neh. 4. *spised*. When he *set a Watch* against them, he first *made* 8, 9. *his Prayer* to God, and then *set a Watch*. When to drive him off from his Undertaking, it was suggested

to him, that the Government would *take Umbrage* at it, and he would be taken up as a disaffected Person, that thereby his Hands might be weaken'd, he addresseth himself to Prayer presently, *Now therefore, O God, strengthen my Hands.* And if we thus, like *Nehemiah*, look up to God by Prayer for *Strength* and *Grace* to do our Work, we may, in Faith, like him, look up to God for his gracious *Acceptance* of us in it; *Remember me, O my God for Good*; for what is done by Divine Assistance will be own'd and favour'd; what comes *from God* will come to him.

Let me now briefly tell you what further we must do in our Prayers for Reformation.

1. We must *sadly lament the Wickedness of the Wicked*, which we pray for the Removal of; we must complain of it to God, as those that do indeed *lay it to heart*, and look upon it with inward Trouble. *Gen. 37. 2.* Can we each of us say, as *David*, *I beheld the Transgressors, and was grieved*; do as *Joseph* did then concerning his Brethren, *bring to your Father, your heavenly Father, their evil Report.* 'Twill better become us to *weep in secret* for the Sins of Sinners, than openly to exclaim against them. The Character of those that are mark'd for Preservation, and whom the destroying Angel must not touch, is, that they *sigh and cry for the Abominations* that are found among us, that is the Spirit of a Christian; not that they are *satyrical* in their *Invectives* against them, so far a *Pharisee* may go. We are then fit to *pray against Sin* when we truly *bewail it.*

2. We must *bless God for what is done towards the bringing of the Wickedness of the Wicked to an end in our Land.* We have reason to be thankful to God for the *National Testimonies* that are born against Vice and Profaneness, that it doth not go without a Check; that good and wholesome Laws are made against Drunkenness, Swearing, and Sabbath-breaking; that the Queen's *Proclamation against Immorality* is read in all our Courts of Justice; that here in this Great City, and in some other Places, Societies are form'd and yet kept up for the Assistance of the Magistrates in turn-

turning the Edge of the Sword of Justice against the most notorious Delinquents. This *Standard* the Spirit *Iſa. 59.* of the Lord hath lifted up against the Enemy that was coming in upon us like a Flood: This Banner God hath given to them that fear him, to be display'd because *Pſal. 60. 4.* of the Truth; a Banner for them to triumph in, and lift themselves under.

3. We must in these Prayers for Grace to reform our Land act Faith upon the Mediation of Christ, and the Promise of God, and make them our Plea. Let us take our Encouragement in these Prayers from this, that Jesus Christ ever lives to make Intercession for the same thing; That he came into the World to destroy *1 John 3,* the Works of the Devil; was manifested to take away *8.* Sin: And we are sure that he will gain his Point, and that him the Father heareth always: And through him we have precious Promises to plead, on which we are caused to hope that God will remove the Iniquity of the *Zech. 3. 9.* Land in one Day; that the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and shall turn away Ungodliness from Jacob; and shall sit as a Refiner. So that we shall not pray in vain, for *Rom. 11.* faithful is he that has promis'd, who also will do it. *26.*

Secondly, Let us follow our Prayers with our serious and sincere Endeavours; and let us act as those that are in good earnest, when we pray that God would bring the Wickedness of the Wicked to an End, and establish the just. When I press you thus to pray for it, 'tis not as if I thought there were nothing else to be done, and that Prayers and Tears were all the Weapons that the Cause of Reformation would admit of, as if no Means were to be us'd, but we must sit down, and leave it to God to do all; Or as if I thought the Case so deplorable that it were to no purpose to attempt any thing for the Relief of it; I do not come upon this Errand to you to day as Luther's Friend did to him, with his *Abi in cellam, & dic, miserere mei Domine*; bidding him content himself with praying for Reformation, for it would be in vain for him to think of doing any thing towards it; No, my Brethren, both God's Promises and our Prayers, are intended to quicken and encourage,

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not to *superfede* or *slacken* our Endeavours. When in  
 2 Sam. 5. Answer to Prayer, you do, like *David*, hear the sound  
 24. of a going upon the *Tops of the Mulberry-Trees*, when  
 you perceive that *God goes before you*, that *God is with*  
 you of a Truth, then you must *bestir your selves*; then  
 up, and be doing.

1. You especially that are *engag'd in these Societies for Reformation*, now you have this Day set me up-  
 on your Watch-tower, you must give me leave to be  
 your Monitor in *God's Name*, as one that desires to  
 be found faithful, and that you be found so too. Be  
 mindful of the *Obligations* you laid upon your selves  
 when you enter'd into these Societies, in a Sense of  
*your Duty to God*, as well as in Love to your Country,  
 to do all you could in your Places for the suppressing of  
 Vice and Profaneness; you have not discharg'd your  
 selves from these Obligations, make Conscience, there-  
 fore, of fulfilling them; *you have open'd your Mouth*  
*unto the Lord*, and *you cannot go back*; go forward, then;  
 go on, and prosper. Tho' the Endeavours of your  
 Societies should prove *unsuccessful*, yet let not the Ti-  
 tle of them be *insignificant*, and an empty Name. You  
 are call'd *Societies for Reformation of Manners*, and  
 therefore are concern'd to enquire what you are doing  
 towards it? your *Warfare*, I am sure is not *accomplish'd*,  
 for the *Canaanites* are yet in our Land, and are as *Snares*  
 Joth. 23. to us, and as *Thorns in our Eyes*. The exorbitant Power  
 13. of Vice and Profaneness is not *reduc'd*. The House of  
*Saul*, tho' we hope it grows *weaker and weaker*, yet is  
 still in being, and its Forces threatning, and therefore  
 you must resolve with Meekness and Fear, vigorously to  
 carry on this *Holy War*, and to *act offensively*, not for  
 the Destruction, but for the Salvation and spiritual Be-  
 nefit of those you appear against.

I understand you have Societies of two Sorts, that  
 have different Provinces assign'd them. Some made  
 up of Persons of a *lower Rank*, that are as the *Hands*  
 and *Feet* of this Body; others of a *higher Rank*, that  
 are to them (as *Moses* said to *Jethro*) *instead of Eyes*;  
 and both these have need of, and are serviceable to one  
 another.

another. Shall I speak particularly to each ?

1. You that have engag'd your selves in the more *active* part of this Undertaking: *Be active* in it; not as Lords over your Brethren, but as Servants to God and the Government, in a good Work. Let those of you that grow *remiss*, and indifferent, be excited by the good Example of those that yet *retain their Zeal*; And let their Care and Courage in this Matter *flourish again*; and return with a double Vigor to the Relief of those that have long *born the Burthen and Heat of the Day*, that you may *strengthen* the Hands which you have *weaken'd*. Complain not that the Drudgery lies upon you, for in such good Work as this, nothing is to be called Drudgery; but rather say, *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile*. Be not frightned with *Eccl. 11. Winds and Clouds from sowing and reaping*; nor excuse 4. your selves with the Sluggard's Fancy of a *Lion in the Way, a Lion in the Streets*. The God *whom you serve* is able to protect you, and to bear you out, however you may be threatned, and abundantly to *recompence* you, whatever Charge you are at, and whatever Damage you may sustain; you *know whom you have trust-ed*, even one who will be faithful to you while you are so to him; and tho' you may be Losers *for him*, you shall not be Losers *by him*, in the End.

2. You that have undertaken the *directive* Part, I beseech you *do your Part*. What you also contribute towards the necessary Charges of this Work *continue* to do it, *increase* it if there be occasion, do it *liberally*, do it *cheerfully* and *without grudging*; How can you bestow what you have better than in thus *honouring God* with it? And what Pity is it that such a *good Cause* as this should be *starv'd*? And there is another thing which may justly be expected from you, Gentlemen, and that is, that you be forward to *appear in Person*, when there is occasion, for the keeping up of the Reputation of this pious Undertaking. The Figure you make in the World gives you an Opportunity to do it, your Education and Converse enable you to do it with a *good Grace*; and these are Talents which put you into

*A Reformation Sermon.*

a Capacity of *erving* God and your Generation, and which must be *accounted for*. A *Frown from you* may *daunt* a daring Transgressor, and put him out of Countenance more than a Reproof or an Information from an inferior Person. A *Smile from you* may hearten an honest Reprover, and keep him in Countenance when he is insulted, as *Lot* was, with *Who made thee a Judge?* 'Twill be your Honour, Gentlemen, to *patronize* those that are *buisy* in this Service, and to stand by them, while there are those that *censure* them, and run them down as *over-buisy*. Be ready to give your Advice *before-hand* to the most regular, prudent, and inoffensive Methods for carrying on this Work; And what is done *conscientiously* and *zealously* appear in the Defence of it, and think not to excuse your selves by saying it might have been done with more Caution and Discretion in some little Circumstance or other, which 'tis an easy thing for those that seek an Excuse, and have a Mind to be critical to spy out: but that will no more justify you in an *inglorious* Retreat from them, than it would justify *David* in the Orders he gave to desert *Uriah* the *Hittite*, to say, *Why went he so near the Wall?* I know nothing can excuse your drawing back, unless you be conscious to your selves of the *Beam in your own Eye*; and if that be the Reason you are *asham'd to appear*, 'tis your own Fault, and you cannot but be *ashamed of your Reason*. But I hope better things of you, Gentlemen, that your *Hearts condemn you not*, and then you may have Confidence in this Cause of God, and shall have *Confidence in the Day of God*. Be bold, therefore, and act like your selves, like Men of Honour: Let it not be said of you, as it was of the *Nobles of Tekoa*, that they *put not their Necks to the Work of the Lord*; nay, we ask you not to *put your Necks to it*, only to *shew your Faces in it*. Honour God thus with your Honour, and you shall find him true to his Word, that those who honour him he will honour, while *those that despise and desert him shall be lightly esteemed*.

Neh. 3. 5.

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2. We are all oblig'd in our Places to do our Utmost for the carrying on of this Work, something more than by our Prayers.

1. Let us do what we can to *bring the Wickedness of the Wicked to an end.* Let our *Conversation* in every thing be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ, strict, and universally conscientious, that they who will not be won <sup>1 Pet. 3.</sup> either by the Word of the Ministers, or the Rod of the Magistrates, may be won by that. We must study to be not only *blameless* and *harmless*, and *without Rebuke*, but *exemplary* in every thing that is virtuous and praiseworthy. Let our *Light shine* before Men, that they may be brought to *glorify* that Name of God which they have reproach'd and dishonour'd. Let those that are Masters of Families keep up Religion there; and *put away Iniquity far from their Tabernacles.* In all our *Converse*, let us witness against Sin, and drive it away (if we cannot use any other Means) by an *angry Countenance.* It is our Duty to *tell* our Neighbours of their *Faults*, *between us and them alone*, in any wise to *rebuke* them, and not to *suffer Sin upon them*, lest we bear Sin <sup>Lev. 19.</sup> for them, and make our selves Sharers in their Guilt. 7.

Let us do what we can to make Sinners *asham'd* of their Sin; were they brought to that it would be an ingenuous and prevailing Principle of their Reformation. Let us have *no Fellowship with the Works of Darkness*, but *reprove them.* Let us have as little Fellowship as possible with the Workers of those Works, and so reprove them.

2. Let us do what we can to *establish the just*, to confirm those that are good in their Goodness. Let those that *fear the Lord* speak often one to another for their mutual Instruction, Quickning and Encouragement; for the *sharpening of one anothers Countenance*, and the strengthening of one anothers Hands. Those that are not themselves engag'd with the Societies for Reformation, yet should do what they can to *establish* them; if they have not your *Hand*, let them have your *good Word*; speak well of them as it comes in your Way: The City ought to be made sensible of its Obligation  
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*A Reformation Sermon.*

to them ; were it so, what an Establishment would it be to them ! As occasion offers, let them have your Help, and be ready to say, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*

To conclude, It will, I hope, be some Encouragement to you, to be *on the Lord's side*, and to assist, by your Prayers and Endeavours, for the bringing of *the Wickedness of the Wicked to an End*, and the *Establishing of the Just*, if I tell you from the Word of God, what will be, at last, the Issue of this Struggle between *Jacob* and *Esau*, between the Pious and the Profane. You may assure your selves, Brethren, the Cause of Religion and serious Piety is the Cause of God, and it will, in the End, be a *victorious Cause* : It will be so in the Day of Decision ; when the *Ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the righteous.* The Lord Jesus will then, and not till then *gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them that do Iniquity* ; then will the Wickedness of the Wicked come to a perpetual End, when into the new *Jerusalem* there shall not enter any *unclean thing* ; And then shall the *Just* be for ever *establish'd* when they shall shine as the Sun in the Firmament of our Father ; when *he that is holy shall be holy still*, shall be for ever holy. Then shall the Great Redeemer have put down all the opposing *Rule, Principality, and Power* of Sin and Satan, which are now so *daring, so threatenng*, which we are sometimes ready to fear will bear down all before them, and carry the Day. It shall all be *crush'd and sunk* ; and the Kingdom shall be *deliver'd up to God, even the Father, that that God* whom Sinners now despise and make light of, *may be all in all to Eternity.*

F I N I S.

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