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T H E
 Independent Whig.

*Iustum & tenacem propositi virum
 Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
 Non vultus instantis tyranni
 Mente quatit solida.*

HORAT. Lib. 3. Od. 3.

Wednesday, January 20, 1720.



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

Besides, Blindness and Prejudice are seldom to be resigned but with Pain, and therefore for the most Part are not resigned at all. It is but an unacceptable Civility to offer to let in the Rays of Understanding upon those Minds which are used to subsist in the Dark. It is like opening Day-Light upon a Nest of Howls, which always sets them a Screeching.

However, the Difference is considerable between natural and acquired Ignorance, and the last is much more incurable than the first. The one is capable, and often willing, to be informed; whereas the other thinks itself above it,

and is too wise to learn. There can be no Cure for one who is taught to be a Blockhead. His Ignorance is the Fruit of Instruction, and has cost him great Pains; and so his Pride is engaged to support it. As he has improved his Mind into learned Darkness, so he stands upon his Guard against common Sense, is Proof against all the Assaults of Reason, and scorns its Power. If he does not take you for his Enemy, and use you accordingly, yet at least he will pity your Mistakes, and perhaps pray for your Illumination.

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

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

I confess there have been some seeming Attempts of this Kind, which were carried on with great Dexterity and Wit, and brought great Credit and other valuable Advantages to the

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the Authors; but I should be glad to know what Service they have done to the Publick. The exposing of small Faults can do but small Service; and People may be singular in their Humours, and vain in their Drefs, without hurting humane Society. A Beau may wear a fine Coat and a gaudy Swordknot, without prejudicing the Commonweath, or indeed any one Member of it: Nor can I see any dreadful Malignity in a hooped Petticoat. A Lady may keep a Squirrel, and diversify her Face with fifty Patches on a Side, without invading private or publick Property. There is no Mischief in a harmless Snuff-Box or a Diamond Ring; nor do laced Cloaths or a clouded Cane prejudice Trade; nor the flirring of a Fan shake our Constitution. A terrible Fellow with a long Sword may be a peaceable Neighbour, and a Coquet may salute her Lap-Dog, and yet not endanger our Liberties.

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

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

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

There was one Weekly Paper which, had it gone on, would have prevented this; I mean

the *Free-Thinker Extraordinary*. It breathed an uncommon Spirit of publick Liberty, and shewed sufficiently the Capacity of the Author to do Service to Mankind. But when he had shewed his Skill, and engaged our Attention, he dropped us and his Subject, and made it necessary though dangerous to succeed him. It was never asked why he undertook it, for every one saw the Reasons and Advantages of it: But why he deserted it, has been the Subject of Enquiry; and the rather, because it was evident he wanted neither Art nor Materials.

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

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

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

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

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

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

T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, January 27. 1720.

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

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

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

That Profession must be always most honourable and deserving from Mankind, which is most useful and advantageous to them. As it is therefore impossible to shew too much Respect to virtuous Clergymen, so the corrupt Part of them cannot be too much expos'd. As the Profession which they have of the Fears and Panick of superstitious People, and in the tenderest Seasons too, enable them to do the greatest Mis-

chief, so the strongest Antidotes ought to be applied to their Poyson. It will be ridiculous to call for Protection from that Character which they constantly disgrace, and to ask Assistance from the Religion which they neither believe nor practice.

I here list my self under the Banners of the former sort; and design by this Work to illustrate the Beauty of Christianity, by exposing the Deformity of Priestcraft, and to distinguish the good Clergy from the bad, by giving to each his share of Praise or Infamy, according to the Deeds done in the Cassock. I will lose no Opportunity of doing Justice to the former, nor willingly to the latter.

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

I shall shew, that notwithstanding Christianity was first propagated by Miracles and Mildness only, and the Teachers of it had no Power but to persuade; making it withal appear in the whole Course of their Lives and Preaching, that they fought no Manner of personal Advantage

or

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in any Manner of Jurisdiction over their Hearers and Converts; yet they who, without their Inspiration and Manners, called themselves their Successors, did by Virtue of their Names lay insolent Claim to Dominion, and carried all Things before them by the dint of Terror and Excommunication.

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

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

If one of them held any Proposition, true or false, it was Reason enough for another to deny it, and curse him into the Bargain. At last there was not one Principle in their System but what was contested, and they agreed in nothing

but their own Power, though at the same time they disputed what that was.

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

I shall shew what a shameful Hand they have always had in bringing and keeping Mankind under Tyranny and Bondage to such Princes as would divide the Spoil with them. In such Case, it was a Point of Conscience and a religious Duty for Subjects to be miserable Slaves, and Damnation but to strive to be happy. But if the Prince happened to be a Lover of Mankind, and endeavoured to protect his People in their civil and sacred Rights, then were they the constant Incendiaries of every popular and wicked Faction. They preached nothing but Sedition and Blood, till they had worked up their blind and stupid Votaries to Rebellions, and Assassinations; and to such Conduct is owing a great Part of their Power and Wealth.

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

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

Magnis tamen excidit ausis.

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T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, February 3. 1720.



RING the Bells backwards : The Temple, the Temple is on Fire : The High-Priests look aghast, and the People stare, and all cry out the Craft, the Craft is in Danger.

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

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

If a Lawyer, Soldier, or Merchant deserves the Pillory; neither *Westminster-Hall*, the Army, or the *East-India* Company are in an uproar, or complain, that the Law, Trade, or the Soldiery are wounded through his Sides, nor endeavour to raise a Mobb in his behalf, or rebel in token of their unlimited Submission to Government: The fair Sex do not think themselves ill used when a Baud is tyed to a

Cart, or a naughty Nymph beats Hemp: The Eleven Apostles lost no Credit when *Judas* hang'd himself, nor would any honest Clergyman, though ever so many of the other sort did the same, or if it was done for them.

But I do not know by what Judgment or Fatality it happens, that if you but touch the Pretences or Vices of the meanest of the Ecclesiasticks, so many of their Body are in an uproar; They roar aloud, their Order is exposed; their Mysteries derided and profaned, and Religion its self in danger of being subverted, and *Socinian*, *Deist*, or *Atheist* is the best Word, and that is often given to their best Friend, and sometimes all of them.

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

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

The Temporal Condition of the Clergy does likewise place them far above Contempt: They have great Revenues, Dignities, Titles, and Names of Reverence, to distinguish them from the Rest of the World. It is too well known that Wealth, Power and Learning carry to the

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Vulgar a kind of Myſtery, and diſtant Grandeur, and command nor only Admiration and Reverence, but often a ſuperſtitious Veneration.

Added to this, they have the Poſſeſſion and Direction of our Fears, and are admitted in Health and Sickneſs: Every Sunday they have the ſole Opportunity to gain our Eſteem by worthy and uſeful Inſtructions, and all the Week by their good Lives: They educate us whiſt Young, influence us in our middle Age, and govern us in our Dorage, and we neither live nor die without them.

A numerous Body of Men ſo conſtituted and endow'd, ſo privileged and poſted, are capable of being moſt uſeful and beneficent to Society, if their Actions are ſuitable to their Profeſſions: All the World will acknowledge and pay a willing Homage to their Merit, and there will be no need of demanding, much leſs of extorting Reſpect, or Complaints and Exclamations for want of it: The Danger lies on the other Side, for there are ſuch Seeds of Superſtition in humane Nature, that all their Prudence and Caution will be little enough to prevent even Adoration to their Perſons.

Therefore, if they want that Reſpect they are ſo fond of, they can't be to ſeek for the true Reaſons, viz. their own Corruptions and Worthleſneſs, which muſt be exceeding great to get the better of ſo many Advantages. When a certain late Dutcheſs was complaining to a Gentleman of more Wit than Complaiſance, that in ſpight of her great Quality and Revenue, ſhe was ſubject to continual Affronts, *pray Madam, ſays he, is not Mr. Goodman an excellent Actor?*

If Clergymen would avoid Conempt, let them avoid the Cauſes of it. Let them not be ſtaring and maintaining eternal Claims to worldly Power: Let them not be hunting after Honours, courting Preferments, and buſtling for Riches: Let them not be aſſuming to give Models of humane Government, or to adjuſt and determine the Titles of Princes: Let them not pretend to puniſh any Man for his way of Worſhip, and to give him to the Devil for his Money or Opinion: Let them not join in Factions and foment Rebellions: Let them not defy Heaven by ſwearing falſly: Let them not promote Servitude in the People, and Barbarity in the Prince; and let them not flatter wicked Kings, and plague and diſturb good Ones.

Let them win Reſpect and wear it; but let them not earn Infamy and demand Veneration. Let not thoſe of them, who gratify brutiſh Appetites, and live in all Vilenefs, add want of Shame to their want of Grace, and bewail that they are contemned, while they are deſerving it. If a Man pretending to great Gravity and Regard, ſhould dreſs himſelf up in a Fool's Coat,

and a pair of Horns, would not People laugh at him in ſpight of themſelves? And would not his Reſentment and Rebukes add ſtill to their Mirth? A Clergyman who is Drunk on Saturday will bur with an ill Grace talk of his Dignity and Ambaſſadorſhip on Sunday. Ought we to own and reverence that Man as our Guide to Heaven, who is himſelf going a contrary Road, and rioting in thoſe Vices which his whole Duty is to refrain?

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

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

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

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

T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, February 10. 1720.



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

It was most agreeable to the infinite Goodness and tender Mercies of God, to make every Thing which he requires of us, weak Men, obvious and clear. The Importance of the Duty implies its Certainty, which is not to be found in Phrases either doubtful or obscure. The Scriptures are justly stiled the *revealed Will* of God, and are address'd to *all* Mankind, and given to remain as a Rule of Faith and Manners to the End of the World. It must therefore follow, that whatever is necessary to be known in them, is to be as easy and intelligible at one time as another, and to all Men alike.

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

What Use is there of an unintelligible Proposition? Or of a Revelation which wants to be revealed? Almighty God will never require of


us to see in the Dark, till he has given us new Eyes; nor to believe any Article, or obey any Precept, till we understand him, and know what he means. A Rule which is not plain, is no Rule at all: Nor will he make a Law binding, or the Transgression of it a Sin, till we know what it is.

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

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

Nothing is plainer than the Law and the Gospel. Whoever says the contrary, does no less than accuse

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accuse the great and good God, and justify wicked and wilful Men, whom he has left without Excuse, by telling them clearly what he expects from them. *What does God require of thee, O Man, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly?* said one of his Prophets out of his Mouth. I am very sure there is no Difficulty in understanding this.

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

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

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

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

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

Let them give us God's Will in God's Words.

Another End of their Office is to execute those Duties of our most Holy Religion, which the Word of God has left at large for every one to do, but which indeed are necessary to be perform'd by single Persons in the several Churches or Societies of Christians; such as reading the Scriptures and publick Prayers aloud to the Congregation, and administering the Sacraments: What by the Gospel Liberty is the Right of every one (as shall be unanswerably made our hereafter) is by the Consent of Voluntary and National Churches become the Duty and Business of particular Persons, who are set aside and paid for that Purpose.

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

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, February 17. 1720.



A S I hope in my last Paper, I have fully shewn that Clergymen have no Right to interpret the Scriptures for other People; so I shall endeavour in this to prove that they are the least qualify'd, for the most Part, to do so, of any Set or Society of Men, in their present State of Learning and Virtue. Which I do with a sincere Design to serve them, as well as the Laity, hoping that when they see from what Source the Neglect and Contempt, which they so much complain of, proceed, they will join heartily in their own Reformation, in answering the Ends of their Institution, and in being hereafter as useful to their Country, as many of them have been formerly mischievous.

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

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

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

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

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

From thence they are sent to the Universities (very commonly upon Charity) where they are hamstrung and manacled with early *Oaths* and *Subscriptions*, and obliged to swear to Notions before they know what they are. Their Business afterwards is not to find out what is Truth, but to defend the received System, and to maintain those Doctrines which are to maintain them. Not only their present Revenues and Subsistence, but all their Expectations are annexed to certain Opinions, established for the most Part by Popes and Synods, in corrupt and ignorant Ages, and even then often carried by Faction and Bribery, in Concert with the Designs and Intrigues of Statesmen; but are sanctify'd by Time, and are now to be received without Enquiry.

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

As Clergymen so educated cannot, for the Reasons aforesaid, be fair and impartial Judges themselves of what is Truth, so their Authority can give but little weight to such Doctrines as they may think fit to teach to others: The first Que-

Question ask'd of a suspected Witness in every Court of Judicature, is whether he gets or loses by the Success of the Cause, and if either appears, he is constantly set aside, and not trusted with an Oath.

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

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

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

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

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

Thus accoutred and thus set out, our young Ecclesiastick commences Governor and Director of Mens Consciences. He is impatient of the least Contradiction, and is all in a Flame at

an Opposition which he has not been used to. As he never questioned the Truth of any of his own Notions himself, he grows outrageous at any one else who does, and immediately cries out aloud for Fire and Faggot.

To this it is owing that the Difference between the controversial Writings of Gentlemen, and those of Divines, is so very remarkable. The first are carried on for the most Part with Humanity, and always with good Manners, even when the Matter is most poignant and sarcastical. In the Latter, at first sight, appears the *Odium Theologorum*; and Rage, ill Breeding, and Revenge, breath through ever Part of them. A proper Disposition this to make Converts, and govern the World!

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

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

I would therefore have every Clergyman enjoy the full Liberty which every Layman enjoys. *We* are not confined in our Searches after Truth; and why should the Clergy be confined, in whose Hands it is more powerful and advantageous than in ours? the granting of *Ecclesiastical Freedom* to Churchmen is as equitable as that of *Civil Freedom* to Laymen. I thank God, *We* possess a glorious Portion of the latter; and I heartily wish *them* an equal Portion of the former. This is a Subject which I think so well worth my Consideration, that I shall some time or other bestow a whole Paper upon it.

P. S. I have received *Phileleutherus's* Letter, and shall be glad to hear further from him, upon the same Subject, or any other. In due time he will see that his Assistance is not given in vain.

X *Bishop of Bangor*

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, February 24. 1720.



ly as it relates to Creeds and Confessions of Faith.

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

Thus when they debate with the Papists, they praise the Scriptures, inveigh against the imposing of Opinions, and speak in the Scile of Dissenters. But when they are pleased to rebuke Non-conformists, they borrow the Language of Papists, and urge the Authority of our Apostolick Church, and her divine Right to judge for

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

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

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

When we clearly see the Connexion of a Proposition, or know that we have God's Word for it, our Assent is inevitable. But if we neither comprehend it our selves, nor see God's Authority for it, and yet swallow it, this is *Credulity*, and not *divine Faith*, which can have nothing less than *divine Truth* for its Object. When we are sure that God Almighty speaks to us, we readily believe him who cannot lie, nor be mistaken, nor deceive us: But when Men speak, though from God himself, our Belief in them is but human Confidence, if we have only their own Authority that they had it from God: Their being-Bishops, their being learned, their meeting

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meeting together in Synods; all this alters not the Case: We can judge of their Opinions no otherwise than as of the Opinions of Men, and of their Decisions, but as of human Decisions.

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

We are sure that the Scripture Phrases were inspired by the holy Ghost, and as sure that our own Forms and Injunctions are Humane and framed by Priests. It is therefore strange that the former should be insufficient and unintelligible, and the latter infallible, and to be embraced and obey'd on the pain of Damnation; and that the Priests must do what God Almighty has without Success endeavoured to do.

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

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

So that Creeds, as they were the Result of Revenge, Pride, or Avarice, so were they the

constant Preludes and Introductions to Ignorance Cruelty and Blood; and the wretched Laity were craftily, as well as inhumanly made the deluded and unnatural Instruments of butchering one another, to prove the Infallibility of the Faith-Makers, who, while they were wantonly shedding Christian Blood, and dooming to Damnation those who called upon the Name of the true God, had the shameless Assurance to miscall themselves the Ambassadors of the meek Jesus.

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

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

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

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

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, March 2. 1720.



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

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

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

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

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for it with equal Modesty and Truth. But in order to adopt it, they are forced to drop the *Reformation*; for,

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

However, I think they themselves seem to be now sensible that it will be a difficult Matter to make our, this way, their Kindred to the Apostles, without being nearer akin to Popery; they are therefore forced to own the Church of *Rome* to be a true Church. But, I would beg leave to observe here, that as there is no conversing with a Chimney-sweeper without catching some of his Soor; so we ought not to be surprized if, in succeeding to the Orders of that Church, they also succeed to most of her good Qualities; and if the Liquor smells strongly of the Cask. I confess, amongst us Laymen, it would look a little absurd, if any one should gravely assert, that, 'indeed *Lais* was a filthy Strumper, and no virtuous Woman could converse with her; but, for all that, she was a true Virgin, and all Chastity was deriv'd from her!'

But such Absurdities as these go for nothing amongst some Sorts of Ecclesiasticks. We will therefore, in the next Place, enquire what it is which they would succeed to. The Apostles had no Ambition, Jurisdiction, Dignities, or Revenues; to which they could be Successors. We read not in Scripture one Word of Ecclesiastical Princes, Popes, Patriarchs, Primates, &c. On the contrary, our Saviour himself declares that, *his Kingdom is not of this World*; and when the young Man in the Gospel (*St Matth. ch. 19th*) asked of him, *what he should do to obtain eternal Life*? He answer'd, that, besides keeping the Commandments, he should *sell all that he had, and give it to the Poor*. N. B. He did not bid him give a Penny to the Priests.

In the 20th Chap. of the same Gospel, our Saviour takes Notice to his Disciples, that the *Princes of this World exercise Dominion over them*;

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but, says he, *it shall not be so amongst YOU; but whoever will be great amongst you, let him be your Minister, and whoever will be Chief, let him be your Servant.* Nay, he says that even the *Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.* In the 23d Chap. he condemns the *Scribes and Pharisees*, for loving the *uppermost Rooms*, and the *chief Seats* in the *Synagogue*; and their desiring to be called of *Men, Rabbi*; and he forbids all this *Pride* to his *Disciples* as well as his other *Hearers*, and orders them not to call *one another Master*, for one, says he, is *your Master, even Christ, and he that is greatest among you shall be your Servant.* Nor do I find that, while he was upon *Earth*, he laid *Claim* to any *Power* but to *do the Will of him that sent him.* Indeed, after his *Resurrection*, he tells his *Disciples* that *all Power is given to him in Heaven and in Earth*; and he bids them teach it to all *Nations*, and baptize them in the *Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*; but he does not give them the *least Power, or Dominion* of any *Kind* whatsoever.

And it is plain that his *Disciples* understood him so. *St. Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, in his 2d *Epistle* to them, *Chap. 1.* that they had not *Dominion over their Faith*, but were *Helpers of their Joy.* In the fourth *Chap.* of the same *Epistle*, he tells them that they *preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus their Lord, and themselves THEIR Servants for Jesus sake.* In the first *Epistle* to the *Corinthians*, *Chap. 3.* He admonishes them *not to glory in Men*, no not in himself, nor *Apollos*, nor *Cephas*; and tells the *People* that even the *Apostles* themselves, and all *Things* are *THEIRS*, and they are *Christ's*, and *Christ is God's.* In the 9th *Chap.* he tells them, that tho' he is free from all *Men*, yet he has made himself *SERVANT* unto all, that he might gain the more. *St. Peter* also, in his first *Epistle*, *Chap. 5.* exhorts the *Elders* to *feed the Flock of Christ*, and to take the *Overight* thereof, not by *Constraint*, but *Willingly*; not for *filthy Lucre*, but of a *ready Mind*; neither as being *LORDS over God's Heritage*, but as being *Examples to the Flock.*

Now either these *Elders* were *Clergymen*, or they were not: If they were *Clergymen*, their pretended *Successors* may see upon what *Terms* they are to be *Feeders*, and *Overseers of the Flock of Christ*: But, if they were only *Laymen*, then it is plain that no other *Qualifications* were necessary to a *Spiritual Shepherd*, than a *willing, disinterested, and humble Mind*; and all *Subjection* is, in the 5th *Verse*, commanded to be reciprocal — *Likewise, ye Younger, submit yourselves to the Elders: Yea, all of you be subject to one another, and be clothed with Humility, for God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.*

For myself, I confess that I am not *Master* enough of any *Language* to find *Words* more expressive, or which can more fully renounce all *Sorts of Jurisdiction and Dominion*, than those in the *Passages* which I have here quoted: And nothing can be more ridiculous as well as im-

pious, than to oppose them with equivocal, doubtful, and figurative Expressions. If the *Popish Priests* could but find out one such clear *Text* on their *Side*, how would they gallop away on the *Ridge* of it, till they had rode themselves out of *Breath*, and the *Laity* out of their *Senses*, and their *Estates*!

As I have made it fully appear that the *Apostles* understood our *Saviour* in this *Sense*; so it is evident that the first *Christians* had not the least *Apprehension* that the *Apostles* claimed any *Power* or *Authority* to themselves. They were poor *Men*, of mean and mechanical *Professions*, who left *Fathers, Mothers, Children, Families, Trades*, and renounced all the good *Things* of this *World*, to wander about it and preach *Christ.* Their *Disinterestedness* and *Sufferings* were powerful *Arguments* of the *Truth* of their *Doctrines*: Whereas, if they had told their *Hearers*, in the modern *High-Church Strain*, that "as soon as they became their *Converts*, they became also their *Spiritual Subjects*; That they themselves were *Ecclesiastical Princes*, and that *Spiritual Government* was as much more excellent than the *Civil*, as *Heaven* was than *Earth*, yea much more so; That the *Episcopal Honour*, and *sublime Dignity*, could not be equalled by the *Glory of Kings*, and the *Diadems of Princes*; that *Kings and Queens* ought to bow down to the *Priests* with their *Face towards the Earth*, and lick up the *Dust of their Feet* — with whole *Volumes* more of such blasphemous *Trash*, as is vended by *Dr. Hicks, Mr. Leslie*, and indeed by almost all the *High-Church Writers*; and yet not publicly disapproved, or censured by the *Convocation*, or any *Body* of the *Clergy*, though they have shewn an outrageous *Enmity* to all who have asserted the contrary *Principles*. If the *Apostles* had told them too, that they themselves had a *Right* not only to the *Tenth part* of their *Estates*, but of their *Labour*, and that since they (their *Hearers*) administered so many *things* to a *King*, who administers *Peace and War* for *bodily Safety*; how ought they not to administer more liberally to him, who administers the *Priesthood* towards *God*, and secures both *Body and Soul* by his *Prayers*?

I say, if any of this *Choice Fustian* had been broach'd to the *World*, at the first opening of the *Gospel*, what progress could *Christianity* have made? How could the *Apostles* have been disinterested *Witnesses* of the *Truth* of the *Doctrines* which gave them such *Jurisdiction, Dominion and Riches*? And how justly would the *Princes and Powers* of the *Earth* have punished such *Usurpations* upon their *Civil and Ecclesiastical Authority*?

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

This Subject shall be continued in my next.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, March 9. 1720.



R. Tillotson, in his Sermon against *Transubstantiation*, tells us, that "it might well seem strange if any Man should write a Book to prove that an Egg is not an Elephant, and that a Musquet Bullet is not a Pike." He might have added, that this was the hard Circumstance the Laity were reduced to in their Disputes about Religion with most Sets of Ecclesiasticks; and, what is still worse, when they had proved these Things, they were never the better.

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

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

Therefore, I hope no one will condemn an Undertaking intended to restore Christianity to its Primitive Innocence, and Native Simplicity; to oppose Common Sense against Pompous Nonsense, and Learned Absurdity; and to shew how, and in what Meaning, *The Kingdom of Heaven is said to be Revealed to Babes and Sucklings, and Hid from the Learned and Wise*: That is to say, it is easily learned and known, by those who make Use of their Natural Faculties, and Uncorrupted Reason; but will always be hid from such who hunt after it in the Schools

of the Philosophers, or in any ambitious and factious Assemblies and Synods of Popish Ecclesiasticks. I shall therefore endeavour to keep this plain and easy Subject clear of all vain Philosophy, and Metaphysical Gibberish, with which my Antagonists always attempt to entangle it; as knowing well, that if they can but make it Unintelligible, their Authority alone will decide every Question in their own Favour.

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

When a Command is given from God to Men, to do and perform any Action, it is not only the Right of every One, but it becomes his Duty to execute it himself, when he is capable of doing it; unless the Precept directs some other Manner of Performance: And whoever asserts that it does, is oblig'd to prove it. And he must not be surprized, if in a Case of this great Consequence, we shall expect plain and direct Texts, describing the Extent of the Power demanded, and the Persons to whom it is given. It will not do his Business to pick up Two or Three scatter'd and disjointed Sentences, and putting them upon the Rack, torture them till they confess what they never meant, against the whole Current of Scripture. It must be laid down plainly and directly, and made obvious to the meanest Capacities; not depending upon the Criticisms of *Rabbinical Learning*; not sublimated from *Jewish and Heathen Traditions*; nor extorted from doubtful, equivocal, and unintelligible Expressions. It is not consistent with the Goodness of God, to suffer a Power, upon which the Being of Christianity, and the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of all the World depends, to remain in Obscurity and Darknes; and therefore we may

(Price Two-pence.)



may be sure, that whatever of this Kind does so, is the Invention of ambitious and wicked Men, and not the Will of the great and good God.

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

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

The Apostles were inspired, had the Gift of working Miracles, could bestow the Holy Ghost, and had the Discernment of Spirits; and were consequently proper Judges of Mens Fitness for the Ministry; and could confer that Fitness. Our Modern Divines are not inspired, cannot work Miracles, nor give the Holy Ghost; nor can many of them even find out their own Spirit, so far are they from discerning that of other People.

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

Christ's Apostles were Pen-Men of the Holy Ghost, and Writ Books of Scripture: But, pray, what New Gospel do our Modern Apostles give us? (I wish None of them had ever confounded the Old!) They are at Best but Note-Makers and Commentators; in doing which, Laymen have succeeded as well, even by their own Acknowledgment.

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

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

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

ADVERTISEMENT.

Just Publish'd,

* * * I. A Short Essay upon Lying, or a Defence of a Reverend Dignitary, who suffers under the Persecution of Mr. Toland, for a Lapsus Calami.

II. A Letter of Thanks from the Author of the Comparison between the Proposals of the Bank and the South Sea, &c. to the Author of the Argument, shewing the Disadvantage which will accrue to the Publick, from obliging the South-Sea to fix what Capital Stock they will give the Annuitants.

Sold by J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane.

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T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, March 16. 1720.



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

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

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

While God is delivering his Law to the World, he is plain even to Exactness, and his Orders are full and circumstantial even about the minutest Points. This is eminently proved by his Manner of giving Laws to the *Jews*. Every Ceremony, and every Instrument and Garment, used in their Worship, is precisely described and directed. The Trumpets, the Candlesticks, the Lamps, the Spoons, the Snuffers, are all of his own Appointment, both as to the Materials and the Use of them. He makes it impossible to mistake him. He calls the Priests by their Names, points out their Persons, and shews them every Branch of their Office. He limits and governs their Behaviour while they are about it, and does not leave it to their Wisdom to invent such Postures or Ceremonies, as they may think fit to call *decent* and *significant*.

They had not the Privilege to chuse their own Garments. *Moses*, who was the *Civil Magistrate*, had it in his Charge to *Sanctify* and *Consecrate* their Persons: Their Business in the Sacrifices is pointed out to them: They are to put their Hands upon the Head of the Beast, and to receive its Blood, and to make Fires. They are not, as I remember, once made use of to speak God's Mind to his People; that is the Duty and Commission of the *Civil Magistrate*, and *Moses* performs it. They had not the least Hand in the Celebrating of the *Passover*, the *Jewish Sacrament*, to which ours of the *Lord's Supper* hath, it is said, succeeded: And as little were they employed in that other of *Circumcision*, the reputed Ancestor of *Baptism*. In short, their whole Function was to be *Servants* and *Journeymen* in the *House of Sacrifice*.

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

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

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

When God spoke to the *Jews* by his Prophets, the same Method of Clearness was observed. The Admonitions given, and the Judgments denounced, were adapted to the Capacity of every one concerned. The *Jews* it is true did not often believe them, at least not mind them; but



it was never pleaded that they did not comprehend them. God inspired, and the Prophets spake, and all understood; but neither *Creeds* nor *Paraphrases* were made, for they were not necessary. At last indeed the *Priests and Pharisees* made void the *Word of God* by their *Traditions*, and very rigidly tithing *Mint and Cummin*, neglected the greater Things of the Law, and taught for *Doctrines* the *Commandments of Men*. But we know what Thanks and Character they had for their Pains from the Saviour of the World, and what a terrible Doom he pronounced against them. Read the 23d Chap. of *St. Matthew's Gospel*, and see the Description of these vile Hypocrites, and then consider whether they be at this Day without Heirs and Successors. Indeed it seems to me to be the only Succession which has not been interrupted.

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

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

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

In this plain Manner did God Almighty always discover himself and his Will, whenever he dispensed his Laws to the World. On the other Hand, while he hid himself from the Heathen World, did their Priests ever discover him? No--- they had Deities without Number; they worshipped Stocks and Stones, Trees, Rivers, Bulls, Serpents, Monkeys and Garlick. Both their Religion and their Gods were of the Priests making, and therefore we may be sure they were hopeful Ones. They created their Deities *after their own Likeness*, angry, cruel, covetous and lustful. Their Mysteries were full of Horror, Obsceneness, Craft and Delusion. The Will of their God was searched in the Guts and Ordure of dead Beasts, and a Coop of Chickens were his Privy Counsellors. His Favour or Displeasure depended upon their Craws; if they had puny Stomacks, the God was in a Fit of the Spleen; if Ravenous, he was in a giving Hu-

mour, and would grant you any Thing, even to the Cutting of the Throats of a whole Army, or Burning of a City, or Plundering a Province: And when he was tired of his Kindness to you, he would perhaps in a Day or two do all this for your Enemy.

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

The all-merciful Being does never require of us that which we cannot find he requires. It is not consistent with his Wisdom and Goodness to make that necessary which he hath not made plain. He has with the greatest Perspicuity described the Candlesticks, Tongs, and other *Tools of Worship* under the *Jewish Law*, and yet in the Gospel has not said one Word of some Doctrines which we are told are necessary to Salvation. Altars and Priests are divinely appointed in the *old Dispensation*, but are neither directed nor described in the *new*; and yet we know of what Importance they are at present in the *Papish Church* and *elsewhere*. The Priest's Office is particularized and circumscribed, even to the Killing of a Goat, or a Pair of Pigeons; and yet under the Gospel it is not so much as hinted that a Priest shall Administer either of the Sacraments; though, if we will take their own Words for it, there can be no Sacrament without them. In the Levitical Law the *Sons of Levi* are expressly appointed to be Priests continually; but it is not once said in the Christian Law that there must be an uninterrupted Race of Bishops, or Popes, or Priests, to the End of the World, and that there can be no Church where it is not; though if this had been needful it must have been particularized: So essential a part of Christian Religion, and so absolutely necessary to every Man's Salvation, could never have been wholly omitted, or so much as left in Doubt.

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

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

N. B. The first Numbers of this Paper being out of Print, and great Demand made for them; on Friday next will be publish'd, No 1, 2, 3, 4, printed together, in order to perfect the Sets. Price 6d.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, March 23. 1720.



Take Honesty and Knowledge to be the Essential Talents requir'd for the Work of the Ministry; the One is acquired by Study, and the Other depends upon the Disposition of the Heart, or the Grace of God. Therefore he who has a Capacity to Teach and Edify, has a Right to do Both.

Those who are Candidates for the Priesthood, carry their Qualifications along with them, and having pass'd Examination, receive a Power from the Bishop, which he receives from the Law, to put these Qualifications in Practice. But, if upon Trial, they are found insufficient, they are, or ought to be rejected.

A Physician does not receive from the College an Ability to practice; but only a Declaration that he already has it. Such a Declaration are *Holy Orders*: They convey Nothing, neither Righteousness, nor Learning, nor Wisdom. They are only a Diploma or Privilege to exercise a certain Calling, during Good Behaviour. Any further than this, what signifies the Hand of a Bishop laid upon the Head of a Stripling, who seeks Promotion or a Livelihood? If that Hand puts any Thing into that Head, I would ask what is it, and how does it appear? What Alteration for the Better is to be found in the Person, or Endowments, or Spirit of the Party Ordained? How does it appear that he has any Moral Sufficiency which he had not before? Or any Spiritual Gift, besides that which he carries Home in his Pocket; and which was confer'd by the *Bishop's Secretary* for a Fee? Can there be any new Ability or Character without some Marks of it? Or is there an Alteration without a Change? It is an unconceivable Mystery to me, that the *same Man* should be *another Man*! I have known many a Man's Pride swell, and his Morals decay, after Orders; but very seldom his Manners or his Capacity enriched by them. He who has the Spirit, will do the Works of the Spirit: *By their Fruits ye shall know them.* The Thing, were it true, is very capable of Proof. Indeed, it could not be hid nor disputed. On the contrary, when neither the Heart is mended, nor the Understanding enlightened, it is manifest that the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with either of them.

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

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

I doubt the Holy Ghost is too often made free with in Popish Countries, upon the Occasion of Young Mens taking Orders. I believe it will be found that their Morives are much more Temporal. It is consider'd as a secular Employment, as much as any other; and the Labour of a Clergyman is as evidently Bought and Sold, as that of an Attorney or any Tradesman. Besides, the Way to this Calling is easy and obvious: Where is the Difficulty of learning a little *Greek*, or chopping a little Logick, and of getting by Heart a few Questions in School-Divinity? Nay, there are many Ordained there, even without any of these momentous Accomplishments.

There are some who take the Orders of Clergymen, and yet never exercise the Function of Clergymen, either thro' Idleness, or Weakness. Does the Holy Ghost call Men to the Work of the Ministry, not to do the Work of the Ministry? Or does he call Men to an Office, without giving them Gifts and Grace to perform it? It was not so in the *Apostles Days*, when God inspired



spired all whom he sent; and where the Divine Commission or Call was given, *A Door of Utterance* was also given. But there were then no *Sine Cures*, no great Revenues; no great Doctors, nor small Curates.

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

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

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

If by the Call of the Holy Ghost, on this Occasion, be meant no more than a serious and devout Bent of Mind to administer in the Publick Worship of God, as some reverend Divines, Lovers of Truth, do, I think, confess; then is the Claim of a divine Mission and successive Right utterly at an End; and the Taking of Orders is

no more than taking a Licence to perform a religious Office, for which every religious intelligent Man is already qualify'd.

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

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

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

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

N. B. Great Demand being made for several of these Papers that were out of Print, N^o. 1, 2, 3 and 4, are Reprinted together, and Sold by J. Roberts. Price Six-pence.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, March 30. 1720.

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

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

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

Every Stander-by would take it for granted, that he was conscious of the Weakness of his Client's Cause, and that it could no otherwise be defended, than by being not understood: This is, in Point, the Case of those, who de-

mand of all Mankind to be heard by the Clock; and will yet hear no Body; who talk and rail by Wholesale, whilst they cannot bear a single Jest, or ludicrous Expression; and who write Volumes by the Yard themselves, and are in an Uproar, and Outrageous at a single Half Sheet of other Peoples.

How absurd would it appear for an Army of an Hundred Thousand Men, entrench'd up to the Ears, to call aloud for the Assistance of the Constable and Watch, to defend their Camp against the Assaults and Storms of Highwaymen and House-breakers! Just such a Request do the Popish Clergy abroad make, when they cry out, Fire, Fire! Help, Help! and demand the Assistance of the secular Power; and insist, that no Sermons be preached, Books printed, or Harangues made but their own: They have already more Advantages than Truth can desire, and indeed enough to offend her Modesty, and to make her ashamed and blush; they are too well armed for a fair Adversary, and yet are always complaining of the shortness of their Weapons, and declaring themselves overcome, by calling out for more help.

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

Crown'd Heads always have thought it their Interest to keep Measures with them; Ministers

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fers of State are not able to Trick successfully, and play the Knave, without their Leave and Assistance; They take Advantage, and make their Market of all Factions and Disturbances in States, and apply them to their own Benefit: Knaves shelter themselves under their Protection; Hypocrites court and seem to admire them, and Bigots and Enthusiasts adore them: Every Event of Life contributes to their Interests: They christen; they educate; they marry; they church; they bury; they persuade; they frighten; they govern; and scarce any thing is done without them: Notwithstanding all this, they roar aloud, that they cannot keep their Ground, but that Contempt and Infidelity pour in upon them like an Inundation.

And yet it is very remarkable that the first Christians were not only destitute of all the beforementioned Advantages, but their Enemies enjoyed them; and they themselves were persecuted and contemn'd, buffeted, ridiculed and calumniated, in constant Books and Libels, published by the greatest Philosophers and Wits of the Heathen World; and yet Christianity every Day spread far and wide, and made a wonderful Progress; insomuch, as in an Age or Two, Superstition and Idolatry were driven from a great Part of the Earth.

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

Indeed it would be unbecoming the Respect and Reverence which I have always professed, and hope shall always pay to these Reverend Gentlemen, to but hint at any Thing so improbable as the contrary Conjecture: For since human Nature is always the same, who can entertain so undecent a Thought of their Designs, or have such a Contempt of their Performances, as to imagine that Mankind can grow worse un-

der the Light of the Gospel, and in Defiance of their pious Lives and Examples; and of the numerous Forms of publick and private Prayer; their constant Sermons, and godly Exhortations; and of so many Creeds, Catechisms, Systems, Commentaries, and whole Cart-loads of other ghostly Geer, which the World is every Day blessed with from the laborious Endeavours of almost a Million of Ecclesiasticks or more, who have always, and do still, cost the People more than their whole Civil and Military Expence put together. Therefore, since we may be sure that this great Change and Degeneracy cannot be owing to any remaining Defect amongst the Laity, it may well be expected from Persons of their Penetration and Perspicuity to let us into the true Causes of so surprizing a Phænomenon.

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

Besides I humbly conceive it to be impolitick upon other Accounts too: It appears to me to be very indiscreet in Persons *Militant* to endeavour to put an end to a War, which for the most part puts an end to themselves and their own Pay. A Jovial Country Parson once in a merry Mood, passing by a Waggon which was overturn'd, told the Carter that he had kill'd the Devil; to which the prophane Wretch reply'd, that he was glad of it with all his Heart, *because then, quoth Ralph, I have spoiled your Trade.* A Word to the Wife is sufficient.

Methinks also, it should be doing too much Credit to his *Satanick Majesty* to suppose him more than a Match for a Million of consecrated Persons, with all their Hierarchy Powers, and, as they say, divine Assurances about them.

N. B. *Great Demand being made for several of these Papers that were out of Print, N^o. 1, 2, 3 and 4, are Reprinted together, and Sold by J. Roberts. Price Six-pence.*

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Advertisements are taken in.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, April 6. 1720.

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

Thus, *Cæsar*, when he seized the Roman Liberties, caused himself to be chosen *Dictator*, (which was an Ancient Office) continued the Senate, the Consuls, the Tribunes, the Censors, and all other Powers of the Common-wealth; and yet changed *Rome* from the most Free, to the most Tyrannical Government in the World.

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

Whilst they see the same broad-brim'd Hats, Bands, Cuffs, and Long Gowns; and hear the same Psalms sung in the same Tone, and in the same fashioned Buildings, they think they have the same Religion, and will be angry with any one who shall tell them the Contrary.

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

The Priesthood in all Ages have made these Arts, and a Thousand others, contribute to their Greatness; and the High-Church Jacobite-Clergy of *England* have put them all in Practice to regain every Thing they lost at the Reformation; and if they could but have prevailed upon their Flocks to have follow'd them, they had long ago sold them again in the *Roman* Market; but since we of the Laity are so refractory and hang backward, they now seem resolv'd to gallop away by themselves, and leave us to come our own Pace after; insomuch that a Clergyman of the Church of *England*, as by Law Established, is, at present, become a most agreeable Sight, and many of his Brethren treat him as a Monster.

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

The poor Injured People had long felt the Malady, but were so intimidated by their own Superstition, and the over-grown Power of their haughty Masters, that they durst not think of a Remedy, till a bold and disoblige'd Friar or Two dissolv'd the Enchantment, and then the whole Christian World seem'd to rise at once against this Fairy and Fantastical Empire.

But People long us'd to Servitude, knowing not what Freedom is, or how to preserve it when thrown into their Laps, have always Recourse to some Leaders, of whose Honesty and greater Wisdom they have conceiv'd an Opinion; and these for the most Part abuse such Confidence, to advance their own Views of Wealth and Power.

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

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

But



But whilst they were thus carrying on their Project for Dominion, they found it necessary to throw out a Barrel to the Whale, and keep the Peoples Minds busied, and their Passions afloat, with Metaphysical Subtilties and Distinctions, of no Use to true Religion and Morality, tho' very conducive to their own ambitious and tyrannical Designs.

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

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

As far as I can remember, these are the important Questions which have set Mankind together by the Ears, for so many Ages, and it seems are yet thought of Consequence enough to create new Fews, and mortal Dudgeon amongst all our Sets of Ecclesiasticks. But why must we of the Laity quarrel about them too? What have Beaus and Belles, old Women, Coblers and Milk Maids to do with *Homoousios*, *Con-*

substantiality, *Personality*, *Hypostatical Union*, *Infinite Satisfaction*, &c. Neither of which hard Words, or any like them, are to be found in Scripture; and therefore, I think, we may even return them to *Rome*, that being the Place from whence they came, and be contented to be good Christians without them.

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

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

This Subject shall be continued in my next.

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. T H E .

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, April 13. 1720.



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

But far otherwise was it where it fell under the Direction of Laymen, who consider'd it as an Opportunity put by Heaven into their Hands to free themselves from the Usurpations, and unjust Domination of the Priesthood: They made no Scruple (notwithstanding the loud Cry of Sacriledge) to seize and apply to publick Uses a great Part of those Riches, which the Clergy had extorted from old Women, and superstitious and enchanted Bigots, the Compositions for Murthers, for publick and private Robberies, the Plunder of dying and despairing Sinners, and the Supports of their own Idleness, Pride, Ignorance and Debauchery.

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

This Doctrine, as little as it pleased the Clergy, yet prevailed so far with the Laity, that

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most Protestant States modelled their Ecclesiastical Polity according to their own Inclinations or Interests; and particularly, in *England* the whole Reformation was built upon this Principle, which ever till lately was esteemed the great Characteristick of the Church of *England*; and therefore 'tis the last Degree of Priestly Insolence for a Body of Men to call themselves the only true Churchmen, at the same time that they deny, and every where exclaim against the fundamental and essential Article which distinguishes it from most other Churches, and particularly from Presbytery; for as to the rest of the Articles, the *Calvinists* are more Orthodox than the Churchmen themselves.

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

This Petition was changed into an Act of Parliament by the 25th of *Hen.* the 8th, *Cap.* 19. But it is there declared that the Crown and Convocation together shall not put in Execution any Canons, Constitution, or Ordinances, which shall be contrariant or repugnant to the King's Prerogative, or the Laws of the Kingdom: The same Statute also gives an Appeal from the supreme Ecclesiastical Court to the King's Commission.

In the same Session of Parliament, the Manner of proceeding upon the *Conged'elire* is directed, *viz.*

* A Licence from the Crown is to be sent to the Chap-

* 25. H. 8. Chap. 20.



Chapter to choose or elect an Archbishop or Bishop, and a Letter missive with it to nominate the Person they are to choose; which if they do not obey, and signify the same, according to the Tenor of the Act, within Twenty Days, they are subjected to a Præmunire; and if the Election is not made within Twelve Days, the King may nominate a Bishop by Letters Patents without any Election at all, as is now done in Ireland, and formerly was so in Scotland, where their Bishops were *durante bene placito*.

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

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

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

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

The 1st of Queen Elizabeth, Ch. 1. establishes and enacts, that all Jurisdictions, Privileges, Superiorities, and Pre-eminences, Spiritual and Ecclesiastical, at any Time lawfully used, or exercised, for the Visitation of the Ecclesiastical State or Persons, and for the Reformation, Order, and Correction of the same; and of all manner of Errors, Heresies, Schisms, Abuses,

Contempts, Offences, and Enormities, shall be annexed to the Imperial Crown of this Realm, and gives Power and Authority to it to appoint any Persons, being natural born Subjects, to exercise all sorts of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; and declares at the same Time *what, and what only*, shall be deemed *Heresy*.

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

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

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

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

Even Aaron himself (though a High Priest of God's own Appointment) when Moses, the Civil Magistrate, was but a little while absent, to receive the Almighty's Commands, cheated the Israelites of their Barings, melted them into a Golden Calf, and encouraged the Boobies to say, *These were the Gods which brought them out of the Land of Egypt*. He built an Altar before his Idol, proclaimed a Fast, and then made use of all this Deceit to extort from that stupid and superstitious People, Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings; which provoked Almighty God to that degree, that his Wrath was kindled against the whole Nation, and he was inclined to consume them all, till Moses, the Lay Sovereign, turned his fierce Wrath by his Prayers, and by remembering him of the Oath he swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *viz. that he would multiply their Seed like the Stars in Heaven, &c.* And then it is true, that the Lord repented of the Evil which he thought to do unto them: But no Thanks to the Priest, who had drawn them into this Scrape. *Exod. cap. 32.*

† 26. H. 8. Chap. 1.

This Subject shall be continued in my next.

T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, April 20. 1720.

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

I shall now proceed to shew what have been the Opinions, and Practice of the whole Body of the Ecclesiasticks, since the making of these Laws; in which I shall take Notice only of their publick and Authentick Acts; for as to the Whimsies of private Doctors, I think them of so little Weight, that I shall be ashamed to quote them on either side of the Question.

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

These Commissions recited, amongst other Particulars of Spiritual Power, that of ordaining Presbyters, and of Ecclesiastical Correction.

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

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

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

Archbishop *Bancroft*, when at the Head of all the Bishops in *England*, he delivered Articles to King *James* against the Secular Courts, for encroaching upon the Ecclesiastical, owns, that all Jurisdictions, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil, are annex'd to the Imperial Crown of this Realm, as may be read more at large in my Lord *Cook's third Institute*, which I would recommend to the perusal of every one, as a Specimen of the difference between Ecclesiasticks and Laymen.

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

This

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

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

For it is certain that Archbishops and Bishops are Creatures of the Civil Power, and derive their Being and Existence from it: They are chosen by the Direction of One Act of Parliament, and ordained and consecrated according to a Model prescribed by Another, in which Those who Officiate Act only Ministerially; and all other Methods of choosing them which the Clergy can devise, are declared void and ineffectual, and will not convey any Spiritual Power at all; nor, I dare say, will any Clergyman in England pay Submission to such a Choice, if he does not like the Man; nor if he does, provided he thinks that he shall lose any Thing by it. If the Bishops have no Power but what they derive from the Crown, they can convey None but of the same Sort to the Inferior Clergy.

I durst not have stood the Imputation of Calumny in charging any of the present Clergy with Principles or Practices so directly in Defiance of these glaring and notorious Declarations of the whole Body, as well as their own repeated Oaths and Subscriptions, if I had not the Authority of the brightest Luminary of the present Church and Age (our Great Metropolitan) to bear me out, who assures us in his Appeal, "That a new Sort of Disciplinarians are arisen up from amongst our selves, who seem to comply with the Government of the Church, much upon the same Account as Others do with That of the State, nor out of Conscience to their Duty, or any Love they

" have for it; but because it is the Establish'd Church, and they cannot keep their Preferences without it: They hate our Constitution, and All who stand up in good Earnest for it; but for all that they hold fast to it; and so go on to subscribe and rail."

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

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

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

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T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, April 27. 1720.



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

I intend to shew, in the Course of these Papers, that there is not the least Colour or Pre- tence for the chimerical Distinction of Eccle- siastical and Civil, in any other Sense than as the Words *Mariime* and *Military*, are used to denote different Branches of the Executive Power; for take away the legal Establishment, and the Clergy can have no Power at all, but what flows from the Consent of voluntary So- cieties; which I undertake hereafter demon- stratively to make out; and I defy all the Eccle- siasticks in the World united together, to take one Step towards proving the contrary, without plunging themselves in everlasting Nonsense and Absurdity.

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

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

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

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

If every Bishop has this whole Power, dele- gated to him from God; then by what Autho- rity can the Exercise of it be afterwards re- strained to a particular District or Diocesis, so as to make his Actions out of it, not only *inva- lid*, but *schismatical* and criminal? Who can limit a Power given by the Almighty? Not the

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the Civil Sovereign, who has nothing to do in another Jurisdiction; nor the Bishop himself, who must accept it upon the Terms God has given it.

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

Besides, when these Bishops differ with one another, which will happen as often as they have different Complexions, Interests, or Understandings) what must the Christian World then do? Must they follow the Bishop of B—r, or the A—r of W—st—r? Or suspend their Christianity till they are all agreed? A solid Rock truly to build God's Church upon!

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

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

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

If it should be said (as indeed what is not or may not be said by Persons of their Perspicuity?) that the Power it self comes from God, but the Exercise of it is to be limited and directed by the Civil Sovereign; I answer, that, besides the egregious Blunder of distinguishing between Power and the Exercise of Power, the First being only a Right to do certain Actions, in which

the other consists; this gives up the whole Question; for there can be no greater Power necessary to give an Authority than to take it away; and every Restriction and Limitation is taking it away in Part: No one can have a Right to depose a Temporal Prince from any Part of his just Dominions, without having also the same Right to deprive him of the whole; and in this respect there can be no Difference between Temporal and Ecclesiastical Sovereignities.

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

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

Therefore in my next Paper I shall descant a little upon the voluntary and most applauded Actions of the highest, even of these High Gentlemen; and shew that they can't help acknowledging the Principle I maintain, even in the Instances where they would oppose it, and amidst their greatest Demands for Power; which I intend not to do with the least expectation or vain hopes to induce them to alter their Measures, (there being a Prescription amongst the Ecclesiasticks against such Lay Follies,) but (if possible) to open the Eyes of their blind and stupid Adorers, and to let them see what wretched Idols they are worshipping.

Just publish'd

†† An Easter-Offering to Doctors Commons, and to all the Ecclesiastical Courts and Church-Wardens in England. Printed for J. Roberts in Warwick Lane. Price Three Half-pence.

L O N D O N: Printed for J. ROBERTS, in Warwick-Lane: Where Advertisements are taken in.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, May 4. 1720.

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

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

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

The asserting of these Rights of the Lower-House is the Merit of their present Champion, supplies the Wants of Charity in him, and covers a Thousand Faults; and 'tis much to be feared and lamented that all the late Zeal of a much greater Man, and the present Services he is doing, will scarcely atone for his having acted formerly upon Low Church Principles, in defending the Prerogative of the Crown, and

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maintaining the Power of the Upper-House over the Lower.

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

Who exhibited Articles against a present Bishop for having impeached the King's Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs (wholly inconsistent with the divine Right of Bishops) but the High-Church Clergy? Who supported the late Dean of *Carlisle* against his own Diocessan? All High-Churchmen. And who defended both these Bishops? All Low-Churchmen. Who burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman a Book wrote by a Right Reverend Bishop, which asserted King *William's* Title upon the once genuine Principles of Conquest, and pass'd a scandalous and groundless Vote upon the late learned Bishop of *Worcester*, but High-Churchmen? and who voted for them? All Low-Churchmen.

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

I can safely say, that, as I had no Interest in entering upon this Design, nor can have any in continuing it, but to promote the Cause of Virtue and Truth, and to support our present legal Establishment, by shewing the Lavery that they are free, both by the Laws of God and their Country, from all the wild and enthusiastick Pretensions of the high-flown Ecclesiasticks: As I was willing also, nor wholly to despair of being able to restore again the Apostate Clergymen to the Church of *England*, and to make them really of the Principles they swear to, pretend to monopolize, and yet constantly oppose; so I shall have the utmost Pleasure, if I can contribute to these great Ends, and shall rejoice over such an Occasion, to drop this Paper.

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

It was a Saying of the wise Lord *Hallifax*, that *Dr. Ecard*, in his Treatise of the Contempt of



of the Clergy, had omitted the *chief Cause* of it, namely, (not their Ignorance, but) *the Knowledge of the Layety*; and it is very true, that the Mists of Superstition and Fear, which have been so long raising before our Eyes, are pretty well dissipated and dispers'd; nor will an Horizontal Hat, a starch'd Band, and long Petticoats, pass in this Age for essential Marks of Wisdom and Virtue.

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

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

I am sensible many of the High-Church *Papists* Clergy will laugh in their Sleeves at this Advice, and think there is Folly enough yet left among the Layety, to support their Authority; and will hug themselves, and rejoice over the Ignorance of the Universities, the Stupidity of the drunken Esquires, the Pannick of the tender Sex, and the never to be shaken Constancy of the *Mobility*; but I would put them in mind that all these fine Visions have once already, and therefore may again mislead and deceive them.

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

I am afraid they are not well informed of what it much concerns them to know, namely, that even the *Tories* themselves will not be Priest-ridden, and that those amongst them, who have any Sense, laugh at High-Church Principles in private, though they bow to the Broachers of them, and seem to admire them in publick; of the Truth of which I my self have been frequently a Witness; so that of whatever Importance they may seem to themselves, they are, in Truth, but the Tools and Cats Feet to the worst of Men; are only employed to do their Drudgery, and run down their Game; and will scarce

have for their Pains even the picking of the Bones, when (like Jackals) they have hunted down the Lyon's Prey.

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

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T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, May 11. 1720.



IT seems natural and reasonable to suppose, that Clergymen, who have a learned, ingenious, and Christian Education; who are bred up in strict Discipline; who in their Youth study the Works of PLATO, ARISTOTLE, CICERO, and other Heathen Moralists, as also the Books of the Old and New Testament, which they believe to be divinely inspir'd; who attend daily Prayers and frequent Sacraments; who pretend to have a Call from the *Holy Ghost* to teach the World; who spend a great part of their time in composing divine Discourses or Sermons; who are obliged to Pray and converse daily with Weak, Sick, and scrupulous Parishoners about heavenly Matters; who, by Conversation and close Union with one another at Visitations and other holy Meetings, and (I presume) by Prayers together, have great Opportunities, of improving themselves in Vertue and Godliness; and who are under a particular Obligation to set good Examples, and under a Sort of Necessity to observe some Decorum; should be better, than other Men. But yet, it is matter of common Observation, that they are not so; almost all in the Roman Church, and too many in other Churches, being notoriously Guilty in an eminent Degree of those Vices, which are of most pernicious or most extensive ill Consequences, and most Anti-Christian; such as Ambition, Pride, Anger, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Litigiousness, Uncharitableness, Hypocrisy, Persecution, Sedition, Treason, Equivocation, and Perjury, (whereof Multitudes of the Laity are not only wholly innocent, but remarkable for the Virtues opposite to them;) to say nothing of their equal Guilt with other Men in respect to the inferior Vices of Swearing, Drunkenness, and such like. And this Fact is honestly confess'd by the late Bishop of Sarum, who in his *Memoirs* (which we expect soon to see publish'd with the utmost impatience) tells us, that he always believes well of Laymen, till he sees cause to change his Mind; tho' as to Churchmen it is otherwise with him; for he has seen so much amiss in that Profession, that he is inclin'd always to think ill of them, till he sees cause to think otherwise.

Whereupon, it is a frequent Subject of Inquiry, how it comes to pass or what are the Causes of this Fact, which would never be credited if it was not very manifest. Some are at a loss about this Matter. But for my part I am not. And the Fact is no more surprizing to me, than are other common Facts concerning Men; which by being common, must have plain and manifest Causes. The Causes of this Fact in particular are so plain to me, that from the mere

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Consideration of them, I should wonder if I found the Clergy better than they are; and I esteem those Causes to be so necessarily productive of their Effect; that I do not think it Presumption to pretend to know the Doings of the High Clergy in all Ages to have been wicked; even without *History* or *Testimony*, which are requisite to give us the Knowledge of other Mens Crimes. GROTIUS's Observation, *qui legit historiam Ecclesiasticam, quid legit nisi vitia Episcoporum?* must be true, and justly apply'd to all other Clergy as well as the Christian.

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

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

Nothing therefore has so direct a Tendency to debauch the World, as to debauch the Youth: And the earlier, the more effectual; for thereby Innocence and Vertue may be so effac'd, as in a little Time to leave no Memory or Trace of them, no more than QUARTILLA in PETRONIUS ARBITER had, who, tho' a young Women, did not remember that she had ever been a Maid.

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

1. First, the Youth who are sent to Universities are early initiated into Perjury, by being obliged to take College Oaths, in some respects impertinent or ridiculous, in others wicked, or impossible to be kept; by which means false Swearing becomes familiar to them, and they esteem

Oaths



Oaths only as Matters of Form, and their Breach to be but common Qualifications for Preferment.

2. Secondly, When they go into *Holy Orders*, they profess, that they are inwardly mov'd by the *Holy Ghost* to take upon them their Office: tho' nothing is more notorious, than that many are inwardly mov'd by the Prospect of Power and Wealth, and by Necessity of a Maintenance; and that many use all the Arts and Means, to no purpose, to procure to themselves Law and Physick Fellowships in Colleges, and other Lay-Preferments, (where no Engagements contrary to their Judgments and Consciences are requisite) in order to avoid the Burden of going into Orders: And by consequence, that they feel no inward Motions of the *Holy Ghost*; unless he can be suppos'd constantly to concur just as serves the Purposes of Men engag'd in the Pursuit of their Temporal Interests. Here then is a solemn Lye and Prostitution of the Conscience in all those who do not feel themselves mov'd by the *Holy Ghost*.

3. Thirdly, Many of the Clergy abroad subscribe *Articles of Religion*, which they do not believe. Mr. WHISTON (*Essays, &c. p. 237.*) says, he believes there is scarce one Clergyman, even of our reformed Church, that has consider'd and examin'd Things with any Care, who believes all the 39 *Articles* in their proper and original Meaning. This implies, that the Unbelievers, among the Clergy, of the *Articles* are very numerous; unless it be suppos'd, that few of the Clergy consider and examine Things with any Care. But the Thing is manifest from the *Sophistry* and *Knavery* used by many of them to palliate their Subscription to the *Articles*; which imply, that they do not believe those *Articles*. (1.) Some pretend to subscribe them as *Articles*, which, tho' in part Erroneous, they oblige themselves not to contradict. (2.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any Sense, wherein they can understand them according to the Rules of Grammar. (3.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any Sense, wherein they can reconcile them to Scripture. (4.) And others chuse the Sense, they pretend to subscribe them in, out of the several Senses they suppose intended to be held forth by the same Article. And I wish more of them pretended to subscribe them honestly and fairly, viz. in the Sense really intended by the Imposers, who, to prevent Diversity of Opinions, impose their own Sense, as agreeable to Scripture; and therefore cannot be supposed to have intended, that the *Articles* should differ from all other Writings, which all Readers endeavour to understand in the one Meaning intended by the Authors. Nay, to subscribe the *Articles* without believing them, is so reputable among the High Jacobite Church-men, that a Fair Subscriber, that is, one who subscribes in the one Sense he supposes originally intended, passes amongst them for the Worst of Men, viz. a *Presbyterian*, and an Enemy to the Church.

4. Fourthly, Every Clergyman instituted into any Benefice, swears, That he has made no simoniacal Payment, Contract or Promise, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other, to his Knowledge, or with his Consent, to any Person or Persons whatsoever, for or concerning the procuring and obtaining of this Ecclesiastical Dignity, Place, Pre-

ferment, Office or Living, (respectively and particularly naming the same whereunto he is to be admitted, instituted, collated, installed or confirmed) nor will at any Time hereafter perform or satisfy any such kind of Payment, Contract or Promise made by any other, without his Knowledge or Consent. So help him God, through JESUS CHRIST. Now whether any of them break this Oath, I leave to the Consideration of the Reader, who ought to esteem all Clergymen taking it guilty, that either make Presents to any Body, or marry, or compound with the Patron about Tythes, in order to get the Benefice, no less than those who, by Bargain, pay Money before or after the Benefice is procur'd.

5. Fifthly, An Oath of Allegiance to his Majesty King GEORGE is taken by all Benefic'd Clergymen; who may be justly deem'd perjurd, if they do not pay the same regard to his Majesty, which they pretend to have been due to King CHARLES the First, or Second, or to Queen ANN, at the Beginning and latter End of her Reign. The Popularity and Credit to which this Perjury intitles the High Jacobite Clergy too among one another, and the Disgrace attending those who are faithful to the Oaths they have taken, (the former being dubb'd by them *Honest Men*, and Good Churchmen, for breaking their Oaths; and the latter *Rogues* and *Betrayers* of the Church, for keeping them;) leaves us no room to doubt that the Perjured of this kind are but too numerous; however, I am willing to think it would be Injustice to say, that many Laymen need not go out of their own Parishes to find one at least, and often more, where there are Lecturers and Curates.

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

ADVERTISEMENTS.

On Saturday next will be published,

* * Number 42. of the *London-Journal*. To be continued Weekly on Saturdays. Sold by J. Roberts, at the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-Lane.

And whereas the Undertakers of this Paper have propos'd to pursue New Methods in their Journal, for the Entertainment of their Readers, which are too long to be inserted here; and they being different from whatever appeared in the Town before, the same will be published as an Introduction to the *London-Journal*, Numb. 42. To which will be added, a fair Challenge to Mr. MIST, Champion for the Tories.

Just Published,

†† The *Fair Circassian*, a Dramatic Performance. Done from the Original, by a Gentleman-Commoner of Oxford. Printed for J. Watts at the Printing-Office in Wild-Court, near Lincolns-Inn-Fields; and sold by J. Graves in St. James's Street, W. Lewis and W. Chetwood in Covent Garden, A. Dodd without Temple Bar, J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane. and W. Meadows in Cornhill. Price One Shilling.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, May 18. 1720.

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

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

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

Formerly, when some certain Persons were content to be Protestants, the Church of Rome was the *Spiritual Babylon*, and the *Scarlet Whore*, and *Sodom*; and the Pope was *Anti-christ*; for he sat in the Temple of God, and exalted him-

self above all that is called God. But this was Truth, and could not hold long, considering into whose Hands it was fallen; and therefore in a little Time, when they had a Mind to get into the Pope's Place, and to do and say as he did, the Church of Rome became all of a sudden a true Church, and an old Church, and our Mother Church. In short, the old withered Harlot and the Mother of Whoredoms grew a great Beauty, and her Daughter here in England resembled her Mamma more and more every Day she lived, and gave the foregoing Reasons for it.

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

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

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

The



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

I wish I could keep these Impositions and wild Claims altogether out of *England*, and confine them to Popish and Infidel Countries only. But that which is obvious and avowed cannot be hid. Very many of our High Jacobite Clergy aim at Dominion by the same wicked Means, and hood-wink and alarm us all they can. They lead us out of the Road of Reason, and play their Engines in the Dark; and all the Illumination we can get from them is, that we are all in a Mist. Without their Guidance we go astray, and with it we go blindfold. All their Arguments are fetched from their own Authority. Their Assertions are no less than Rules and Laws to us; and where they lead we must follow, tho' into Darknes and Servitude. If we grow wilful, and break loose from our Orthodox Ignorance, we are pursued with hard Names and Curses. Doubting is Infidelity, and Reason is Atheism. What can we do in this Case? There is no Medium between a Blockhead and a Schismatick; if we follow them blindly, we are the First; and the Second, if we leave them. We want Faith, if we will not take their Word; and we want Eyes, if we do.

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

The eternal War that they wage against Reason, which they use just as they do Scripture, is founded upon good Policy; but it is pleasant to observe their Manner of attacking it. They reason against Reason, use Reason against the Use of Reason, and shew from very good Reason that Reason is good for nothing. When they think it on their own Side, then they apply all its Aids to convince or confound those who dare to think without their Concur-

rence: Therefore in their Controversies about Religion, they frequently appeal to Reason; but we must not accept the Appeal, for if our Reason be not their Reason, it is no Reason. They use it, or the Appearance of it, against all Men; but no Man must use it against them. As there is no such Thing as arguing and persuading without the Assistance of Reason, it is a little absurd, if not ungrateful, in these Gentlemen to decry it at the same Time that they are employing it; to turn the Batteries of Reason against Reason, and make it self destroy it self.

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

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

What a Contempt must this Tribe have for Mankind!

N. B. That no Gentleman, who thinks fit to write any Thing under my Title, may lose the Praise of his own Productions; I do hereby acquaint the Publick, that the *Independent Whig* has not, since he began this Paper, writ any Thing else; and that any Book which has already taken, or may hereafter take his Title, is None of his.

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T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, May 25. 1720.

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

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

It is not pretended by any of the Advocates of *Infallibility* or *Authority*, that God has deliver'd

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

If then God has not provided an *Infallible Judge*, nor any Men with *Authority* in Matters of Religion; there is some other way, whereby Men may be secur'd against all dangerous Errors and Mistakes in Religion, and whereby they may discern all such Truths as are necessary to their Salvation. Now that way our Saviour has declar'd to us in these Words, *If any Man desire to do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self*: that is, if a Man has an honest and sincere Mind and a hearty Desire to do the Will of God, he has the best Preservative against dangerous

(Price Two-pence.)



gerous Mistakes in Matters of Religion; and God or his own Understanding will enable him to distinguish sufficiently, whether Doctrines be of God or Men, and will conduct him into all necessary Truths.

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

But notwithstanding the Plainness of the Case, it is no Wonder, that weak People now a Days should believe in Priests and not in Christ; should be Priestlings and not Christians; when in our Blessed Saviour's own Time, the Jews were ready to believe in any Impostors, and averse to believing in him, as he himself tells us. *I am come, says he, in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not; if Another shall come in his own Name, him ye will receive; how can you believe, which receive Honour one of another?* That is, (to make a sort of Application to our present Times) "you have the Bible among you, wherein I teach you in my Father's Name, wherein I bid you search, examine, and try all Things for your selves, and to call no Man Master in Religion upon Earth: That Bible you reject in not understanding it for your selves; but if any Man set up for an Authoritative Interpreter of it, him you will receive for your Master, and call your selves after his Name. How can you be Believers in and Followers of me, who believe upon the Authority of Men, and reject the Authority of God?"

Christianity, or Religion, thus truly understood, has too many Enemies to make it lost Labour to prove it true by Arguments. And therefore I observe, in Proof of our Saviour's Doctrine, *That a hearty Desire and Endeavour to do the Will of God, is the best Preservative against dangerous Mistakes;* First, that therein our Saviour recommends the best and most proper Disposition of Mind to qualify a Man to receive Truths from God, and to enable him to make a right Judgment as to what proceeds from God and what from Men. For a good Man is most likely to have right Apprehensions of God and Divine Things. Secondly, such a Disposition in

a Man supposes his Impartiality in the Search of Truth; that he has the Indifference of a Traveller to every Way but the true Way; that he has no Partiality to any particular Doctrine; and that he is superior to the Temptations of any Passions, (which blind the Mind) and has no Reason to deceive himself by receiving Things without Evidence; nor Inclination to reject what has Evidence. Thirdly, God will not suffer the best dispos'd Minds to fall into dangerous Mistakes; but will, as he says himself, *guide them in Judgment, and show them his Way.* Again, God says by SOLOMON, *If thou incline thine Ear unto Wisdom, and apply thy Heart to Understanding; yea, if thou cryest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding, if thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasure; then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.*

Indeed, the Bible is so plain as to all necessary Truths, that he that runs may read; and a Day-Labourer cannot fail of finding Truth that searches it there; and is in no Danger of failing, unless he delivers himself up absolutely to some Guide to interpret the Bible for him. Fourthly and Lastly, living honestly, and seeking after Truth, are the best Things a Man can do, and the very Perfection of his Nature; and by Consequence all that God, who is a good and reasonable Being, can require of him.

I shall conclude this Paper, which I have written in Behalf of Christianity, and against Antichristianism, with another Divine Saying of our Blessed Saviour. *He that speaketh of himself, seeks his own Glory; but he that seeks his Glory that sent him, the same is true, and no Unrighteousness is in him.* As if he had said, "Hereby you may distinguish One that comes from God from an Impostor. If any Man seeks his own Glory and Authority, you may conclude, God has not sent him; but, whatever he pretends, that he speaks of himself, preaches himself, and from himself; but he that seeks the Honour of God, and not his own Interest, Advantage and Authority, by directing Men to the Authority of God alone, that Man has no Falshood, no Design to deceive. You may conclude him to be no Deceiver or Impostor."

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* * Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church, and National Happiness. By B. M. Sold by T. Jauncy at the Angel without Temple-Bar; and J. Roberts in Warwick Lane. Price Bound Five Shillings.

LONDON: Printed for J. ROBERTS, in Warwick-Lane: Where Advertisements are taken in.

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, June 1. 1720.



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

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

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

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

After he has put the Clergy in "joint Commission with the Angels themselves," as he says God has done, it is no Wonder that he will not allow the meanness of them to be any Man's *Servant*, how great soever. He therefore reasons against the 12th of *Henry 8th*, because it calls the *Patrons of Chaplains their*

Masters. If some of them "formerly were *Stewards and Clerks of the Kitchen to People of Distinction*," as he says *Bp. Latimer* complains some of them were forced to be in his time; I cannot see for all that how they could, according to *Mr. Collier*, suffer by it in their Dignity and Reputations; because for as good Reasons as before, their gathering the Rent and going to Market for Provision, might give them *Jurisdiction* over the Person who employed them. I cannot join with some of the *Criticks* in censuring the Author of the *Scornful Lady*, for dispatching *Parson Reger* in a Morning, with his Basket under his Arm, to scour the Roofts and gather Eggs; the same being a primitive Branch of his Office, if we may believe the aforesaid *Bishop*.

But though "People misapprehending the Priests Office entertain a *Chaplain* upon the same Account they do their Footmen, only to garnish the Table and stuff out the Figure of the Family" (*Collier's Essays*, part. 1. p. 204, 205.) yet for a Patron to account such a "Consecrated Person his Priest, as if he belong'd to him as a *Servant*, is, in effect, to challenge divine Honours, and to set him (self up for a God." (p. 207.) *Mr. Leslie* puts the same Thing stronger, in fewer Words, and will not suffer any Man (Prince or Subject) to say, *my Parson*, or *my Chaplain*, in any other Sense than we say, *my King* or *my God*.

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

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

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

Milton, though otherwise a Man of great Parts and Merit, yet wanting either the Sense or the Grace to see the Usefulness and Excellency of these adoped *Sovereigns*, speaks of them with too much Contempt. He says, that "in State perhaps they may be listed among the upper serving Men of some great Household, and be admitted to some such Place as may file them the Sewers or the Yeomen Others



"*Others of Devotion, where the Master is too resty or too rich to say his own Prayers, or to Bless his own Table.*" (2. Vol. of his Works in Fol. p. 509.)

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

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

It must be owned farther, that a Chaplain in a Great Family is a useful Body for most Purposes, except that of his Function. He is often a facetious Person, and his Jokes and Puns keep the upper Part of the Family in a good Mood; for, as to the *Inferior*, he deigns not to speak to them, unless to Insult them, and thereby reach them the great Respect which they owe him. He moreover graciously condescends to pry into all the Actions and Behaviour of the Servants, by which he keeps them in Obedience and Fear, at least of himself.

Scire volunt secreta domus atque inde timeri.

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

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

After all this, who can wonder that our *Household Priest* holds up his Head, and adores himself? He is an hourly Witness of his own

Importance and Figure; and finding himself an extraordinary Body, it is nothing strange that he demands extraordinary Treatment. As little to be admired is the Erectness of his Mien, and the dignified Primness of his Manner; how else should he be himself, and differ from all other Men? His Authority and the Custom of the Cloth give him a Right to Contradiction; and if he loves State and *pompam aulicam*, what Layman does not? If he hates to see a Brother peeping thro' Timber, or wringing in a String, who can blame the Workings of Self-love? If the *German Princes* are under his Displeasure for sacrilegiously admitting their Pages to say Grace; so are all they who make bold to cut their own Corns, under the Frowns of that famous Artist *Don Sabro of Chelsea*.

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

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

ADVERTISEMENT.

This Day is publish'd, in 2 Vols. 8vo. the 4th Edition (with a Character of the Author and this Work, by Mr. Addison.) of

Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth; containing an Account of the Original of the Earth, and of all the general Changes which it hath already undergone, or is to undergo, till the Consummation of all Things. In 4 Books. 1. Concerning the Deluge. 2. Concerning Paradise. 3. Concerning the Burning of the World. 4. Concerning the New Heavens and New Earth. Adorn'd with 17 curious Cuts. In this Edition are added the following Tracts. I. A Review of the Theory, and of its Proofs; especially in Reference to Scripture. II. An Answer to Mr. Warren's Exceptions made against the Theory. III. A Relation of the Proceedings of the Charter-House, upon Occasion of King James II. his presenting a Papist to be admitted into that Hospital: Being the first Stand that was made against the Dispensing Power by any Society in England. All written by Dr. Burnet. Printed for J. Hooke at the Flower-de-Luce against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street. Price 12 s.

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, June 8. 1720.



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

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

(Price Two-pence.)

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

1. No Man will deny but that the *Quakers* are born with the same natural Parts as the Churchmen. It will also be manifest, that they improve their natural Parts by the Knowledge of what the Clergy esteem the most important and sublime Points of Religion, under their general, diffus'd, *unhir'd* Ministry; equally at least with the Members of the Church, under the Direction of their Clergy *hir'd* for Wages; for by free Conversation with both sorts, you will find that the *Quakers* understand as well the Nature and Attributes of God, the Doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, the Satisfaction, the Incarnation of God, and other such Points, and express themselves as clearly about them as Churchmen; and I presume this Matter will appear so clear as not to admit of the least doubt. I do confess, the *Quakers* have some Errors, (for what Man is or can be free from Error?) But as to those Errors, I think two Things may be offer'd in excuse of them.

First, I observe in general with the most ingenious and Reverend Mr. NORRIS, (in his *two Treatises of the Divine Light*, 2d Tract, p. 32.) who says, *that he cannot think Quakerism inconsiderable, as the Principles of it are laid down and manag'd by Mr. BARCLAY. That great and general Contempt they lie under does not binder him*

from



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from thinking the *Sett* of the Quakers to be by far the most considerable of any that divide from the Church, in case the Quakerism that is generally held be the same with that which Mr. BARCLAY has deliver'd to the World for such; whom he takes to be so great a Man, that he professes freely he had rather engage against an hundred BEL-LARMINES, HARDINGS; and STAPLETONS, than with one BARCLAY.

Secondly, I observe, that the Quakers seem very excusable in respect to several of the Errors wherewith they are charg'd; and that their Neighbours, if they would do as they desire to be done unto, may justly pardon them. For as to their Opinions about Tyths and paying Wages to Clergy, (which are deem'd fundamental Errors, and judged by the Clergy in their Books against the Quakers to be a sort of *Atheism*) they have it to say in their Excuse, that Tyths, which were a Part of the ritual Law of the Jews, are as such abolish'd under the Gospel, which has repeal'd the whole ritual Law. It seems also strange to them, that Ambassadors, (as the Clergy pretend to be) or Negotiators, should claim Money from those to whom they are sent; that it appears more strange that the Clergy, who pretend to be Successors in Ambassadorship to Christ and his Apostles, should claim Tyths or Money, and thereby suppose our Blessed Saviour himself and his Holy Apostles to have begun that Claim: Therefore they alledge, that if the Clergy are only voluntary Ambassadors or Negotiators, they ought to bear their own Charges; and if only Ministers or Servants, they should be paid their Wages by those who hire them, and not claim an independent Maintenance; and herein they pretend to follow the Primitive Christians, who (according to the Reverend and Learned Dr. REEVES, in his *Apology*, &c. Vol. 1. p. 44.) would not pay Taxes for the Maintenance of the Heathen Temples: And indeed there is no colour to make Tyths due *Jure Divino*, that Point being fully determined on the side of the Quakers by that accomplish'd Scholar and Divine Dr. Prideaux, in his *Original and Right of Tyths*; and besides it is a Matter of Contest among the Clergy, to which sort of them an independent Maintenance does by Divine Right belong.

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

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

It will be difficult to find one Quaker that cannot read, unless he has been Educated and Bred up in

the Church, and became a Convert to Quakerism. Whereas, I will venture to affirm, that Half the Common People of the Church, especially in the Country, cannot read a Word.

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

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

2. As to the Comparison, which are the Best Men, Quakers or Churchmen; I suppose, it will not be deny'd, but that the Quakers are as Good Men, as Good in their Families; as Good Neighbours; as Quiet, Temperate, Chaste, Sober, Free from Passion, Industrious; as Clear from the Gross Crimes which fill the Goals, and expose Men to the Pillory and Hanging; as Charitable in their Sentiments to those who differ from them; as Great Enemies to Persecution; as True to Liberty and Property as any Churchmen; and, in fine, as Good Subjects, and as Loyal to King GEORGE, (tho' Loyalty be the distinguishing Principle and Glory of our Church,) as any forsaken Follower of Dr. SACHEVEREL, LUKE MILBOURNE, or other Sweating Loyal Divine.

Since, therefore, it is undeniably evident, that the Quakers are at least as well and piously Educated, without any Charge to the Publick, as Churchmen are with it; I conceive it is incumbent on every One, who does not envy the Clergy their Preferences, to endeavour to find out some other Way to make them as useful as possible to Mankind, and to put them upon such an Establishment as may enable them to deserve all their Power and Riches, which shall be the Subject of some future Papers.

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T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, June 15. 1720.

POETS tell us that *Midas* changed every Thing he touch'd into Gold, and *Medusa's* Head every one who law it into Stone; but *Priestcraft* is yet of a more mischievous Nature, for that converts all who come within its Influence into Idiots or Lunatics; and every Verrue or good Quality of the Mind into Nonfense or Roguery.

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

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

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

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

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

Religion from Imposture, is decried, and the Use of it deemed impious and dangerous.

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

Enthusiasts, fanatical, melancholly, monkish, reclude and sequestered Persons, are esteemed *the Religious*; and are supposed to know the other World in Proportion as they know little of this. Philosophers, and Men of Wit or sound Knowledge, are generally accused of Infidelity and Atheism; nay, the cardinal Virtues themselves can't escape; but without the Belief of certain fashionable Speculations, are accounted only *shining Sins*, and those who possess them are treated with Ignominy; and indeed none are thought fit for Heaven by Gentlemen of this Cast, but such as no Man of common Sense would care to keep Company with upon Earth.

Celibacy is esteemed a Virtue in some Churches, and not discouraged in others; and the disobeying the great Dictates of Nature, and the positive Commands of God, *to encrease and multiply*, is mis-called Chastity; and the wasting our Time in running up and down from Church to Chappel, from Chappel to Church to hear *Masses*, and idle Harangues, and being perfectly useless to Society, and good for no one Thing in the World, is called by the *Popish* Priests *Devotion* and *Godliness*; as if the Almighty could be any way served but by doing good to his Creatures.

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



An Attempt to oblige the Clergy to keep the Laws they have sworn to, and the Articles they have subscribed, is to oppose received Opinions, and *quieta movere*. An Endeavour to preserve our Legal Constitution, is Sedition, Faction, and being *given to change*; and a generous Love for all Mankind, and the Liberty of our Country, with a noble Resolution to venture Life and all which is valuable here below for that glorious Cause, is Rebellion, and worse than the Sin of Witchcraft.

Wasting, macerating, and torturing our Bodies by Fasting and Penances, is sanctifying our Souls; and to reject and throw back the Benevolence and bountiful Gifts of indulgent Providence, is to shew and pay our grateful Acknowledgements to his Goodness; as if he gave us any Thing not to use and enjoy it, but we were to accept these Blessings only in trust for the Clergy, and to live poorly our selves, that they may riot in Luxury, Profuteness and Pride; which they have seldom fail'd to do, when they have had the Means of doing it; carnal Things being observ'd best to suit with spiritual Minds.

Playing Monkey Tricks at Church, passes amongst the Papists for the Worship of God; and they go to ghostly Dancing Masters, to know how to accost him fashionably: The failing in a Ceremony, the Omission of a Bow, the not filing to the Right or Left readily, or not adjusting their Motions to the Tune and Time of the Organs, are all dangerous Errors, and favour much of Heresy; and the *worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth* only, is Disobedience to the Church, and little better if not worse than Atheism: The decking up, and dressing of Churches, and giving the Deity fine Cloaths, is Decency, and doing him honour.

Consecration, which is the Appointment or Appropriation of Places, Persons, or inanimate Things to be used only in the immediate Service of God, (and which may be so applied indifferently with any Ceremony, or with none at all) is turn'd by the *Romish* Priests into a sort of Incantation or spiritual Juggling: By Virtue of a little Holy Water, looking towards the *East*, mumbling over a few cunning Words, certain Motions of the Hand and Head, and by the help of some Powder de Pimp, the said Places, Persons, and Things, become sacred, and the Holiness is transferred from the Minds of the Communicants to the Ground, the Waincoat, and the Carcass and Cloaths of the Priest; and so the Devotion due to Almighty God, is chang'd into a senseless Idolatry to as senseless Men and Idols.

Prayers are turn'd by them into Curses, and Sermons into Invectives and Libels: Benevolence and good Will towards Men, and even Charity its self, which is comprehensive of all the Vertues, and without which Faith and Hope signify nothing, and which is not confin'd to Persons, Nations, or Languages, to Sects nor Opinions, but ought to be as free as the Elements, and diffusive as the animal Creation, is chang'd into Faction, Partiality, and often Profuteness to support a Party; and a Combination against all Mankind, who do not think and act as we do.

But no Parts of Speech have had so ill Fortune, as Scripture Language, and even amongst some Protestants: Appellatives, and the Names of Complex Ideas, are often left untranslated, that they may pass for real Beings, and signify whatever the Priests have Occasion for; and sometimes where they have been translated, false or unfair Meanings have been af-

signed to them, and they have been made to convey a quite different Sense from what they import in Scripture: The Word *Ecclesia* or Assembly is translated *Church*, which *there* always signifies the *Christian People*, and in our Articles, is defined to be the *Congregation of the Faithful*, but is now generally us'd only for the Clergy; and the Word *Episcopus* (which in *English* is *Overseer*) is english'd *Bishop*; so that Women, and the ignorant Crowd are fully satisfy'd that they have found in Scripture a *Lord of Parliament*, and a *Diocesan Prelate* with a Mitre upon his Head, and a Crozier in his Hand; and whenever they hear or read the Word *Presbyter*, they fancy they see a Parson beating his Cushion in a Pulpit, and believe him to be *jure Divino*: Instances of this kind are endless.

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

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

One Drop of Priestcraft is enough to contaminate the Ocean.

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* * A Letter to the Independent Whig, occasion'd by his Considerations of the Importance of Gibraltar to the British Empire. Sold by the Booksellers of London and Westminster. Price Six-pence.

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THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, June 22. 1720.



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

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

Therefore especial Care ought to be taken, effectually to distinguish true Zeal from false, and the Thing from the Pretence of it. For, if it is not well grounded, it falls under the Apostle's Censure, of a *Zeal*, which is *not according to Knowledge*. Of the latter Sort, is that with which crafty Men insatuate the credulous Multitude, who take their Religion upon trust, and their Faith and Zeal at second Hand: Their Godliness consists in Prejudices and a Set of Names. They hate Dissenters, because they do not come to Church, and are strict Observers of the Lord's Day, and seek God without Book. And they are *zealous* for the Church; but if you ask them what they mean by it, you will find it to be either the Organs, the Ring of Bells, or the Parson. They have a zealous Antipathy to a black Cloak, which is a certain Sign of a wrong Religion; and they have a doating Fondness for a black Gown, which is an infallible Mark of the true Church. They therefore abhor and insult the former, and honour and bow down to the latter; which Temper and Behaviour in them are wonderful Demonstrations of the Spirit of the Gospel; and entitle them to the highest Favour and Approbation of their Spiritual Governours. At the time when Doctor Sacheverel was suffering the Law for Sedition, I asked one of his Mob, who was struggling at some Distance from the rest, in *Lincoln-Inn-Fields* (as they were proceeding to demolish *Daniel Burges's* Meeting-House) what provoked him to so much Outrage against *Daniel*, and his Congregation? He answered, *because they had murder'd King Charles the First*. I then asked him, What he knew concerning King *Charles the First*? Why quoth he, *he was one of the Twelve Apostles; and the Doctor, Sacheverel, is the best Friend he has in*

the World. Here he swore a great Oath, and left me to pity the Ignorance and Phrency of the enchanted Crowd.

Ignorance is the Mother of this sort of *Zeal*, and Craft its Father: And as its Pedigree is vile, so is its Behaviour brutal and abominable: It is the Tool of Knavery and Design, and operates by Folly, Wickedness and Force; It is a Mastiff uncoupled, and halloo at Conscience, Sobriety, and Peace; and set on to devour every good Quality which it possesses not: It is rouzed by Lies, and animated by Liquor: It combats Truth with Curfes, and Moderation with Blows. Its Courage is Madnes, and it is bold through Blindness. It has never any Mercy upon others, and seldom upon its self. It takes the Word of its *Driver*, and mistakes Mischief for Merit, and his Word for God's. It is the most miserable of all Slaves; it is blind, and it is distracted; and its only Freedom is to act Outrages, and shed Blood. It is neither blessed with Enjoyment nor Rest. It boils with Anger; it burns with Envy; it is tortured with Hatred; it is worried by all the worst Passions. It is incapable of Happiness; and either deaf to Instruction, or undone by it; for the Minute it grows wiser, it dies.

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

When I see a grave Doctor proudly urging upon his Hearers the Divine Right of *Episcopacy*, which



which is just of as much Importance to Mankind as the Divine Right of *Geography*; I see presently into the Heart of the Man, and would lay any Wager that he has a burning Zeal to succeed *St. Peter* in the Divine Revenue and Lordship of some human Diocess, or else courts some Bishop with great Zeal for his Lordship's Neice, or for a fat Benefice. And I cannot but own that a Christian Zeal for a Thousand Pounds a Year, or even for Two Hundred Pounds a Year, or even a rich Wife, gifted with a good Apostolick Fortune, is a very commendable and very prevailing sort of Zeal; but I cannot see that it equally affects the whole Congregation. Pray of what Moment is it to a harmless well-meaning Flock of Sheep, whether their Shepherd is called *Pastor* or *Overseer*? Or, whether he has Twenty Pounds a Year Wages, or Twenty times as much? Or, whether he is hir'd by the whole Village, or only the chief Man of the Village? Or, whether he wears a plain Hat, or a high *Crown'd Cap*? Or, whether he wears *Linnen* or *Woollen*? But it is of great Moment to them, whether he feeds them or starves them; or whether he defends or plunders them; or whether he utterly neglects them himself, or only leaves them to the Care and Command of his Dog; or whether he seeks their Safety and Happiness, or only their Flesh and their Fleeces.

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

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

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

If People would but look a little into their own Hearts and Constitutions, they would too often find that their Zeal is only Anger, and that this hot Devotion resides altogether in the Blood. I have long observed that your Choleric Fellows are your most

zealous Fellows, and are always the warmest Churchmen; and that, amongst the Ladies, the most amorous are ever the greatest Bigots. He who is peevish at his Table, will be peevish in his Pulpit, and as highly offended at an ill Dinner, as at a Conventicle. I once caught a great fat Doctor at *St. Paul's*, cursing and storming against *Presbyterians*, whom he consigned in a Body over to Satan with great Zeal, and no Remorse. Says I, to my self, *This reverend, ill-tongued Parson will certainly quarrel, and kick, over his Claret as well as over his Cushion*: In order to try, I got into his Company at the *Baptist's-Head*, and by the Humility of my Behaviour, and the Divinity of the *Hermitage*, I sat at tolerable Ease with the Doctor, till the middle of the third Bottle, and then he swore at the Drawer for not answering before he was call'd; and, before it was out, he drank Confusion to *Fanatics*, and a Health to *Sorrel*. The Doctor then shew'd a violent Appetite for Quarrelling; but meeting no Body in the same Humour, he only eas'd himself in Oaths; till an honest Citizen drank to him the Glorious Memory of King *William*, which the Doctor pledged by throwing a wild Duck, just hot from the Spit, full in the Citizen's Face, and got up at the same time to fall upon him with his Hands; but as soon as he got up he fell, and we left him upon the Floor, to the Care of the Drawers.

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

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

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

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, June 29. 1720.



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

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

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

To punish Men for Opinions that are even plainly False and Absurd, is barbarous and unreasonable. We possess different Minds as we do different Bodies, and the same Proposition carries not the same Evidence to every Man alike, no more than the same Object appears equally clear to every Eye. A choleric Temper, when it is not corrected with Reason, and seasoned with Humanity, is naturally Zealous. A phlegmatick Temper, on the other side, as it is

naturally slow, so is it Luke-warm and indifferent. Is there any Merit in having a warm Complexion, or any Sin in being dull?

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

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

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

Our blessed Saviour, who had no View but the Redemption of the World, never used his Omnipotence, or the least Force to subdue his Enemies, though he knew their Hearts to be malicious and implacable. He neither delivered them to Death nor the Devil, even for their Hellish Designs to kill him, much less for Points of Error or Speculation. He reasoned with all Men, but punished none. He used Arguments, he worked Wonders; but Severities he neither practised, nor recommended: His was a different Spirit. He rebuked his Apostles with Sharpness, when, being yet full of the Spirit of this World and

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void of the Spirit of God, they were for bringing Fire down from Heaven upon the *Heresetical Samaritans*. The merciful Jesus would not hurt these half Heathens, though they rejected him in Person; for he came not to *destroy Mens Lives, but to save them*: And they who take another Method, give the Lye to the Lord of Life, and disown him for their Head.

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

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

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

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

Those who set up for Infallibility have found a good Excuse, if it were true, for the insupportable Tyranny, infinite Murthers, and wide Devastations,

which their Religion has every where introduced. But those who exact a blind Obedience to Decrees which they own to be human, and annex Penalties to Positions, which we know to be false, and they know to be disputable; and, in fine, act and dictate as if they were infallible, without pretending to be so; are so utterly without all Excuse, that I know no Language which affords a Name proper for their Behaviour.

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

Persecution is therefore *the War of Craft* against *Conscience*, and of *Impiety* against *Truth*. Reason, Religion, and Liberty, are its great Foes; but Ignorance, Tyranny, and Atheism, its great Seconds and Support. We ought then constantly to oppose all Claims of Dominion in the Clergy; for they naturally end in Cruelty. I believe it will be hard to shew that ever the Priesthood, at any Time, or in any Place, enjoyed the Power of Persecution, without making use of it.

Errata. In the last Paper, in the fourth Paragraph of the third Column, instead of the Word *Fears* read *Tears*; and in the last Paragraph of the Paper, instead of *Grain* of that Christianity read *Grain* of that Charity.

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T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, July 6. 1720.

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

Thus, when the Elements in the Sacraments are said to be Holy, it is meant only of the Uses to which they are apply'd, and the Purposes for which they are taken; for, tho' they were consecrated over and over again, yet, if they are never taken, or never devoutly taken, they have in themselves no more Holiness than a common Roll, or a Cup of cold Water.

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

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

And thus, lastly, when the Priests are call'd Holy unto the Lord, it is meant only of their assisting at the solemn Acts of Adoration which are paid to him. At other times, they are as other Men; as is evident from their Living after the Manner of other Men.

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

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

If one was to demand of these reverend Worthies, *who required these Things at their Hands?* I doubt it would prove a hard Question; and probably the impertinent Enquirer would be dispatch'd for Satisfaction to *Satan*, or the Inquisition—An effectual and orthodox Answer to such busy Unbelievers, and often practis'd with terrible Success!

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

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

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

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

But if it is allowed that People may pray to as good Purpose out of consecrated Ground as in it; how are Prayers at Church better than in a Chamber, or the Fields? Or, why should the Prayers of Five Hundred have more need of consecrated Ground, than the Prayers of One, Two, or Three? Or, if a Place becomes Holy by the Devotions perform'd in it, then every Place where Devotions are perform'd, is as holy as another; and if so, pray what use of a Form of Words, and a particular Office for that Purpose?

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

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

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

I would here be glad to know the precise Extent of the Influence which Holiness and Vice have upon

the inanimate Creation: Is a thick Church-wall as quickly and fully impregnated with them as a thin One? And do they never extend an Inch beyond the Church and Church-yard? Or, is the Church equally Holy, whether much Devotion, or little, is perform'd in it? Or have the *Popish* Priests set Bounds to the Godliness of the Ground, and the Building; and said — *Thus far, or thus deep, O Ground! shall thy Holiness extend, and no further.*

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

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

ADVERTISEMENT S.

This Day is publish'd,

* * The Grounds and Principles of Christian Communion consider'd. In a Letter to the Reverend Mr. John Cumming, M. A. Occasioned by his Dissertation concerning the Authority of Scripture Consecrations. By Thomas Morgan. Sold by J. Roberts in Warwick-Lane. Price 1s.

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All by the same Author.

This Day is publish'd, in 2 Vols. 8vo. the 4th Edition (with a Character of the Author and this Work, by Mr. Addison.) of

Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth; containing an Account of the Original of the Earth, and of all the general Changes which it hath already undergone, or is to undergo, till the Consummation of all Things. In 4 Books. 1. Concerning the Deluge. 2. Concerning Paradise. 3. Concerning the Burning of the World. 4. Concerning the New Heavens and New Earth. Adorn'd with 17 curious Cuts. In this Edition are added the following Tracts. I. A Review of the Theory, and of its Proofs; especially in Reference to Scripture. II. An Answer to Mr. Warren's Exceptions made against the Theory. III. A Relation of the Proceedings of the Charter-House, upon Occasion of King James II. his presenting a Papist to be admitted into that Hospital: Being the first Stand that was made against the Dispensing Power by any Society in England. All written by Dr. Burnet. Printed for J. Hooke at the Flower-de-Luce against St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet-street. Price 12 s.

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T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, July 13. 1720.



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

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

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

(Price Two-pence.)

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

Besides, saying is not proving. If we would be thought Christians, we ought to shew our selves Christians. Living well, is the best and only Evidence we can give that we believe well. If a Man professes his Faith in Jesus Christ with one Breath, and swears falsly by his Name with another, why should I give Credit to one who so effectually contradicts himself? We do not credit the Propositions of Mathematicians, till they have gained our Assent by Demonstration: And why should we trust any Man's Professions of Faith and Morality, before he has by Works of Faith and Morality proved them sincere? If we hear a Man full of the Praises of Loyalty, and yet see him every Day re-

* See Monsieur Bayle, upon the Article Aristotle.

Printed by J. O. W. P. in the Strand, near the Church of St. Martin's in the Vintry.



bellings, would we not take him for a Madman or a Deceiver? A good Life is beneficial, both to our selves and others, but a good Belief without it, is neither.

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

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

Conformity is the Word! it is the Mother of all Virtues, and the Sanctifier of all Crimes. It is, in fine, All in All. And yet, so weak and blind am I, that I take this same applauded Conformity to be in some Cases a very great Sin. If a Man, for Instance, in the Worship of God, follows the Authority of any Church whatsoever, and dissents at the same Time from the suggestions and Persuasions of his own Conscience; it is certain that he does not Worship God at all, but mocks him, adores Men, and condemns himself. If, on the other Hand, he thinks his Soul in Danger, or in no Way of being edify'd in any Church, tho' ever so Orthodox; he ought to desert it, and join with that which appears to him better. If I should thwart or disturb my Conscience, by bowing fashionably to the Altar, I would ask the Clergy, whether ought the Altar or my Conscience to be first or most regarded? He who believes at Random, and obeys blindly, may give great Satisfaction to Churchmen; but he neither knows the Gospel of Truth, nor obeys the Precepts of the Holy Ghost.

It is a surprising Thing, the Selfishness and Pride of Man! What Priest is there that (in Disputes of the most trivial Nature) does not grow hot and eager for Victory, and angry if his Opinion does not prevail? In Spiritual Affairs, this Spirit of levelling all Men to our own Conceits, is still fiercer; and Religion, which was given and intended to subdue the Passions, is turn'd into an Engine to raise them.

We are much more zealous that Men should conform to us than to Holmeis, and would rather have them obedient than godly. How many High-Church Parsons would not rather see their Parishioners drunken Churchmen, than sober Dissenters?

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

Thus we see that God may be pleas'd, and some of the Clergy provok'd, by one and the same Action. From hence it wofully happens that weak Men and Profligates, who will do and say as they are bid, without any Bias from Reason and Conscience, are carets'd, encourag'd and promoted; while the Wise and Virtuous, who cannot abandon Truth and the Fear of God, to promote the Craft, and humour the Pride of assuming Men, are brow-beaten, reproached and persecuted. Mr. Whiston, and the Parson of his Parish, are known Instances of this shameful Truth.

I know several who, notwithstanding their avowed Disbelief of the Gospel and all Reveald Religion, are in high Esteem with the High Clergy; because, tho' they deny our Saviour, they Reverence his Successors; and are zealous for the Hierarchy, tho' they laugh at Religion. The Truth is, if a Man is but a hearty Churchman, it is never asked whether he is a Christian. Profligates, void of common Honesty, and common Sense, have been, and are still, reckon'd True Friends to the Church, and courted by the Ecclesiasticks, as their Patrons and Defenders. And indeed, where Religion is turned into Faction, such Measures and Alliances are natural and necessary.

But, in the Opinion of us Christians, a wicked Liver, whether he is a Believer or no, is an Enemy to Religion, which is propagated and supported by Example; and to humane Society, which is maintain'd by the Bonds of Morality. Whereas a Good Man, tho' a Heretick, is a Friend to Religion, Virtue, and his Country. To conclude: He who is a Rebel to the King of Kings, is like to prove but an ill Subject to his Vicegerent; and as bad a Pattern to his Fellow-Subjects.

T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, July 20. 1720.



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

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

For this and such like Reasons they preach Penances, Mortification, Fasting, and a Contempt of worldly Riches, and of all those earthly Blessings which indulgent Heaven has given to wretched Mortals, to alleviate their Sorrows, sweeten their Calamities, and make the nauseous Draught of Life go down; whereas we cannot better shew our Acknowledgments and Gratitude to Providence, than by making a proper Use of the good Things he has given us, and by enjoying them in every Degree

which will not destroy that Enjoyment, and change it into a Misfortune.

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

Besides, the Luxury of the Rich (when it does not exceed the Bounds of Vertue and Prudence) is the Wealth and Support of the Poor, and the best judged Charity; for, what we give in gross Sums to, or for the Use of those who appear to be in Necessity, is often mistaken, and applied to maintain present Idleness, or reward past Extravagance, and sometimes too, I doubt is pocketed by those who are trusted to distribute it; whereas whatever is laid out upon the Produce of Labour, and for such Manufactures as employ Multitudes of People, can never be misapplied: It might easily be made appear, that there is not a Piece of wrought Silk, Linnen, or Woollen Cloath, which has not contributed to the Maintenance of more than an Hundred Thousand industrious People, who must be all kept alive one way or other.

As



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

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

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

However, to do right to my Countrymen and their genuine Clergy, I must freely confess that we suffer very little from the Penitential Observance or Fasting part of our Holy-Days; for the Poor do not fast at all, unless they can get nothing to eat; and the Rich, in Imitation of their Guides, hold

out no longer than is necessary to digest their former Excesses, and get better Stomachs to a double Dinner; as old experienced Sinners often live a Day or two with Sobriety and Innocence, to enjoy a Debauch the remaining part of the Week. At the Universities, as I am told, it is quite given up, and there is not more Epicurism than on those Days; and to their Churches there are ancient Vestries annex'd, which are the consecrated Repositories of Pipes, Sack and Tobacco, where the Reverends take regularly a Whiff and a Cup, to prepare them for the Fatigues of the ensuing Service.

But how little soever Holy-Days and stated Fasts contribute either to the Temporal or Eternal Happiness of the Laity, yet the Romish Clergy have been able sufficiently to find their own Account in them: When all other Shops are shut, theirs are open, where they sell their Spiritual Cargo of Grimaces, Visions, Beads, Indulgences, and Masses, for Silver and Gold, Lands and Tenements; and to enhance the Value of their Merchandize, and persuade the People of the Reasonableness of such an exchange, they make it their Business, and exert all their Endeavours to depreciate worldly Happiness, and cry down all the good Things of this Earth, that they may have them all to themselves: If they can extinguish the Appetites God has given us, and teach us the Secret to live without our Estates, or to make us think it dangerous to live on them, they hope to have them for their Pains; for who can have a better Title to our Superfluities than our Spiritual Guides, who have inspired us with so much refined Devotion, and have given to us lasting Estates in Paradise, in lieu of a few momentary Pleasures, and frail and earthly Tabernacles below?

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

This Subject shall be continued hereafter.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

Just publish'd,
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T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, July 27. 1720.



BY Faith is often, if not most commonly meant, an inward Perswasion or determined Assent of the Mind to a religious Proposition affirm'd, or deny'd; and such Consent can never be given but by the Conveyance and from full Conviction of the Senses, or the manifest Operation of the Holy Ghost; and therefore must depend wholly upon what appears to be infallible Inspiration, or infallible Information: In this Sense of the Word, I doubt there can be no such thing now in the World; for as no Man living ever saw the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, or can prove his particular System from Self-evident Propositions, or can be sure he is inspired by the Holy Ghost; so he cannot have Faith in this Sense, whatever he himself may imagine.

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

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

But no Decisions or Resolutions of uninspired Men are, or ought to be, of any weight with us, but as far as they will bear the Examination of our Senses and our Reason. The only Motive any Man can have to believe, or to put this Confidence in another, is, that the Person trusted is not deceived himself, and will not deceive him; neither of which he can have any tolerable Assurance of; for no Man is infallible; and the gravest and most solemn Pretenders, are as easily cheated as the meer Vulgar; and, what is more, will as often lye and cheat others; and there-
(Price Two-Pence.)

fore there can be no such thing as Authority in this Sense amongst Men: for let a Matter in it self be ever so certain, I am by no Precept humane or divine obliged to believe it true, till it is proved true; and it is the Business of my Reason alone to distinguish what is so from what is otherwise.

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

All Books therefore, except the Holy Scriptures, and all Names, except those of our blessed Saviour and his inspired Followers, ought to be of no Authority with us, any further than they convince our Understandings by solid Arguments, and Self-evident Truths; and a Beggar or a Cobler, when he can do this, is so far entitled to equal Credit, or if you will, to equal Authority, with Councils and Fathers.

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

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

Nor is there any certain Authority in Learning of any kind or degree. Who are better Scholars, or greater Rogues, than the Jesuits? Who was a more learned Man, or a greater
Simple-



Simpleton, than Mr. Dodwell? And, as to his genuine Ancestors, *Aquinas* and *Scotus*, those celebrated Founders of the Schools; who have been long the infallible Guides of the infallible Church; they were the most Voluminous and most unintelligible Dunces that ever dabled in Sophistry, and darkened common Sense.

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

Nor are Men the more to be trusted, merely because they are acquainted with Ecclesiastical History and the Fathers. As to the Fathers, they are guilty of grievous Errors against Orthodoxy, and Church Power; insomuch that Father *Petavius*, the Jesuit, has pretended to prove that most of them were infected with Heresy, especially in their Notions about the Undivided Trinity. We all know that *St. Austin* (the Foreman of all the *Latin* Saints and Fathers) was for admitting Children to the *Lord's Supper*, contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of our Church of *England* as by Law established. *St. Jerom* derives Episcopal Power from the Instigation of the Devil, which is also an impudent Reflection upon our Orthodox Church. *St. Basil* (I think it was) very fairly challenged the Emperor, his Liege Lord, to fight him; in defiance of the Doctrine of Passive Obedience, which is the peculiar Doctrine of our High Church Men, and which unless a Man believes and practices, he cannot be sav'd. *St. Ambrose* bullied *Theodosius*, the *Lord's Anointed*, and refused to admit his Imperial Majesty to partake of the *Lord's Body*, till he had made his humble Submission. *St. Gregory Nazianzen* gives a miserable and vile Character of Synods and Councils; and his *Grace of Canterbury*, when he was Bishop of *Lincoln*, and before, did the same. *Dr. Prideaux* shews *Tertullian* to have been a credulous weak Man, often mistaken and misled.

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

Lastly; even the most apparent Piety, the most disinterested Mind, and the most unblameable Life, tho' to me certain Signs of a good Man, yet in the Eye of our best High Church Men, are only *shining Sins*, and cannot entitle the Bearer to the least good Word or Tenderness, much less to any Authority, amongst Men. *Dr. Clark*, *Mr. Whiston*, and others, are undeniable Instances of this Truth.

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

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

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

To conform without consenting, is a Contradiction, and a Mockery to the Spirit of Religion: And to conform, because I approve, is no Compliment to Authority, but, indeed, destroys it, and justifies every Man in every Religion, provided he has taken all necessary Pains to find out the true one. If I have a Liberty to enquire which is the best Church, I have also a Liberty to blame its Errors, if I see any, as well as to admire its Excellencies. And the Authority of no Man or Men shall determine me in either, in Opposition to my Reason. If I praise the Advantages of any Church, I am my self praised by its Votaries, for doing Justice to those Advantages, which my Reason shews me. But if the same Reason discovers Blemishes in it, I am condemn'd by the same Votaries, for what I cannot help. So that I am applauded for seeing, and damned for seeing, at the same time, and from the same Principle; namely, that of Passion and Partiality.

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

ADVERTISEMENT.

Now in the Press, written in French, by Francis De La Pilonniere, Minister of the Gospel,

* * * * * THE LATITUDINARIAN vindicated thoroughly, and the Rigid Church Man of any Denomination whatsoever, shewn to be, as such, nothing of a Christian; from the Principles maintain'd, and the Authorities quoted to support them, by Mr. Turretin, Minister of the Church of Geneva, and Professor of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History, in the Academy there; in his late Book (written in Latin) entitled, *A Cloud of Witnesses*, produc'd in behalf of the Moderate and Pacifick Way of Thinking in Divinity; in order to Establish Unity of Hearts among Protestants. To which is premis'd, (by the said Mr. Turretin) a short and Pacifick Dissertation upon Fundamentals, by which the Way is open'd for Peace, and Mutual Toleration, among Protestants.

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, August 3. 1720.



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

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

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

As soon as the Emperors and their Courts came into the Church, Ambition and Pride got in too, and the Innocence and Simplicity of primitive Christianity became corrupted, and changed into outward Pomp and Pageantry: The Clergy bethought themselves how (in the Modern Phrase) to make the best of their Bible; Unluckily it was all against them, and tho' they read it over and over, they found it every where levelled against Spiritual Pride and Domination, and they could not so much as pick out one direct Text for their Purpose.

What must be therefore done in this momentous Affair? The Holy Writings were dispers'd Abroad, and could not be suppressed, and yet Riches and Power were of indispensable Necessity to the Good of the Church? Why! since they could not get them out of the Peoples Hands, they contrived how to render them of as little Use as possible there; and in order to it, they pointed all their Batteries against Humane Reason and Polite Learning, and made it an heinous Sin to read any Heathen Authors; by which Means, in an Age or two, few could read at all; and the *Romans*, so famous for Knowledge, Vertue, and Humanity, became (for the most Part) sunk to the lowest Dregs of Barbarism, Superstition and Ignorance.

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

When they had so reduced the Laity to this happy and desirable State of Stupidity and Submission, they took away their Bible from them too; or, which was the same Thing, they continued it only in a Language, which, by the many Conquests upon the Empire, and the Revolutions of Time, was understood by none but themselves; and now having converted their Hearers into Asses, and Beasts of Carriage, they bridled



bridled them, they saddled them, they yoked them, and put heavy Burthens upon them, till they so overloaded the Jades, that they grew refty, and overturn'd their Packs and Riders too.

Thus the World came by the Reformation, which dispersed the thick Mist of Superstition and Ignorance, which then overshadowed all Christendom: The Laity were resolv'd to be no longer hood-winked, but a general Disposition arose in *Europe*, to revive antient Learning and useful Knowledge: And the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors were sought after, rescued from Dust and Worms; and diligently read. Many Princes promoted these Studies, and gave all due Encouragement to Vertue and Learning; but this noble Spirit of Liberty lasted no longer than the Lives of those Princes, and whilst the Images of sacerdotal Oppressions were deep engraven in Men's Minds, which like all other things wore out by degrees.

The *Unum Magnum*, necessary to secure all the rest, was never thought of, or forgotten; which was to retrieve the Education of Youth out of the Hands of the Priesthood, and to reform the Universities, (which were contriv'd and established by Popes to support their own Pride and Power over the unhappy Laity,) and instead of suffering them to continue Seminaries of Faction, Tyranny, and Ecclesiastical Usurpations, to convert them into Schools of Vertue, Liberty, Knowledge, and true Religion: The old Leaven was permitted to remain, and the Clergy had still left to them the Education of the Nobility and Gentry in most Countries; and they were educated accordingly.

It became a Maxim in the Universities abroad, That those who were born to large Possessions and Estates had no need of Learning, and such were always encouraged or conniv'd at in mispending their Time in Idleness and Luxury, and were generally made the Companions of their Governours and Tutors in their Pleasures, who were perpetually instilling into their tender Minds Tyrannical or Slavish Principles: But when they had to do with Youths of sprightly Wit and Genius, who either, from their own Inclinations, or the Impulse of their Relations, would not be diverted from the pursuit of Knowledge; they industriously put them upon a Wrong Scent, and perplexed and confounded their Understandings with metaphysical Whimseys, and an artificial Cant, out of which many of them could never extricate their Senses; and such as did, spent often as many Years after they came into the World to do so, as they lost before in the Universities, to be upon the Level with those who had never been there.

This soon became again the State of Learning and Knowledge amongst the Nobility and Gentry: Either they had none at all, or such as they were the worse for having; insomuch that those whose Birth and Fortunes intitled them to

be Legislators and Governours of Mankind were themselves the Slaves and Dupes of Pedagogues and Chaplains, were contented to do all their Drudgery, and be humble Instruments to their Pride and Luxury.

However, as the Priests could not agree amongst themselves about sharing the Laity, and as Printing about this time came into Christendom, which made it impracticable to suppress all Copies of useful Books, or hinder them from being read, many Persons have had the Vertue and Resolution to oppose Clerical Usurpations, and have kept alive some Spirit of Liberty, in spite of all the Efforts of Priestcraft and Delusion, ever supported by worldly Interest and too often by worldly Power.

It's a hard Circumstance for Truth, that in most Countries it must submit upon Converts; and Education, Interest and Authority must combine against it; but if notwithstanding all their Efforts, its own clear Evidence and irresistible Authority can make such a Progress in the World, what might we not expect, if the Approaches and Passages to it were made easy and advantageous, and proper Rewards and Encouragements given to the Promoters and Discoverers of such Philosophy and Knowledge, as will make Men useful to themselves and their Country?

It cannot be doubted but antient Vertue and antient Eloquence would revive again; the Nobility and Gentry of Christendom would resume their proper Stations, and exceed the inferior Part of Mankind as much in publick Spirit, Courage and Wisdom, as they do in Fortune and Quality, and possibly might in Time as much outshine the *Greeks* and *Romans* in those great Endowments, as they are evidently outdone in such Arts and Sciences, as the Priests do not pretend to teach, and seldom know any thing off.

This shall be continu'd in the next.

ADVERTISEMENT.

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T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, August 10. 1720.



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

Our Minds as well as Bodies are easily distorted, and put out of their natural Frame; Absurdity and Nonsense is to be learn'd, and good natural Faculties may be improved into foolish Ones, or none at all: A Man, like a Vessel, is capable of holding only a certain Quantity, which when it is full of one Liquor is incapable of receiving another; and even when the first is drawn out, it generally leaves a Tincture behind it: The Mind when rightly set out, usefully employ'd, and upon proper Objects, will improve and every Day strengthen; but

when conversant only with Visions, Phantoms, and Whimsies, will assimilate with the Company it keeps, and by Degrees looses its distinguishing Faculty.

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

Whoever spends his Time in reading foolish Books, and in studying useles or false Speculations, will grow the greater Coxcomb, the greater Progress he makes: He is learning backwards, and undermining and destroying the first Sparks, innate Principles, or Capacity of Knowledge, and in time will be fortify'd and impregnable against common Sense. A great Philosopher tells us, that Ignorance is a middle State between Knowledge and false Learning; that is to say, one who is wholly untaught and unimproved, is as much above a Learned Man, in the common Acceptation of the Word, as a Man well educated does exceed another who has

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has had no Education at all: The Capacity of the first is entire, and susceptible of Information; whereas in the other, all the Avenues and Passages to Wisdom are destroy'd or lock'd up, and he is so puzzled, perplexed and confounded in a Maze of improved Nonsense and Absurdity, that he can never get through it or out of it. The Acquisitions in such Learning have been aptly compared to the fluttering and rumbling of a Swallow falling down a Chimney, who when he is at Bottom, flies about, and hurries backwards and forwards to every Window and every Corner of the Room to make his Escape, but never thinks of the Way he came in, and so becomes an easy Prey to the first Enemy which assaults him.

Whoever is conversant with Scholasticks, and has any Understanding of his own, (if such a Correspondence can possibly be) must readily assent to this Truth. It is even grown a Proverb in the Learned Language that, *Merus Scholasticus est merus Asinus*: What an Appearance do these reverend Drones, and accomplish'd Dunces make amongst Mankind? How are they exceeded in Conversation, agreeable Address, and useful Knowledge, by the youngest Gentlemen, by Soldiers and Merchants, and often by Mechanicks and Tradesmen, who can only write and cast Accounts? Nothing but the Solemnity of their Habits, and the austere Gravity of their Phiz, Mien and Behaviour, hinders them from being the Jest and Contempt of Women and Boys: It is said, the old Duke of *Buckingham* once took a Conceit to invite all the deep Chins about the Town to a magnificent Entertainment spread upon a long Table, and he made himself amends by sitting at the upper End, and enjoying the Vistto. Indeed I can't deny but I have sometimes had such a sort of ill-natured Pleasure in imagining that I saw some of the Governours of the Two Universities (with others of their betters who shall be nameless) uncased of their reverential Robes, and dressed up with Hats and Feathers, Sword-knots, and laced Coats, and in that Equipage marching in solemn Dump like a Call of Serjeants from *Temple-Bar* to *Westminster*.

They give us in some Degree the same Figure when they shew in the Grand Monde: Like Snails they carry their Houses about them, and bring Pedantry, Conceit, sour Humour, Bigottry, magisterial Grimace, and ill Manners into all Conversations where they have to do; and indeed are not fit for any, till they have been often kick'd out of it. They have neither the Temper of Christians, the Reason of Philoso-

phers, or the Affability of Gentlemen, and therefore are justly despised by them all: *Fygar John*, as I remember, asks of *Penurge* or *Pentagrouel*, in *Rablais*, what is the Reason that the Household Priest is used worse than any one else in the Family? And I think he answers, because he neither ploughs the Ground, like the laborious Ox, carries Burthens like the useful Horse, nor keeps the Door like the faithful Dog; but like the Monkey, runs about every where fouling the House, chattering and making a Noise, biting Peoples Fingers, and doing nothing but Mischief; and so every Body has a Stroke at him, and gives him a Knock as he passes by.

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

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

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, August 17. 1720.

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

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

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

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

It can never be conceived that the All-Merciful and Omniscient God should, by the sending of his Son, abolish, or suffer to be abolished, the whole Jewish Legion of Ceremonies, tho' appointed by himself in Person; and should graciously condescend

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to establish a new Dispensation, destitute of all Ceremony and exterior Grandeur; and yet should leave it to the Ambition of designing Men, or to the Folly of weak ones, to invent and impose a fresh Load of Rituals in Opposition to the plain Genius of the Gospel. This would be for the All-Merciful, to be merciful in vain; for the Creator to resign his Power to the Creature; and for God to recall his own Injunctions, which he once gave for a gracious and wise End, since ceased, that Men may enforce theirs for a weak or a wicked One.

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

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

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



The Teachers of Mankind have, for the greatest Part, been the most unteachable of all Men; and these our Guides to Peace have been always the Foremost to break it. They have seen, from Time to Time, the Violence and ungodly Effects produc'd by their Contention for Human Forms, Habits, and Decisions; and yet, where the *Religious Laity*, and the *Law*, did not interpose, to restrain this Unchristian Behaviour in *Churchmen*, they have not only still a lbered with *Obstinacy* to their Inventions and Impositions, but frequently made it their Business to broach new ones, and to throw about fresh Balls of Strife and Cruelty.

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

It is pretended that the Invention of stated Ceremonies and Garments, is justified by these Words of *St. Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *Let all Things be done decently, and in order*; which Words are only a Precept to avoid Immodesty and Confusion, in their Religious Assemblies. Two, for Example, were not to speak at the same Time: One was not to sing *Psalms* while another prayed. Neither Love nor Trade was to be the Business of their Meetings; nor Tithes and their own Power the Drift and Business of the Preachers: Christ was not to be confounded with *Belial*; nor Pride and Dominion with Meekness and Christianity: Exhorting was not to be mix'd with Railing, nor Praying with Curfing; nor were the People to be taught to hate one another: In short, God was to be adored with the Heart and Affections, and not with a Fiddle, or a Pipe and Tabor.

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

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

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

The Words *Decorum* and *Significancy*, which are made use of to justify the Celebration of Ceremonies, are Words of such prodigious Latitude, that the World does not agree, nor ever can agree, what it is that does come properly under their Denomination, and what does not. With the *Turks* it is *decent* to be covered at Devotion; with *us*, to be bare-headed. How is the wearing of a Petriwig, or a Cap more *decent* and orthodox than the wearing of a Hat? How is a *Prunella* Gown, or a *Lawn* Frock more *significant* than a *Cloth Coat*? Is *God* Al-

mighty better pleas'd with a *Cambrick Band* than with a *musling Cravat*? And is an *Organ* Loft more acceptable to him than plain *Country Piety* that has neither *Motion* nor *Musick* in it?

If Men are at Liberty to invent and enjoin one unnecessary Ceremony, why not two? And if two, why not two Thousand? When such a Power is once granted, it cannot be easily, nor indeed reasonably limited. If the Clergy can oblige me to throw my Head into my Bosom, upon their pronouncing certain Sounds; they may, by the same Right, upon pronouncing different Sounds, oblige me to run it against a Stone Wall. Nay, which is still worse, whoever has an Authority to direct my Manner of Worship, must have also a Power to direct the Master of it; and may command me WHOM to worship as well as HOW.

Superstition in the People, and Power in the Priests, were the true Ends and Consequences of creating *Popish* Ceremonies; for, as to their Significancy, it was a mere Bubble and Pretence. Such a Plea would justify endless Pireuzs and Fooleries; and every Madness would be made a Mystery. For instance, we might be made to walk bare-footed into the Church, to signify the Sanctity of the Place, and to crawl upon all four out of it, to signify the Humiliation of our Hearts. A Match of Cudgelplying every Sunday might be instituted, to signify our spiritual Warfare; and a Game at Blind-man's-Buff, to signify the Darkness of our Understandings. In short, any Thing might be made to signify every Thing; and any Punishments be inflicted upon the Profane *Gain-sayer*; and upon this Foot may be justified all the *Pagan* and *Popish* Fopperies that ever were, or ever could be invented; and nothing can be said against all the many Garments, and many Colours, and many anticick Gestures used by the *Romish* Priests at this Day.

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

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

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

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, August 24. 1720.



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

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

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

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

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

Our Blessed Saviour knew well, that the crafty and profane Priests, had by their shameless Inventions and

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filthy Ceremonies, polluted or abolished all Religion; and therefore, in Mercy to Mankind, founded a Religion without Priests, and without Ceremonies: (as shall be fully shewn hereafter) For, it is to be observed, that while the Established Church of *Paganism* flourished, Priests and Ceremonies always flourished or increased together.

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

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

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

Here therefore is a glorious and ample Field of Gaping, Sottishness, and Credulity, for crafty Priests

to



to play their Tricks; and sow Superstition in. And, indeed, they have topped their Parts, in this Undertaking, with such Dexterity and Success, that their humble and resigned Votaries do not any longer pretend to carry their own Eyes or Understanding: Their very Palates and Noses are Priest-ridden, and dare neither Taste nor Smell, without an *Ecclesiastical Licence*. Thus even the invincible Operations of the Animal Spirits, and of the Five Senses, must stand still, when commanded by the Priest, who can annihilate the Creature, and create his Creator.

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

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

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

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

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

But I am quite sick of this strange significant Stuff, before I have gone thro' the Tenth Part of it. The whole Performance is perfectly Theatrical, and improperly and impiously called a Sacrament. It is indeed a wretched, unentertaining Interlude; a stupid Farce, of which the Priest is the Chief Mimick; for Mumbling and making Mouths, does not deserve the Name of *Acting*.

We have had several Attempts made to revive a-

mongst us this infamous Mummery in Devotion, and these Apish Ceremonies, which are an Affront to Common Sense, and below the Dignity of Human Nature, much more of Religion. But such Attempts can never succeed, while we enjoy either Liberty or Knowledge. *Archbishop Laud* therefore, when he had bewitched the Court, sway'd the Scepter, and destroy'd the Liberty of the People and of the Press, took the best Opportunity he could get, to Transport *Rome* to *Lambeth*; and having Married the *Harlot*, he Adopted her Trumpery.

A Sample of this Man's Genius for Popery may be seen in his Mad Manner of Consecrating some New Brick and Mortar which had been used in the Repair of *St. Katharine Creech-Church*, London; as the same is related at large by *Rushworth*. At his Approach to the West End of the Church, the Doors flew open, upon pronouncing certain Words out of the *Psalms*, *That the King of Glory might enter*; and then entered the Bishop, and falling down upon his Knees, Baptiz'd the Ground, or which is the same Thing, pronounced it Holy, *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. Then he threw Dust in the Air, and play'd some other pious Pranks. Then he pronounced many Curses, and called upon the people to Curse with him. Then he scatter'd a Basket full of Blessings amongst all the Masons, and other Holy Mechanicks, who had helped to make that Church fine. He also went round the Church in Procession, and told God Almighty and the People, over and over, that that was Holy Ground. At last, after a Beed-Roll of Prayers, and a Hundred and Fifty Bowings, and after many wild Gestures, sometimes advancing, sometimes recoiling, like One affrighted and crazy, he gave the Sacrament.

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

This Paper grows too long, and leaves me no Room to do Justice to Crosses, Square-Caps, and Fantastical Garments; all which, I warrant you, are profoundly Mysterious; tho', to Carnal Eyes, they seem only to *signify* to make the People stare: For every odd Sight strikes the Imagination, and disposes the Beholder either to Laughter or Reverence. Nor have I Time to Honour with a proper Encomium, that Ingenious and Ecclesiastical Device of explaining the Sublime Mystery of the Trinity by a Pair of Compasses, tho' it is above all Explication, and even of Conception, unless thro' Faith; and of representing the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, by a Triangle in a Circle, over the Communion-Table. Was there ever such a pretty Piece of Pious Cunning! By the said Triangle is typify'd and held forth to us, that the said Triangle consists of Three Angles; which is exceeding plain and edifying: And by the Circle is signified, that the said Circle is but One Circle, which is prodigious Good again! But, that a Triangle is a Circle, and a Circle is a Triangle, *Dr. Waterland* saith nor.

I must, for the same Reason, pass over unobserved, the Praising of God with Organs, which our Homilies very uncivilly call Superstitious; Cuts in the Common-Pray-Book; tending to prepare People for Idolatry; and Pictures in Churches, for the same Devout Purpose.

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, August 31. 1720.



Have always thought the best constituted Church in the World to be that, which forms and produces the most religious and most rational Members. Churches are Places where Men are, or should be, taught the Love of God, and of Vertue; and when People have been long used to perform divine Discipline, and, as they imagine, receive Instruction in Moral and Evangelical Duties, in these stately Fabricks, they generally conceive a deep Reverence and Devotion for the Buildings themselves, and for every Thing that is said in them, as well as a great Opinion of the Wisdom and Sanctity of the Teachers who preside there, and dictate *ex Cathedra*. They esteem them as Persons sent by God himself, to deliver a Message from his own Mouth; for which also they have often the Word of the Preacher—no small Reason to *the many* for the believing of it!

So that here is an uncontrollable Prepossession in Favour of every Doctrine, or every Dream, which corrupt Priests shall think fit to deliver. And indeed the High Church Jacobite Clergy have never failed to make their Advantage of this superstitious Awe and Credulity of their Hearers, and to sanctify every Falshood, and every Whimsy and Impiety uttered by them, with a misapply'd, or perverted Text of Scripture; and so prostituted and profaned the high and holy Name of God to patronize their Impostures. I shall give some Instances.

When they have had a Mind to flatter a cruel or a foolish Prince, in order to make him serve their Purposes, and do their Drudgery, they have dubbed him instantly *God's Vice-gerent*, tho' he acted at the same Time by the Instigation of his Lust or of Satan. And, because *David* and *Saul*, being appointed by God himself, by Word of Mouth, were called the *Lord's Anointed*; therefore every Tyrant, who was not appointed by God himself, but seized a Crown by Violence or Surprize, became also the Lord's Anointed. And because *Adam* was the Father of his own Son, therefore he was the King of his own Son; and therefore all such Kings, who had not *Adam* for their Father, were nevertheless, in Right of *Adam*, Kings and Fathers of their Subjects, who yet were not their Children, but for all that owed them the Duty of Children, whist they were plundering and ruining them; and all the Rapine and Murthers they were prompted to commit, by their Anger or their Avarice, were called the *Ordinances of God*, and were to be submitted to, with *Christian Stupidity*, on pain of Damnation; that is, it was made Damnation to resist Actions and Cruelties which deserved Damnation; and as you were to submit to Law and Justice, on pain of Damnation, so ought you to

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submit to the overturning of all Law, and all Justice, on pain of Damnation also. And, because when we have any Matter of Complaint, we are bid to acquaint the Church with it; therefore the People, who are the Church, are in every Case to be determined by the Parson of the Parish, who is nor the Church. And, because we are to confess our Sins one to another, therefore we are to do it to a Priest; which is not doing it to one another. And because *Abraham* gave the Tenth of his Plunder to *Melchisedech*, who was not a Priest of our Church by Law Establish'd; therefore our Establish'd Priests, who have nothing to do with *Melchisedech*, nor know any Thing of him, have a divine Right to the Tenth Part of every Man's Estate and Industry. And as the Tribe of *Levi* had a Right to Tythes, tho' they and their Tythes are long since abolished; so ought our Parsons to have the same Tythes by the Gospel, without being in the least a-kin to *Aaron's* Person, or Heirs to his Estate, or Successors to his Institution. And, tho' our Saviour's Kingdom is not of this World, yet the Kingdom of the High Clergy, who, if you will take their Words for it, are his Representatives, is, and ought to be of this World. And because the reprobate gluttonous Monks, had by endless Rogueries, and diabolical Lies, plundered the deluded Laity of their Possessions, and engrossed to themselves most of the Lands of *England*; therefore our modern High Priests have a natural and hereditary Right to enjoy the same; and, though they have, upon Oath, renounced all Power, and all Pretence to Power, but what the Law vouchsafes to grant them, yet they have a Power independent on the Law, and Principles independent on these very Oaths, tho' renounced by these very Oaths.

All these and many more Absurdities, equally vile and impudent, have been blasphemously father'd upon Scripture, and the Author of Scripture; tho' they all contradict the Scripture, as well as they do common Sense and common Honesty. But as the Vulgar do always take that to be the highest Point of Religion, about which their Teachers make the most Noise, for the time being, whether it be Tythe, or Dr. *Sacbeverel*, or the Pretender, or the late Duke of *Ormond*, or King *Charles the First*; so vicious and corrupted Clergymen, on their Part, have always tacked the Name of God, or which is much more powerful with the Mob, the Name of the Church, to any Assertion, or any Claim, or any Invention of theirs, be it ever so monstrous or mischievous; and instantly it becomes, with weak People, an Article of Faith, upon which Salvation it self depends. For as it is their first Care, to force a Testimony from Heaven for every Whim, or Forgery of theirs; so their next Concern is, to make every Contradiction and Opposition to it, damnable.

Hence



Hence it comes to pass, that the same Vertues are not of the same Importance at all times; but Vertues are made Vices, and Vice is made Vertue, just as the present Temper, or the present Views prevail; and, by corrupt Priests, Things are often taught under the Name of Christianity, which are opposite to the Nature of Christianity: Religion is pretended, and Power meant. In consequence of this, Duty is converted into Sin, and Sin into Duty. Thus, the worshipping of God according to one's Conscience, without which there can be no Worship, is made by the High Church Priests a damnable Sin; and the not worshipping a Table in the Chancel, tho' in Opposition to one's Conscience, is as bad. Sometimes the *resisting of unlawful Power* is certain Damnation; and sometimes the *not rebelling* against the most lawful Power, has the same terrible Penalty annexed to it. To doubt or deny their uncharitable, unintelligible Explications of Mystery, which cannot be explained, is the most heinous Atheism; and to whip a seditious, forsworn Priest, is crying Infidelity, and a Wound to Christ, thro' the Sides of his Ambassador.

At one time, *Predestination* is of high Consequence, and made an *Article of Faith*, and all *Free-Willers* shou'd be banished the Land, or locked up in Dungeons, like wild Beasts; which was the Judgment of the Bishops in King *James's* Days, concerning the *Arminians*. At a different Season, when *Preferments* run high on t'other side, as in King *Charles* the First's Reign, and ever since; *Arminianism* not only recovers Credit, but grows modish, and consequently *Orthodox*; while *Predestination* becomes an old fashioned Piece of Faith, and a sure Sign of *Fanaticism*; and yet it continues one of the 39 Articles, and yet it must not be believed, and yet it must be signed and assented to with a sincere Assent.

In all these Marches and Counter-marches, the Passions of too many of the people keep Place with those of the High Priests; and they are constantly disposed to be Slaves or Rebels, Free-Willers, or no Willers, Believers of this, or Believers of that, just as Almighty High Church commands them.

Such Men do not pretend to teach their People the Meekness of Christianity:— No, their Zeal is to be Anger, and their Religion Cruelty. That Fierceness, which is inconsistent with the Spirit of a Christian, is to be the certain Criterion of one whom they call a *true Churchman*; and that Mercy, which is inseparable from the Gospel, is inconsistent with the Temper of High Church: Their Voraries are not taught to be *Christians*, which wou'd spoil the Project, but *High Churchmen*; and instead of an Army of Martyrs, they are to be an Army of Martyr-makers: Nor is any Portion of Knowledge fit for them; for that might endanger the Loss of their Vassalage; and the teaching them to know for themselves, might extinguish their Zeal, and entirely change their Belief and Behaviour. The poor People are, in short, by such Guides taught to be ignorant, and to let others know for them: They must give up common Sense, to learn their Duty, and abandon Christianity, without which they cannot have the Grace of God, to embrace rigid Conformity, which is neither a Sign, nor a Cause of that Grace, but often a Barr and a Contradiction to it. This is so true, that whoever can reconcile *Humane Authority* to *Christian Charity*, may reconcile Water and Fire, or do any other Impossibility.

Tenderness and Moderation to those who devoutly differ from us, though they are evident Principles and Duties of Christianity, and even the Result of Reason, Justice, and Humanity, yet are never mentioned by the Mouth of Orthodoxy, but as Terms of Contempt or Reproach; insomuch, that a pious

Indulgence to Men of a different Communion, the most honest, virtuous, inoffensive Men; and an Indulgence for the invincible, and perhaps rational Persuasions of the Mind, is the common Bur of Satire, and either ridiculed or reviled; whilst Men of the same side may go what Lengths they will in Violence and Villany, without Anger or Rebuke; and while one Man shall have his House burned, his Brains beat out, and his Family ruined, for having a scrupulous Conscience, which is much more offensive than none at all, another Man shall break all the Ten Commandments with Reputation.

Harred and Bitterness of Spirit, are the first Lessons which the unhappy People are taught by such Men; and the Gospel must be laid aside, and good Nature be extinguished, before Modern Orhodoxy can be swallowed, or Modern Zeal infused. Some of them may probably have learned to repeat the Catechism by Rote, and even to have practiced profound Respect and submission to their *Spiritual Superiors*; but for the great and indispensable Duties of Religion, how can it be expected they should mind them, while they daily see their Teachers express a much more warm Concern for their own Dignities and Revenues, than for the Honour and Interest of pure unmix'd Religion, which was ever highest when Ecclesiastical Power and Ecclesiastical Exercise were lowest.

When a Congregation sees the Doctor much warmer against Dissenters, than against Sin, and not half so zealous for the absolute Necessity of a virtuous and sober Life, as for the absolute Necessity of a rigid Conformity; what can they conclude, but either that he banters them, or that a stupid Compliance with him, and a raging Resentment against Non-conformists, are the great Duties of Churchmen? Add to this, that if his Life be vicious, such a Conclusion is still the more natural to vulgar Understandings. When they see Church Power so violently contended for, and Gospel Holiness so little regarded, or so easily dispensed with; what can their stupid Understandings infer, but that a blind Submission to the Ecclesiasticks, is beyond all Evangelical Grace, and every Moral Virtue? They find by daily Experience, that they may commit Drunkenness or Whoredom, with Impunity, or a small Expence; but if they do not give the Doctor what he calls his due, even to the last sheaf of Corn, or the last Pound of Wooll, they are expos'd in the Pulpit, harassed in the Bishops Court, and probably, at last, surrendered to Satan and Damnation.

Besides, they often hear Texts quoted, in some Pulpits, to abuse Separatists, than to recommend Godliness and Vertue; and see the Mode of performing a Duty more vehemently urged, than the Duty itself. Thus kneeling at the Lord's Supper, is made by many of equal Importance with the Sacrament itself; and the Cross in Baptism must no more be parted with, than the Ordinance of Baptism.

It is therefore no wonder that the Affections and Antipathies of the common People, have neither proper Causes nor proper Objects; and that they neither love the Gospel as such, nor hate Sin as such; but form their Faith and Devotion upon the Word and Behaviour of their Priests, who have the keeping of their Religion, their Zeal, and their Passions; and what hopeful Use they make of this terrible Dominion, we all know: For indeed the Christian Religion is not so much as known to the High Church Vulgar, nor suffered to be known; and as little do they feel, or are suffered to feel the tender Impulses of good Nature and Humanity, but possess an Implacableness of Spirit, as opposite to the Spirit of *Christ*, as was the Spirit of *Mahomet* to that of *Moses*.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, September 7. 1720.



IN my 27th Paper, I have made a Dissertation upon *Fasting*; in this I shall continue it.

Monsieur de Fontenelle, in his History of Oracles, tells us, from *Philostratus*, that the Oracle of *Amphiarus* in *Attica*, deliver'd its Answers in Dreams, and that those who consulted it, must first fast well, in order to dream well: But when Fasting failed to produce a Phrenzy of Brain, and by it the Meaning of the God, who had no other Way of ascending into the Head but upon the Fumes arising from empty Bowels; then the Priest helped his Master to bring forth a Dream, by wrapping up the devout Querist in the Skins of Victims, which being rubb'd and impregnated with intoxicating Drugs, disposed him to dream most divinely, and fill'd his Noddle with every pretty Prophecy. This satisfied the believing Querist, saved the Credit of the God, and brought pretty Offerings to his *Vicar*.

Such Use did the *Pagan* Priests make of the Duty of Fasting; and that the *Romish* Priests have perverted it to as wicked and deceitful Purposes, I have shewn in another Paper. It is agreeable to their Cunning and their Avarice, to make the People poor and mad; and it must be own'd a pretty Priestly Art, that of driving Men out of their Estates and their Understandings with their own Consent; and leading them into a Belief, that Starving is a Duty, and Lunacy is Grace.

By the Law of Nature, we are not obliged to fast at all, unless in the way of Physick, when we are ill, through an Overfulness of the Vessels, or any other Disorder, which may be removed or lessened by Abstinence. In this Case, we ought to fast for our Health sake; and whatever is necessary for Self-Relief, or Self-Preservation, becomes also a Duty, and a Piece of Natural Religion, when it does not contradict a positive Law of God. But to abstain upon certain Days from the comfortable Use of God's good Creatures, which ought to be received with Thankfulness, out of a vain Pretence to please him, or to promote our own Salvation, is a strange and barbarous Chimera, which the Law of Nature abhors; and can be the Effect of nothing but Discretion (I'rice Two-l'ence.)

straction in the People, or Craft in the Priests. We might as rationally imagine, that going naked at certain severe Seasons of the Year, would draw us nearer Heaven, and that the afflicting our Skins with Frost and Snow, would do great Service to our shivering Souls; and that though Self-preservation be an Essential Law of Nature, yet Self-destruction is also an Essential Law of Nature.

Fasting, therefore, being no Part of the Law of Nature; the *Jewish* Law of Ceremonies, which is abolished, cannot make it a Duty: And for the Examples of Fasting, taken from the Prophet *Daniel*, and other Holy Men of the Old Testament; they were either voluntary, such as any one may perform when he is in a Fasting Humour, which no Body pretends to restrain; or they were the Effect of Sorrow, when Grief had destroyed Appetite; and then there was no Devotion in them; or they were extraordinary and supernatural, and being inimitable, cannot be necessary. Miraculous Fasting cannot be a Duty, where the Gift of Miracles is not given.

As to the New Testament; there is not a stated Fast appointed in it: We are indeed commanded to fast and pray; but we are no where told how much, or how o'ten, we are to do either; but are left to choose proper Occasions, and proper Inclinations, for doing both. *St. Paul* is such a generous Advocate for Liberty of this kind, that he condemns all those who condemn others for taking it. *Let not, says he, him that eateth, despise him that eateth not: And let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. One Man esteemeth one Day above another: another esteemeth every Day alike. Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind.* (Rom. c. 14. v. 3, and 5.) The same Spirit of Charity, and the same good-natur'd, rational Advice, runs through the whole Chapter.

The Institution of *Lent* was founded upon our Saviour's Fast of Forty Days in the Wilderness; as if weak impotent Mortals could imitate the omnipotent Son of God, in Works done but by Divine Power! They might as well pretend to walk upon the Sea once a Year, or to raise the Dead at all Times: Besides, our Saviour performed this Fast but once, and his Apostles never, as far as we know. *Once*



¶ *Twelve-month you must keep Lent*, is not a Gospel Precept.

No Society, therefore, of Men, can enjoy any Time, or Measure of Fasting, (except where the Law directs the same) without departing from the Gospel, and contradicting *St. Paul*, and setting up their own Authority in Defiance of both the Gospel and the Saint. Such an Injunction would be impracticable, and even cruel. To many Constitutions it might be dangerous, and even fatal; and to all Men it would render Life wretched and burthensome. The good God has no where commanded frail Men to worship him with Pain and Sickness of Body, nor to hasten their own Death by the Means of their Devotion. This would be to represent him as delighting in human Misery, and human Sacrifices; a sort of Worship suitable to the terrible Spirit of *Moloch*, or any other Dæmon, but no wife acceptable to the God of Mercy, and the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

The Popish Priests know well that it is intirely impossible that all Men should comply with this their Discipline of Hunger, and perhaps that very Impossibility is their best Reason for Maintaining it. It is certain that from hence they draw vast Gain, by hiring out Dispensations for Eating on the Days of Fasting; and the Lucre they make by breaking the Canon, is an unanswerable Argument for defending it. No Man is denied the Privilege of breaking *Lent*, who can pay for breaking it. He who cannot fast at all, may, for a Competent Fee, eat Fish, which is a more Luxurious Diet than Flesh; and he who cannot fast upon Fish, may, for a more Competent Fee, fast upon a Belly-full of Roast-Beef; which, tho' a Chaster Sort of Food than Fish, is more strictly forbidden by that Church.

Indeed, such are the vast Fees arising to the Popish Church, from Licences for a Liberty to eat, when it is a Duty to fast, that the whole Institution of Fasting *there*, seems only a Religious Roguery, design'd for starving the People to feed the Priests. For my self, I think the Parson has so little to do with this Matter, that I do not think any Direction ought to be taken about Fasting, but from our Constitution, or our Physician. If it be our Duty to Fast on certain Days, no Tribe of Priests can dispense with the Pleasure and the Laws of Almighty God; tho' it is a Task which (for Money) they never refuse: And if it be not our Duty; it is insolent and wicked in them to command what neither God nor Nature requires; and it is in us a Sin and a Folly to obey them. Even the Protestant Priests, long since the Reformation, have known how to make the right Use of this Power. I, my self, have seen several formal Dispensations sign'd by *Archbishop Sheldon*, and under the Arch-Episcopal Seal, to Licence the Eating of Flesh in *Lent*; which Dispensations, I presume, were not granted without Application and Fees.

Religion is a voluntary Thing; it can no more be forced than Reason, or Memory, or any Faculty of the Soul. To be devout against our Will, is an Absurdity; and it is ridiculous in others to hope to make us so, in Spite of our selves. We have no Power over the Appetites of others, no more than over their Consciences. Neither a Man's Mind, nor his Palate, can be subject to the Jurisdiction of an-

other; and whoever takes upon him to regulate one's Throat and Stomach, and direct one how much to swallow, may (with equal Reason) assume Dominion over the other Offices of Nature, and dictate how much one ought to discharge. If Fasting is good and pious, because it afflicts and mortifies the Human Spirit and Frame; a Surfeit, or a Debauch, or a Kick in the Guts, or a broken Leg, must be good and pious, for the same Reason, if given or taken with the same View.

As Fasting ought to be left to every Man's Discretion, because every Man is the best Judge of his Constitution and his Conscience; so ought it to be exercised with exceeding Care and Caution; otherwise it will be apt to lower our Tempers, or disorder our Heads, and probably do both. Now, neither Ill-Nature, nor Enthusiasm, is any wife related to True Religion; far otherwise, they are the greatest Enemies it has. A bitter Spirit, and a raving Brain, may be occasioned or increased by Fasting; but Christianity neither produces them, nor owns them. We may fast our selves into Peevishness, and call it *Christian Zeal*; and into the Vapours, and call the Wind in our Heads, *Inspiration*: But by all this we only shew that we know nothing, at least possess nothing, either of Inspiration or Zeal.

But this same immoderate Fasting does not only render People whimsical and passionate, and has consequently helped to give Birth to many ridiculous and uncharitable Principles of Divinity, which have infatuated and inflamed Mankind; but it also creates narrow Thoughts and an abject Pooriness of Spirit; and renders the Mind prone to Delusion and Slavery. It is manifest that a moderate Use of the Blessings and Enjoyments of Life, of which Eating and Drinking are not the least, has a wonderful Tendency to create or improve a good and beneficent Disposition of Heart; which, in my Opinion, is as absolutely necessary to Devotion, as to good Neighbourhood. I can never think that Ill-Nature, or Baseness of Mind, can be an acceptable Oblation to the Wise and Merciful God; or that Religion should command what Common Sense forbids. I must own, I am always best pleas'd after a good Meal, and therefore best disposed to love God and my Neighbour, which is the Sum of both Tables: I feel, at the same Juncture, the Love of Liberty, and the Spirit of *Whigism*, strongest in me: And if Eating and Drinking makes us thus bold for our Constitution, let us, we beseech you, in the Name of Publick Spirit, promote moderate Eating and Drinking.

It is a Principle in Politicks, that a Happy People will never bear a Tyrannical Prince: He must therefore make his Subjects wretched, before he can make himself absolute. And this Principle holds equally true in the Business of *Church Dominion*. The Lacity must be Fools, before they can think the Priests to be Oracles; and they must be Slaves, before they can think the Priests to be Lords. Here now is an unanswerable Reason, taken from the standing Rules of Ecclesiastical Polity, why the Lay Beasts of the People, as *Mr. Lesley* kindly calls us, should be always kept senseless, always starving. I would therefore entreat all my loving Countrymen, that, as they love their Liberty and the Protestant Religion, they would love their Victuals.

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Independent Whig.

Wednesday, September 14. 1720.

REASON is the only Guide given to Men in the State of Nature, to find out the Will of God, and the Means of Self-preservation. The Senses are its subordinate Instruments and Spies: They bring it Intelligence; and it forms a Judgment, and takes Measures, according to the Discoveries which they make. It compares Things, one with another, and chooses them, if they are good; or neglects them, if they are indifferent; or shuns them, if they are bad. It discovers a first Cause, the Maker, Contriver, and Preserver of all Things; and therefore it teaches Submission to his Will, Admiration of his Wisdom and Power, and Thankfulness for his Goodness and Mercy. It distinguishes Subjects from Slaves; and shews the Loveliness of Liberty, and the Vileness of Vassalage: It shews that, as to political Privileges, all Men are born equal, and consequently, that He who is no better than others, can have no Right to command others, who are as good as himself; unless, for the Ends of their own Interest and Safety, they confer that Right upon him, during their good Pleasure, or his good Behaviour.

REASON has invented all Science, pointed out all Commerce, and framed all Schemes for social Happiness. It has polished Mankind, set the Greeks above the Barbarians, and the Romans above the Greeks. It has been observed, in praise of its great Power and Excellency, by a celebrated Moralist, that we have not sufficient Strength to follow our Reason as far as it would carry us.

To REASON we are beholden for all the Comforts and Conveniencies of Life, next after the first Author of them; and for our Defence against the Assaults of Beasts of Prey, and of one another; and for our Shelter from the Inclemencies of uncertain Weather, freezing us, or scorching us, according to the different Seasons of the Year. The Earth, with all its Abundance, affords but rude and unpleasing Entertainment, without the Dexterity and Refinements of Reason. Thus, even the Gifts of Nature, before they arrive at us, and are made fit for our Use, become also the Gifts of REASON. Without REASON, we had lived like the Brute Creation, upon raw Fruit, tasteless Herbs, and the cold Spring; or exposed to the merciless Jaws of Famine, when a severe Winter had frozen up the Stores of the Earth, and locked the Waters under Ice.

REASON checks tumultuous Passion, the greatest Enemy to the Peace of the Mind, and to the Peace of Society. Hence it has been ob-

(Price Two-pence.)

erved by the same Moralist, that all our rational Pursuits are temperate Pursuits; and that what we pursue with REASON, we never pursue with Violence. REASON subdues Anger, and prevents Cruelty; it makes a Man less fierce than a Lion, and less ravenous than a Bear. It is not humane Shape, but humane Reason, that places a Man above the Beasts of the Field, and lifts him into a Resemblance with God himself. Hence it is justly styled, *Divina particula Aura; A Ray, or Impulse of the Divinity.* And, in what Sense can a Man be said to be made after the Image of God, unless by his possessing that REASON, which is a divine Particle of the GOD HEAD? We resemble not our MAKER in Person or Complexion; and therefore can only resemble him in REASON, and in Mercy, which is the Child of this Divine Reason.

Were we not rational Creatures, we could not be religious Creatures, but upon a Level with Brutes, to whom God has made no Revelation of himself, because they want Reason to discern it, and to thank him for it. Revelation therefore presupposes Reason, and addresses it self to Reason; and God himself, by persuading us, as he does in his Word, by the Voice of Reason, appeals to our Reason. We cannot glorify God but with our Understandings; and we are convinced of his Goodness before we adore it. To praise him without Reason, is a Contradiction, and an Impossibility. The Devotion which he requires, must be free, rational and willing; and where it is not so, it is Folly or Hypocrisy.

Nor is there any Opposition between Reason and Grace, where some may weakly, or dishonestly, maintain. In Truth, Grace is never given but where Reason was already given, and the former cannot subsist, where the latter does not. We may have worldly Wisdom without Piety; but cannot possess Piety without Understanding; nor does Grace, tho' given in the greatest Abundance, at all supply the ordinary Offices of Reason. We do not find that St. Luke was a better Physician, for having written a Gospel; or St. Paul a better Sailor, or better Tent-maker, for being an Apostle. But neither could St. Luke have been an Evangelist, nor St. Paul an Apostle, unless God had given them Reason as well as Grace: Indeed they are both the Gifts of God; only the one is ordinary, and the other is extraordinary.

REASON, even without the Light of Revelation, teaches us to investigate Nature, and praise God for the Wonderfulness of his Works. It must judge of Revelation it self, what is so, and



and what not, and of the Words and Language in which the holy Oracles were at first conveyed, and of the Words and Language into which they were afterwards translated. Now Words, many of them, being obscure or equivocal, and signifying different Things to different Men; it is left to our Reason to determine, in what Sense these Words are to be understood. The Spirit of God has invented for us no *new Ones*, or such as carry in their Sound certain and determinate Ideas, which cannot be mistaken, but must *infallibly* be the same to every Man.

By the *Light* of REASON we see about us. It warns us against Craft, and arms us against Force; and the same Reason which commands us to believe in God *implicitly*, and obey him *passively*, does also command us to trust to no Man without Enquiry, and to submit to no Man without Cause. Thus, what is our Duty, in Relation to God, would be Madness in Relation to one another: The good GOD cannot deceive us; but MEN have Pride, Folly, Interest and Complexion, all conspiring to deceive themselves and others.

Our first Attempt to make Converts, is an Appeal to their REASON, by which they are to judge *for themselves* of the Reasonableness of our Religion, and of the Arguments which we bring for the Defence and Recommendation of our Religion: Which Method would be exceeding absurd and dishonest, if we did not suffer them to judge of our Religion with the same Freedom, after they are come into it, as they did before they embraced it. This would be Trepanning one's Reason into Captivity with its own Assistance; first to make use of it, and then to vote it useless. A strange inconsistent Piece of Treachery, and a flat Contradiction to that Liberty with which CHRIST has made us free! As if we were to receive any System upon the Grounds of our Reason, without which it never can be sincerely received, and then to reject our Reason upon the Grounds of our System!

Pray, how do we distinguish the Beauty and Truth of the Gospel, from the Imposture and Absurdity of the *Alchoran*, but by our Reason? How do we detect the impudent and senseless Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, but by our Sense and Reason? Why did we, or how could we, leave *Papery*, and embrace the Reformation, but because our own private Reason told us, and Scripture, of which we made our selves the Judges, told us; that we left Slavery, Falshood, and Cruelty, for Truth, Freedom and Innocence? How did our Saviour prove himself the Son of God, but by Miracles, which every Eye saw, and every Ear heard? He appealed to the Sense and Reason of Mankind; and all were convinced, that would be convinced. How do we know the Scripture to be the Word of God, but by the Deductions and Information of Reason? How can we prove our own Church, as by Law established, to be the purest and best constituted Church in the World, but by the Testimony of impartial, disinterested REASON? For, it is plain, from the great Number of *Gainlayers* and *Arians*, that her genuine Sons have not the miraculous Gift of inspiring from above all Men with their own orthodox Sentiments. How can we distinguish Religion from Enthusiasm, Grace from Superstition, Faith from Credulity, the Love of the Church from the Love of Power, and the Au-

thority of God from the Impositions of Men; but by Reason, or by the Scripture interpreted by Reason?

In short, all who are Friends to TRUTH, are Friends to REASON, the Discoverer and Champion of Truth and Reason; and none are Foes to Reason, but those who have Truth and Reason for their Foes. He who has dark Purposes to serve, must use dark Means: Light would discover him, and Reason expose him: He must endeavour to shut out both; and make them look frightful, by giving them ill Names; for further than Names the Vulgar inquire not.

From this Cause, Religion and Liberty flourish, where Reason and Knowledge are encouraged; and wherever the latter are stifled, the former are extinguished. In Turkey, Printing is forbid, Enquiry is dangerous, and Free speaking is CAPITAL; because they are all inconsistent with the MAHOMETANISM by Law established. Hence it comes to pass, that the wretched Turks are all stupidly ignorant, are all Slaves, all Infidels. Nor have the Papists much Advantage to boast above the Mahometans. Their Guides and Governours lock up from them the Scripture, which is the Book of Knowledge: They teach them, that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion: They banish Liberty, they brow-beat Reason, they persecute Truth. In Consequence of all which, the deluded Votaries of the Romish Church are as ignorant as the Mahometans, as great Slaves, greater Idolaters, and greater Persecutors; that is, they exceed the Turks in their Barbarity, who exceed most others.

Here in England, why are we free, why Protestants; but because we are guided by Reason, and judge for our selves? And none amongst us complain of the Liberty of the Press, or the Growth of Free Thinking, but those who would found a Dominion upon Stupidity and Persecution. Vile and Woful is that Cause, which must be supported by Ignorance and Misery! And yet there are those in Great Britain, who, though they wear a holy and venerable Livery, yet have the Boldness and Blasphemy to christen that impious Cause the Cause of God, and of his Church.

To conclude; Scripture and Reason, without which Scripture can have no Effect, are the only Tests of every Falshood and Imposture, and every Superstition: Suppose, for Example, a Reverend Doctor is touched with an odd Zeal for Bowing to the East; he ought to convince my Reason that Bowing to the East is enjoined in Scripture, before he enjoins me to bow also. If he says it is enjoined by the Authority of the Church; he then must satisfy my Reason, that the Scripture teaches the Church to teach her Members to make Bows. If he answers, that neither does the Scripture teach to bow to the East, but that the Church thinks bowing decent and edifying; he must then prove, by rational Evidence, that what every Church thinks decent is a Duty. If he replies, that this is only true of the one Orthodox Church; then he must prove that his Church is the sole Orthodox Church, according to the Rules of the Gospel; and if the Doctor cannot do this to my Satisfaction, then there will be an End of his Argument for his Ecclesiastical Bowings.

As we must judge from Scripture what is Orthodox; so we must judge from Reason, what is Scripture.

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, September 21. 1720.

IT is a shameful Insult upon our Understandings, that of sanctifying the most wicked Purposes and most cruel Actions with the most honest and innocent Names; and yet nothing is more frequently practised. Thus the worthy Name of RULER shall be prostituted and pronounced aloud, to palliate and even to justify the Barbarities of a TYRANT; and that peaceable Word *Obedience* shall be forced to signify an unmanly and unnatural Patience of *Servitude*. LAWS, which were intended to protect and encourage good Men, and to restrain and punish ill ones, are often perverted into deadly Instruments in the Hands of Robbers and Usurpers, against the Virtuous and the Harmless; and the Means of Preservation are turn'd into Engines of Destruction. The *Lord's Anointed*, which at first was only a Man approved and chosen by God himself to be the Ruler of his People, has been since compelled to mean an over-grown Plunderer, who *chose himself* to be a Destroyer of God's People.

These are some Instances of the Abuse of Words in *Civil Life*. In Religion the Abuse has been, if possible, still greater; of which I have given already many Proofs, and shall continue to give more in the Course of these Papers. I shall at present confine my self to a Phrase which is indeed a very good one, but which I have never known applied to a good Purpose in my Time, nor at any Time before; I mean, that of *the Peace of the Church*.

By the *Peace of the Church*, when it is taken in a rational and warrantable Sense, I take to be meant no more than this; namely, that any Number of People, who have agreed among themselves upon Terms of religious Communion, shall quietly enjoy the sacred Privilege of meeting together to worship God; and whoever disturbs them, let his Title or Pretensions be what they will, is a Breaker of the Peace of the Church. Or if any other Society greater than the former, and of longer standing, think fit to be provok'd at this religious Indulgence, and call it a Breach of the Peace of the Church, they bring home the Charge upon themselves; who by breaking the Peace of the Church, mean only the not submitting to their own proud Spirit, which finds Peace only in the Exercise of successful Tyranny. Or if the smaller Society should usurp Dominion over the Thoughts of its own Members, and demand of them a Belief contrary to the Light of their Minds, or a Behaviour contrary to the Dictates and Conviction of their Consciences; they justify the Claims of the greater Society over themselves, and leave themselves without Excuse for having left it.

A Man who leaves the Communion of any particular Church, does no more break the Peace of that Church, than a Man who leaves the Realm breaks the Peace of the Realm; or than a Man breaks the Peace of a Family, who whilst the rest dine upon Flesh, does himself dine separately upon Fish. But he does evidently break the Peace of the Church, who would by Violence keep any one in that Church; forasmuch as by so doing, he violates Conscience, which is the Seat and Centre of Religion, there being no Religion where there is no Conscience, and consequently no real Church. He who prays without Book, does not break the Peace of the Church; provided he forces no Body to pray as he prays: But he who would compel others to pray by his Pattern, against their own Liking, does not only break the Peace of the Church, but destroys, as far as he can, its very Essence; because a Church is constituted by the *voluntary* Devotion performed by two or three met together in Christ's Name. If it is not *voluntary*, it is no Devotion; God will be worshipped *in Spirit and in Truth*: And if it is voluntary, no Man can controul it.

Hitherto, for the most part, *the Peace of the Church* has been unnaturally made to signify a blind Submission to the Dictates of Priests in Matters of Devotion; and a blind Acceptance of all their Schemes, Dreams and Forgeries in Matters of Faith. Now here is no Church at all; but on one hand, the Invention and Imposition of deceitful and tyrannical Men, defacing and misrepresenting Religion, and wresting it to serve their own wicked Purposes; and on the other hand, a Tribe of Fools and Slaves, sacrificing their Senses, their Freedom, and their Consciences to Antichrist, and worshipping him, and not God. If one of these groveling Bigots resumes his Eyes and breaks his Fetters, he, forsooth, is a *Schismatick*, he breaks the *Peace of the Church*.

Why will these Men, so famed for being close and crafty, be so plainly shewing us, that by the Church they mean only themselves, and by the Worship of God they mean only the Worship of their own Persons and Authority? But they make this manifest, as by a Thousand Instances, so particularly by this; namely, that the greatest Rebel to God shall find good Quarter, provided he be but a good Subject to them; and the most conscientious Servant of the living God shall find no Mercy, if he disputes to bend to their Usurpations, and to swallow their Inventions for divine Oracles. It is no matter whether you live like a *Christian* or no, provided you do not break *the Peace of the Church*; but if you do, your being a Saint will not atone for it, nor stand you in the least stead.



If I do all I can to please God, I shall certainly please him. Now if the Clergy had the same View and Design, my pleasing God would also please them. In consequence of this, if I thought my Abode and Communion with them a Sin, it is their Duty to encourage and exhort me to leave them, and to obey God rather than Men. But far from this, the Plea of pleasing God is often no Way of pleasing them; and they seldom fail to damn a Man for those very Actions, by which through Christ he shall be sav'd; namely, deserting Authority for Conscience, and finding out the Truth for himself.

A stupid Servitude to unbounded Dominion supports the Peace of the Church in some Countries, just as Ignorance, Poverty, and many Dragons do the Peace of the State in others.

The breaking of the Peace of the Church, as the same is generally understood by the ignorant People, and always by the ambitious Clergy, is both a rational and a religious Duty, and the best Action a Man can perform. That Man must be as void of Reason as of Religion, who quarrels with me for having different Faculties from him, and a different Way of conceiving Things. He might with as much Propriety quarrel with me for having a different Complexion, and a different Palate, neither of which is in my own Power.

If I christen my Child without the *Sign of the Cross*, or a *humane Form of Words*, how do I by this break the *Peace of the Church* or of good Neighbourhood? But he who oppresses or calumniates me for thus doing my Duty by discharging my Conscience, commits an Outrage both upon Humanity and Conscience, and not only breaks the Peace of the Church and of Society, but by his Want of Charity declares his Want of Christianity.

If I follow the best Light I can get, I do my Duty; and if I do my Duty I please God. And who shall dare to tell me that though I please God, yet I break the Peace of the Church? Would not this be to own that the Will of God and the Will of the Church are opposite Things?

I do not believe that there are upon Earth, two Men who think exactly alike upon every Subject; and yet our different Tastes in Mear, Drink, Building and Dress, make not the least Difference in humane Society; nor is it likely they ever will, unless we establish by Law, and rack Preferments to one particular Mode of eating, drinking, building and dressing; then indeed we may soon expect to see the establish'd and orthodox Mason, Cook and Taylor very zealous and loud for *Conformity* or *Penalties*.

But at present, ten Men in ten different Suits, can dine together upon ten different Dishes, and give ten different Opinions upon one Piece of Painting or Architecture, without breaking Friendship or good Humour. If indeed they are drunk either with Wine or Zeal, they will be apt to fight about the *Church* or *something else*: But why Men in their Senses should clamour and quarrel at their Neighbours particular Conscience any more than at his particular Palate, no Reason can be assigned, but the Insatiations of Priestcraft operating upon its Brat Bigotry. Is not Conscience dearer to a Man than his Palate or his Fancy in Cloaths? God can receive no Worship that comes not from the Conscience, and he who commands you to follow him a-

gainst your Conscience, commands you in effect to provoke God out of Complaisance to Man; and rather than do this I hope it is lawful to break the Peace of the Church. Where the Church quadrates with a Man's Conscience, he will of Courte comply with the Church; but where it does not, he is in Conscience bound to desert it; otherwise to be a Conformist, he must be a Hypocrite.

Can these Men be Christians, who demand Submission to their Dictates in Opposition to the Dictates of Conscience, and at the Peril of Salvation; and who, provided you obey them, care not though you mock God? But if they will allow every Man to be fully persuaded in his own Mind, which is the Apostle's Rule and Precept, then the Cry of breaking the *Peace of the Church*, is an empty knavish Cry.

Indifferent Things in Religion there are none; and therefore the pretended Power of the Ecclesiasticks to impose them, is wicked and ridiculous. If they are indifferent in their own Eyes, why are they imposed? And if they were indifferent in the Eyes of others, no Body would refuse them. But, if I dislike them, they are no longer indifferent to me; and if you lay any Strefs upon them, they are no longer indifferent to you. But to oppress, imprison and ruin People for Things *allowed to be indifferent*, is such a Piece of Impudence, and wanton Cruelty, as cannot be described.

To call any Thing indifferent in Religion, is to own that it has nothing to do with Religion. Now can any Reason be given why Religion should be interested in that in which Religion has no Interest. Sure these Men mock us, and would seem to be in Jest, did not their Proceedings, when they have Power, shew them to be terribly in Earnest.

If I neglect a Ceremony or a Cringe, which I think a Reproach to Religion and Reason; do I break the *Peace of the Church*, for thus doing Honour to Religion and Reason? Or is it not rather an Insult upon Both, and a manifest Breach of Charity, to use me ill for acting upon such righteous and laudable Motives? Do I break the *Peace of the Church* in worshipping God after a Manner that I am verily persuaded he will accept? Or do I not rather dishonour him in using that as Worship which my Mind tells me is no Worship; tho' it should be Establish'd by Law?

In Popish and Mahomeran Countries, you see neither true Religion nor the Practice of it; and yet the *Peace of the Church* there is wonderfully well secured by great Armies and Capital Penalties. Fire and Sword, Halters and Dungeons, are all employed to protect the *Peace of the Church*. And in every Nation under the Sun, where the Church enjoys the most profound Peace, the People enjoy the most profound Misery, Ignorance and Slavery. Civil and Religious Liberty, are certain Signs of each other, and live and die together; but I believe I may lay it down for a Maxim, that in any Country where there is ne'er a Separatist from the Church, there is ne'er a Freeman in the State. To which Maxim I may venture to add another, namely, that in the Ecclesiastical Style, the PEACE OF THE CHURCH is but another Phrase for the POWER OF THE PRIESTS.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, September 28. 1720.



WE can never sufficiently admire and adore the infinite Goodness of God to Mankind, in giving him a perfect Rule or Law for his Direction and Conduct, and delivering it in Books and Scriptures which are plain and easy in all Things, necessary to be known to every one, who shall make a proper Use of his natural Faculties, and not weakly trust a Pope, or some Body like a Pope for their Interpretation, who will ever have ambitious or other worldly Purposes to serve, by imposing false and wicked Meanings on those sacred Writings.

How ought we then to value our Bibles, daily to read them, and search our selves for those Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; and how jealous should we be of trusting our Temporal and Eternal Happiness to the Judgment and Conduct of others, who for the most Part, from imbibed Prejudices or worse Designs, represent the most ridiculous, chimerical, absurd, contradictory and immoral Opinions, to be fundamental Articles of Christianity.

Notwithstanding, such is the Power and crafty Malice of the Popish and popishly affected Clergy, that in most Countries they have either taken the Bible (even on the Pretence of Religion it self) out of the Peoples Hands, or have made it useless there; and such is the senseless Stupidity of the gaping Herd, that they observe not the Injury done them, and nor only suffer this worst sort of Robbery, Violence and Injustice, but kiss the Rod, and esteem themselves to be kindly and religiously dealt with.

In all Popish Countries, before the Reformation, the Bible was lock'd up in the learned Languages, which effectually hindered the People from being acquainted with that Holy Book; the Priest saying, and the poor ignorant Lairy believing, *That it was Heretical, and the very Foundation of all Heresy and Schism, for the People to read the Bible.* Indeed after the Reformation, some Translations were made of it into the vulgar Languages of particular Popish Countries; but were the People ever the better for it? No such Matter, I can assure you; for no one was suffered to read those Translations without a special Licence, which was dangerous

to ask for, and rendered a Man suspected of heretical Pravity; and the Priest never granted it but to those, who either would not or could not make any use of it; that is, to such as he well knew were pre-engaged by strong Prejudices, or stronger Interests to favour the sacerdotal Power, and who durst not understand the Word of God differently from the Clergy, who called themselves the Church.

But in other Popish Countries, and particularly in *Spain*, the Bible is not extant in the vulgar Tongue, and consequently must be unknown altogether to the People, who are incapable of reading it even by Licence, which can scarcely be called a Privilege lost, considering how few durst ask, or can get Licences; who they are that can obtain them; and what Danger they would incur in making a right Use of them.

Especial Care is taken to prevent the Importation of any Translation of the Bible in these Countries; and no sooner does any Ship of a Protestant Nation come to Anchor in any Popish Port, where the Inquisition prevails, but she is visited and search'd narrowly for heretical Books, and particularly for Bibles, by the Officers of that Court, which are immediately carried to the Inquisition, and there burn'd.

The brave old Marshal *Schomberg*, when he was last at *Lisbon*, told a Friend of mine with Tears in his Eyes, That having when he came a Shore there, left a *Dutch Bible* (which had been his Grandfather's) upon the Table of his Cabin, it had been carried from the Custom-House to the Inquisition, and that though he had sent to the chief Inquisitor, and had spoke to himself for it, he had not been able to recover it.

Let us now approach nearer home, and see how Protestants are used in respect to reading the Bible. And in order to consider this Matter, I shall premise Two Things. *First*, That the End and Design of reading the Bible, is to find out the Will of God, or the Meaning God holds forth to us therein, that we may regulate our Belief, and form our Practice thereby. And *Secondly*, I premise, That to such reading the Bible, it is requisite that we should not be prejudiced by Education, in behalf of any Fancies; that we should pay no Regard to the Authority of weak and fallible Men; that no O-

pinions



Opinions should be imposed on us as Christian Opinions; as, for Example, Consubstantiation, Predestination, the peculiar Opinions of Arius or Socinus, and other Doctrines, pretended to be derived from the Word of God; and that no Man should be hurt in his Body, Name or Goods, for understanding the Bible in that Sense which he thinks to have been intended by God: But that we should act, and be permitted to act in this Matter, as we do in understanding another Book. For if such Arts and Crafts, and Force are used to make Men understand the Bible in a *Lutheran*, or *Presbyterian*, or *Socinian* Sense, as form Mens Minds so strongly to those Senses, that nor a Man in the Countries, where any of those Opinions prevail, does or dares differ from the Sentiments of the Publick, or hurts himself any way by so doing; that Man is not properly allowed to read the Bible, or to take his Religion from thence, but receives his Religion from his *Lutheran*, or *Presbyterian*, or *Socinian* Priest, and might as well take his Religion from a Popish Priest, without using any Bible at all. For what is the difference between taking a Popish Priest's Word for the Sense of the Bible, about the Infallibility and Authority of the Pope and the Church, or the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, (which Bible the Priest keeps solely in his own Hands,) and taking a Presbyter's Word, or being influenced by him, as to the Sense of the Bible, in respect to the Doctrines of the Divine Right of Presbyters and Predestination? (which Bible he does, for Form's sake, put into the Lay-mens Hand, but keeps the Sense in his own)? If there is any material Difference, it is in this, that the Popish Priest acts a fair, open and consistent Part, in denying the Use of the Bible; and that the Presbyter does the same thing hypocritically; and that the Presbyterian Layman makes a more shameful and contradictory Submission to his Presbyter, than a Popish Layman does to his Priest.

When the Minds of the Youth, and their Passions, are thus engaged in behalf of certain Humane Compositions; when they are taught to reverence Men, who are hired and paid to maintain those Compositions, are bred up to hate the Persons of Men of other Persuasions, to abhor their Doctrines, and think it matter of just Disgrace to change the Principles of their Education: and when all this is taught as the Dictates of the Holy Scriptures, must they not, under these Prejudices, read the Scriptures, without understanding them? Is not that Impartiality, which is necessary towards finding out the true Sense of a Book, intirely taken away? And is not a Partiality, which must lead Men to mistake the Sense of a Book, introduced?

But even this is nothing to what those must go through, if they dare to understand the Bible differently from what is vulgarly understood in the Country where they live; they will be

deemed Hereticks; which is supposed to include every thing that is bad in it: It makes every thing appear odious and deformed; dissolves all Friendships; and extinguishes all former kind Sentiments, however just and well deserv'd. And from the time that a Man is deemed an Heretick, 'tis Charity to act against all Rules of Charity. And the more Men violate the Laws of God in dealing with him, 'tis in their Opinion, doing God greater Service. And besides being thus put into a Bear-Skin, and made a Scare-Crow; what is called Heresy, undoes Men in their Trades and Callings, subjects them to Ecclesiastical and Civil Prosecutions, and deprives them of all Preferments in the Church or State. Whereas a Person who understands the Bible, as he is led by the Nose to understand it, which is for the most part falsely, has not only fair Quarter and Reputation, and all manner of Preferments in Church and State attending him, but may be as lewd as he pleases, provided he has a sufficient Portion of Zeal for his Orthodoxy, or rather for the Orthodox Priest.

Is it not therefore a mere mock Show, to recommend to Men the reading of the Scriptures; if when they read them, they must understand them just as their Master, the Priest, tells them, under the Penalties of all the foregoing Inconveniencies, and the foregoing Rewards, which the Priest by his Power and Influence bestows? Bp. Bramhall tells us plainly, (and too many of our modern Divines agree with him) that the promiscuous Licence which Protestants give to all sorts to read and interpret the Scripture, is more prejudicial, nay, pernicious, than the over-rigorous Restraint of the Romanists. Which is Protestant Priestcraft with a Witness! For, as Mr. Chillingworth most judiciously observes, He that would usurp an absolute Lordship and Tyranny over any People, need not put himself to the Trouble and Difficulty of abrogating and disannulling the Laws made to maintain the common Liberty, or of locking them up in an unknown Tongue from the People; for he may compass his own Design as well, if he can get the Power and Authority to interpret them as he pleases: If he can rule his People by his Laws, and his Laws by his Lawyers. Nay, the more expedite, and therefore the more likely way to be successful, is to gain the Opinion and Esteem of the publick and authoriz'd Interpreter of them. For by this means he presses the Laws into his Service, to advance his Designs; and can, in Accommodation to the Opinion Men have of the Excellency of the Laws contained in the Scriptures, with a sort of Grace, put a Crown on their Head, and a Reed in their Hands, and bow before them, and cry, Hail King of the Jews, and pretend a great deal of Esteem, Respect, and Reverence to them, while he is in a more effectual manner misleading the People about their Meaning, than if he destroy'd the Scriptures themselves, or lock'd them up in an unknown Tongue from the People.

T H E
Independent Whig.

Wednesday, October 5. 1720.



Have in two former Papers considered the Nature, Use, and Consequences of *religious Fastings*. I shall in this enquire a little into the Merits of *Penance*, and the Devotion of *Festivals*; a Couple of potent Engines

in the Hands of Churchmen.

Joy and Sorrow proceeding, as they do, from certain Causes which necessarily produce them; the one troubles the Imagination, and the other delights it, whether we will or no. They are different Names given to different Operations of the Animal Spirits, which bring to God Almighty no voluntary Worship, and consequently no Worship at all. The same Disorder in the Blood or Nerves, which discovers it self in Sighs and Groans, would, in a greater Degree, bring forth Rage and Convulsions, which are not the Symptoms of a Gospel-Spirit, but rather the Marks of Spirits dispossest'd in the Gospel. People under Trouble, or in the Spleen, are too apt to mistake their bodily or mental Disorders for the Workings of divine Grace; as if the wise and mild Spirit of God delighted to play childish and mischievous Pranks with weak and unhappy Men, by filling them with wild Freaks or cruel Agonies. I doubt there are few of these Sort of People, who can give a Reason why the great God should be better pleased with a sorrowful Heart than a fore Ankle.

If God Almighty is pleased with our afflicting our selves, he must be pleased best when we afflict our selves most; and a greater Degree of Suffering must beget a greater Portion of his Favour: And consequently the cutting our selves with Knives, as did the *Priests* of *B A A L*, must be more acceptable to him, than the bare whipping our selves with Rods, as do the *Priests* of *R O M E*, &c. By the same Rule, if the endangering of one's Life be well pleasing to him, the destroying of one's Life must be more pleasing to him; and Despair and Self-Murther are more grateful Instances of Duty and Devotion to the God of Mercy, than barely being afraid of him, and barely making our Lives miserable. The pious Consequence of all which must

be, that the blessed and beneficent God, who is the Giver of all Good, is the Author of all Evil and all Misery; and the Maker and Preserver of Mankind, who is the Father of Mercies, is also the Destroyer of Mankind, and the Father of Cruelties.

Nor is this Reasoning so strange, or these Conclusions so unnatural, as some may ignorantly imagine; since the *Priests* who, for the godly Ends of Dominion and Gain, were the first Inventers of *Sacrifices* and *Penances*, have frequently proceeded so far in their inhumane and diabolical Craft, as to butcher Men to appease their Deity. And indeed when once you had taken their Word for the divine Will, you renounced all Right and Pretence to judge for your self, or to dispute any Measure of Devotion which they had thought fit to prescribe. Thus, for Example, if the *Priests* told you that their God graciously long'd for a Bonfire, and had, in his divine Goodness, appointed you to be the principal Faggot; as averse as your carnal Spirit might be to this great Honour, yet you could not decline it without the terrible Imputation of Disobedience, or Apostacy, and probably of Atheism: For having given the *Priest* the Property of your Body, your Thoughts and your Behaviour, you were become A L L the *Priest's*.

The Duty of *Penance* is, according to certain Churchmen, a very necessary Duty: But there is another Duty quite opposite to it, and yet very necessary also; and that is, the Business and Duty of *Festivals*. These two may indeed seem Contradictions to each other, and to the Eye of unanctify'd Reason are so; but where they are enjoined by *Church-Authority*, it is our Duty to think them orthodox and consistent, and so to be merry or melancholly, and to weep or laugh, just as *Mother-Church* C O M M A N D S us, in defiance of our Constitutions and our Understandings. We are to mourn on *Good Friday*, because on that Day our *Saviour* died; though, if he had nor, we could not have been saved: And we are to take our Belly full of Meat and Mirth on *Easter Sunday*, because *Christ* rose on that Day from the Dead; though it was impossible for him to have continued there.

P E N-

(Price Two-pence)



PENNANCE is a ghastly Punishment imposed by a Priest, or voluntarily suffered by a Penitent, for some Offence, real or imagined. Sometimes it consists in Abstinence from certain Meats, which, it seems, are not so much in Favour with Almighty God, as are others: A Piece of Cod, for Example, with rich Sauce, is less Savoury in God's Sight, than a plain Piece of Beef and Cabbage; and a greater Atonement for Sin, Sometimes it is performed by Change of Apparel; and a dirty Hair-Cloth is more pious and meritorious than a clean Holland Shirt. Sometimes it is perform'd by rambling to some Church, to stare at a *wooden Saint*, and kiss an old Coffin. Sometimes this holy Severity rests altogether upon your Pocket, and God's Wrath is fervently and successfully bribed away by the prevailing Intercession of some potent *Pieces* to his Priest, who will infallibly persuade him to overlook your Guilt, and be good Friends with you. Sometimes you are to scarify your Backside for the Healing of your Soul, and reconcile your self to Heaven by the Dint of Lashing, which will sometimes serve for another Purpose; and so a Scourge made of Broom, is made the Scourge of God. But, if drawing Blood on this Occasion be so pious, because so painful, I do not see why the Drawing of a Tooth would not do as well; or why the Omnipotent would not be, as propitious to desolate Gums, as to blister'd Loins.

So much for praising God by being Sorrowful; in which Case Sickness and Pain are great Blessings: Now for the Method of pleasing him, by being Joyful; in which Case, Festivity and Merriment are great Blessings too! So that, we see, the Almighty is highly pleas'd with both our Misery and our Happiness.

Worldly Blessings are no doubt the Gifts of God, and we ought to receive them with joyful Hands and grateful Hearts, and Religion and Philosophy too reaches us to submit to Afflictions and Calamities with Patience and Humility, and to consider them either as Effects of our own Intemperance and Folly, as the necessary and inevitable Concomitants of humane Nature, or the Strokes of Providence intended for our Correction and Amendment; nor do I deny but it may be sometimes lawful and expedient too, mechanically to prepare our Minds with Dispositions suitable to the Actions they are to produce.

Every one's Experience shews him that his Mind and Body operate upon one another: Both are improved by Exercise and moderate Food, raised and exhilarated by Musick or Diversion, enervated with Sickness, oppress'd with Drunkenness and Gluttony, fatigued with Labour, and often all the noble Faculties of the former are quite destroyed and extinguished by Distemper or Accidents.

It may be therefore not only lawful, but our Duty, by proper Food, agreeable Conversation, and due Exercise, to prepare and keep our selves in such a Temperament, as may best qualify us for cool Reflection, and enable us in the best Manner to exert our Faculties; but from what Principle of Reason or Religion do we find that we must work up our Passions beyond their natural Pitch, and endeavour to de-

stroy the Serenity and Calm of our Minds to do Homage to the Deity, who will accept no Service but what flows from a sincere and upright Heart, elevated and raised by a due Contemplation of the divine Perfections and the Benefits received from our great Creator, or humbled by the Consideration of humane Infirmities; and not intoxicated with various Musick, pompous Shews, delicious Banquets, or Bottles of Brandy, nor depressed or sunk with Mortifications, Penances, Fasting, or unwholesome Diet; all which have nothing to do with true Religion, though they have been always essential Parts of every false one.

Let us now see what sort of Devotion these *Holy Days* produce.

Idleness is the Nurse of Vice, and fills the Taverns and the Stews with many debauch'd Customers, who, had they any Thing else to do, or would do any Thing else, might live as chaste and sober as any of their Neighbours, that are so, because they are well employ'd. The common People think of a *Holy Day* with no other View, than that they shall then have their Belly-full of Ale, and Rambling, and Idleness. Perhaps, in the Morning, they hear a Sermon, which is often calculated to drive Peace and Religion out of their Souls, and to fill them with Bitterness and Rage against those who provoke them, by being sober Subjects, and conscientious Christians. Next comes a gluttonous Meal, and a Load of Liquor, which adds fresh Fuel to the orthodox Zeal they imbib'd in the Morning, and inspires them to deface or demolish Places sacred to God's Worship, and to affront and insult every sober Man, who has not been at the Brandy-shop, and will not pronounce *Hell* and *Damnation* according to the Word of Command. After all this Mischief and Bravery, they have Recourse to more Liquor, over which they swear and triumph upon their late *Orthodox Exploits*. Probably, at last they vomit up their Devotions in *Drury Lane*, and finish the *Holy Day* in a *Bawdy-House*. Next Morning the Sum of the Reckoning will be this; They have lost a Day, and with it their Innocence: They have risked their Health and their Souls: They have provoked God, and in his Name committed Outrages upon their Neighbours. Sweet Jesus! Is this the Spirit of *thy Church*? Can these be *thy Followers*, or the Followers of *thy Servants*?

Upon the Whole; a Man may ply his Imagination with black and dismal Ideas, till he has made his Heart as sad and sorrowful as he pleases: He may also, by playing with his Fancy, and by amusing it with agreeable and humorous Images, render his Soul as merry as he pleases; and by these Means create either *Comedy* or *Tragedy* within himself: But neither is Wantonness of Spirit any Worship of God; nor is this Gloominess of Soul any Devotion to him. The *Mahometan Dervises*, and *Indian Brahmans* exceed us by far in Fasting and Austerities. It is incredible what voluntary Torture and Plague they undergo in the Way of Religion. And as to godly Ranting and Roaring, the old *Pagan Bacchanals* were as mad and as drunk on their *Holy Days*, as we of the Established Church can be on *ours*.

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, October 12. 1720.



Religion, as the Popish Priests have disfigured it, is only a wicked and ambitious Scheme, contrived by them, to set themselves above the People. This is so true, that wherever the Priests have the most Power, Religion has the least. Being neither appointed by the Law of Nature, nor the Law of Christ, they are only Intruders into the Affairs of Religion, which is therefore under an Usurpation, while it is under them. So that their Foundation being false, they are in most Countries reduced to support it by false Facts, and deceitful Appearances. And as they are thus oblig'd to cover Fraud with Fraud, and support one Violence by another, it is no wonder that we find it often so carefully hidden under Inventions and deform'd by Absurdities, and all those Inventions and Absurdities defended by Cruelty and a strong Hand.

This strange Jumble of Fictions they have the Front to call by the holy Name of Religion, and gravely to create Faith out of Lies; And with the groveling Multitude, whose Eyes are in the Earth, all this passes off well enough; they have fearful Hearts and simple Heads, and so stand always prepar'd to be frighten'd or deluded at the priestly Word of Command. But because the Craft lies subject to daily Detection from rational and discerning Men, its Champions have rais'd loud Cries and strong Prejudices against the two principal Weapons, by which their Cause is most annoy'd; I mean, the Weapons of REASON and RIDICULE; the former of which discovers Truth, and the latter exposes Fraud.

What civil Treatment these Reverend Seers afford to Reason, I have shewn else-where; and shall handle in this Paper, the Business of Ridicule, which they always represent as impious and profane, whenever it meddles with the Cassock; and yet always exercise it themselves according to their Talents, without Mercy, when the waggish grave Creatures, are pleas'd to be Arch upon Dissenters or Free-Thinkers.

To them is no doubt owing, that frequent, but false Saying, now in the Mouth of every Ignorant; namely, that it is an easy Matter to make a Jest upon Religion or the Priesthood; which, whether they are aware of it or not, is saying, that their Religion and its Priests are a Jest. For he, upon whom the Jest is made, does in Effect, make the Jest, otherwise it is none. Religion and Virtue cannot be ridicul'd; and whoever attempts it, by shewing himself a Villain, raises Horror instead of Laughter, which is the End of Ridicule. But the vending of Grimace for Religion, and setting up for Piety without Virtue, are the natural Subjects of Jeer and Merriment.

Whoever fears Ridicule, deserves Ridicule. He is conscious of a weak Side, and knows he cannot stand a Laugh. This is the Case of sacred Grimace, or Gravity, which Men of Sense see to be only a studied Restraint laid upon the

Muscles of the Face and the Joints of the Body; and teaching them to move, not by the Impulses of Nature and the Motions of the Heart, but by Design, either to attract Admiration, or obtain Credit, or gain Followers. And therefore sacred Grimace dreads Men of Sense. However, it is never to be set aside; for this same affected Demureness, ridiculous as it is in it self, is a solemn Bait to catch the Mobb, whose Respect always follows their Wonder. The Vulgar are caught, like Woodcocks, by the Eyes, and led, like Calves, by the Ears; Shew and Sound lead their fat Heads Captive. It is therefore no wonder, that in Popish Countries a shewy Chancel, a curious tall Steeple, gilded Organs, and a delicate Ring of Bells, keep the Many on the Parson's side, and make them all good Churchmen, and always get the better of a plain Religion, that has its abode only in the Heart, and wants all the above-mentioned Marks of the true Church. Besides all this, there are more Mirth and Holy days in their Orthodox Faith, than in the contrary Scheme, which obliges Men to earn Heaven with the Sweat of their Brows, and take pains to be saved.

These, however, are but small Instances of Ridicule, taken from the Force and Grimace of an external Religion. I shall here give Instances much more considerable, as well as much more ridiculous. Do we not see the pretended Successors of the Apostles, at home and elsewhere, instead of making *Tents* or converting the World, living voluptuously and promoting the Excise? Do we not frequently see the Ambassadors of God, sent to promote Virtue and Peace and the Observance of his Laws, promoting Strife, frequenting debauch'd Houses, rooking after Wealth, and plaguing and reviling their Neighbours? Do we not see holy Men, who have the Call of the Spirit, rioting in all the Works of the Flesh? Do they not buy Livings with Money, and then claim them by divine Right? Do they not chop and jockey away poor Parishes for such as are richer, and yet pretend to have upon their Hands the Cure of Souls; though by such vile bargaining, they shew that they value as little those Souls they have just bought, as they do those they have lately sold? Do not many of them, tho' they are void of all Merit, yet demand great Respect; and tho' ignorant, pretend to teach, and to reveal God's Will, which is already reveal'd, and yet live as if there was no God? And do they not, without obeying God, set up to command Men? Do they not seek Honour from their Cloth, which yet they dishonour? And do they not, for the blackest Crimes, claim Sanctuary from the Church, which Church is the People, which People they abuse and deceive? Do they not pretend to mend others, without being better than others, but in Truth more idle and proud than all others; two Qualities neither suited to the Welfare of Religion nor of humane Society? Do they not flatter and support the worst of Tyrants; and plague and distress,

and



and often destroy the best of Kings? and in both Cases, do they not bely the holy Ghost and pervert his Meaning? Do they not pretend to be appointed for the Good of Mankind, and yet always make Mankind, wherever they have Power, thoroughly miserably, base, poor, ignorant, and wicked? And finally, do they not invent vile Lies for vile Ends, and then blasphemously make God Almighty to father them?

Here is now such a motly Mixture of opposite Principles and Practices, as will always render those who are chargeable with them, the Contempt or Abhorrence of all Men who have Eyes and Understanding. Jest and Scorn will subsist as long as their Causes subsist; and Clergymen, of all others, will be most exposed to them, while they continue to deserve them; because more Modesty, Truth and Consistency may be expected from them than any others. It is but a Piece of Justice due to Religion, to ridicule those who, as far as they can, ridicule Religion, tho' they set up for its Defenders. Ridicule, when it has no longer Matter to feed on, will die of it self; and the Clergy, to avoid it, have no more to do, but not to deserve it: But to go on complaining without amending, is to nourish Raillery and Satyr by their own Actions. But as the reforming of themselves is a Practice seldom known among High-Churchmen; Clamour, Lies and Oppression, are the constant Remedies they apply to the great Grievances of Wit and Ridicule, as often as they meddle, or seem to meddle with the Cloth. This will abundantly appear from the following Instance, which will also shew the wonderful Vigilance and Jealousy of Churchmen, in behalf of the Trade.

Moliere having in his Plays, brought upon the Stage Characters from the highest Quality and Professions in *France*, without offending either; drew in his *Tartuffe*, an excellent and strong Picture of a Hypocrite, who, tho' carefully distinguished from a Man sincerely religious, yet happened to resemble the *Churchmen* so much, that they raised a terrible Outcry against the Play, and according to their laudable Custom, lugg'd Heaven, Head and Shoulders, into their Quarrel. *Tartuffe* was, it seems, their Representative General, and in ridiculing his godly Grimaces and stoical Devotion, *Moliere*, they said, ridiculed them. In fine, by exposing the concealed Villain and Debauchee, the whole Possé of the Priests thought themselves expos'd.

Zealous therefore for the Dignity of the Calfsock, and justly apprehending that a Contempt upon Hypocrisy, would bring a Contempt upon the Order, they applied to the Court; I say, to the Court, where by a religious Subserviency to the Ambition, Lust, and all the Rogueries of the Great, this Sort of Creature always finds Friendship and Countenance. That arbitrary and debauched Court could refuse the Priests nothing; and the Play was forbid. Thus the *Tartuffes* of the Church, redeem'd from Scorn the *Tartuffe* of the Stage: The Picture was secur'd from being shewn, by the Number, Clamour, and Interest of the *Originals*.

Not content to rail with all due Clerical Bitterness against this Comedy, and curse the ingenious Author by Word of Mouth; they detach'd one from their Body to curse him in Print. This Christian Author, without ever having seen the Play, pronounced it diabolical: He affirmed that *Moliere* had a Devil, that he was a Devil incarnate, a Devil in Man's Shape, a Libertine, an Atheist, and one who ought to be

burned in this World, as he would assuredly be damn'd in the next. For the Vengeance of these Messengers of Peace never stops at the Death of their Victim; nor will they allow their Maker to have more Mercy than themselves.

To shew how justly these holy Persons were alarm'd on this Occasion, I shall here give a Sketch of *Tartuffe's* Character, as drawn in that Play. He is a Fellow, who from his godly Outside and great Poverty, is taken by an honest Gentleman, credulous and devout, into his Family, and permitted to govern it. He is a great Glutton, and a great Pretender to Fasting; a great Despisers of Money, but rooks all he can from his deluded Patron. He will not speak to my Lady's Maid till she has cover'd her Bubbies with his Handkerchief; so afraid is the Saint of Temptation; but at the same time he tempts my Lady herself to Adultery, and endeavours to debauch his Benefactor's Wife with Heaven in his Mouth. The Gentleman's Son discovers to his Father these Solicitations of the Hypocrite, which he overheard; and the Lady owns and confirms them; but neither of them is believed. The poor bewitch'd Man cries, *You are all Enemies to the godly Tartuffe*, and tells him that to make him amends, he will give him his Daughter, and settle his House and Estate upon him. *The Will of the Lord be done*, says the Hypocrite. Accordingly by an instant Deed, to the apparent Ruin of his Family, he makes this godly Villain Heir of all he has, with a Right of present Possession. The Lady, not knowing what was done, does by putting her Husband under a Table, make him a Witness of the holy Lecher's Designs and Impertunity. He is by this convinced; but when ashamed of himself, and enraged at the Ingrate, he bids him get out of his House, *No, Sir*, says *Tartuffe*, *It is your Turn to get out; The House is mine and you shall know it; I will be revenged of you on behalf of Heaven, which you would wound through my Sides.* Behold an orthodox Pattern of the usual Claim of *Divine Right* to the Wages of Villainy and Delusion!

All this Behaviour, and these Speeches were such manifest Marks of the Church, that all its genuine Sons dreaded their coming upon the Theatre. Their Rogueries are all sacred, and must not be set to view.

Moliere, to take away as much as was possible, all reasonable Ground of Clamour from the Ecclesiasticks, had not so much as suggested in the Play that *Tartuffe* was a Priest; and only called his Comedy, *The Imposter*, in General. Besides all this, he had dress'd up his Rogue like a Man of the World. He had not given him so much as a flapping Bever, but a smart secular Cock, with a Sword, a good Head of Hair, a Cravat, and a gaudy Coar. But all this Precaution of *Moliere's* availed not; *Tartuffe* had the Conduct, Craft, and Spirit of a Priest, tho' disguised like a Layman, and the Clergy found themselves whipp'd upon *Tartuffe's* Back.

Eight Days after *Tartuffe* was forbid to be acted, the Court was entertained with a very irreligious Play, call'd *Scaramouch*. After it was over, the King told a certain Prince, that he wonder'd why those People, who were so scandaliz'd at *Moliere's* Comedy, did not say a Word of this. *O Sir*, answer'd the Prince, *The Reason is plain; The Play of Scaramouch only makes a Jest of God and Religion, in which these Gentlemen are no wise concern'd: But Moliere has dared to bring the Priests upon the Stage; which is not to be suffered.*

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, October 19. 1720.

A Good Man is distinguish'd by his Humanity, as is the good God by his Mercy. Where there is no Humanity there can be no Grace: We cannot possess at the same Time the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of a Brute or a Dæmon. Charity it self, the most sublime Christian Grace, seems to be only Humanity guided and animated by Piety: And this is the more likely, for that it is the Business of the Christian Religion, to recover to human Nature those Virtues which were either lost or lessen'd by the Fall of *Adam*. Had Man continued as he was made, perfect, a new Covenant and another Institution had been unnecessary.

Humanity then is an amicable Virtue, and the Characteristick of a Man; and of a Man civiliz'd, gentle, benevolent; purged from all Rage and every unfociable Passion.

But the Appetites and Passions of Men being too powerful for Reason, and the Law of Nature; Religion was instituted to regulate and quell them. For this End, it proposes, as Sanctions and Restraints, the Favour of God to the Virtuous, and threatens his Displeasure to the Wicked, in this Life; and, in the next, still more adequate Rewards and Punishments, even those of Heaven and Hell. This is the great Design of Religion; and it effectually answers the same, where its own honest and simple Dictates are observed and followed; than which Dictates nothing can be more plain and reasonable; the principal Precept of the Gospel, next after our Belief in *Jesus Christ*, being that of Peace and Love: *A new Commandment*, says our Blessed Saviour, *I give unto you, that you love one another.*

In Consequence of this Doctrine, and of the heavenly Temper which it inspir'd, the first Christians lived together in perfect Concord, Love and Charity; and yet there is no Question to be made, but they differ'd from each other in their Conceptions about some Points in Religion, as we see the Apostles themselves also differ'd on several Occasions, and express'd some Warmth in these their Differences.

This same Spirit of Charity and Love continued amongst these first Christians, till lying, crafty, and selfish Men, calling themselves Ministers, and assuming to be Teachers, fill'd them with the Spirit of Discord, and instructed them to hate one another. They rent them into Parties, inspir'd them with the Bitterness of Faction and taught them its Watch-words, by which they were to distinguish themselves from all other Christians. *I am of Paul, I of*
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Apollos, and I of Cephas, and the like Cans, full of Zeal, but void of Sense and Religion, had a direct and mischievous Tendency to abolish Faith in Christ and to place it upon Men, and in fine, to turn Christianity into Caballing. They likewise marked out all who would not be driven nor deceived by them, with malicious and opprobrious Names, proper to expose them to Hatred and ill Usage. *Heretick, Apostate, Unbeliever, Schismatick*, and the like hard and equivocal Words, were found strangely effectual towards stirring up Rage, Revenge, and relentless War against all those unhappy People who were miscall'd by them; so effectual! that the same Set of Men have never suffer'd the same Set of Words to wax obsolete; but to this Day use them, and cause them to be used to the same impious and antichristian Purpose; and (where the Law does not restrain their bloody Hands, and guard the Innocent) with the same Success.

When these ungodly and merciless *Ecclesiasticks* had thus, under the Cloak of Religion, craftily rais'd the blind Resentment and impious Zeal of their deluded Followers against their Christian Brethren, who prefer'd the Spirit of the Gospel, and the honest Convictions of their Consciences, to the Pride and Commands of Men; there follow'd such amazing Instances of Cruelty and such terrible Scenes of Blood as must affect the Hearts and the Eyes of all who read them, or hear of them, if they possess either Christian Grace or natural Compassion. Christians were by their Priests set on to butcher Christians, and to make Havock of each other, in the Name of that Religion, which was distinguish'd from all other Religions by a Spirit of Meekness, Mercy, and Love: And all this perhaps, for their different Manner of explaining a Mystery, which could not be explain'd, or which, if explain'd, ceas'd to be one.

This restless and unrelenting Rage which Christians practis'd, at the Instigation of their Clergy, upon one another, for Thoughts and Opinions which they could not help; was a strong and a lasting stumbling Block in the Way of the *unconverted*, who could have but small Appetite for a Religion which disown'd all Kindred to Peace and Humanity, and inspir'd its Voraries with such cruel Hatred and such dreadful Fury. For, in short, that was the Religion they were to embrace; a Religion no longer to be found in the Gospel of *Christ*, but in the ridiculous Systems and selfish Inventions of *Priests*. And it was no Wonder the *Heathens* were backward and afraid to embrace a Religion, in which the involuntary Mistake of a Priestly Distinction without a Meaning, might cost them their Lives, and ruin their Families. So



So terrible and deform'd had merciless Christian Priests render'd the merciful and amiable Christian Religion! Their outrageous Zeal was become so powerful, and had such bloody Effects, that the Pagan Persecutions were real Advantages to Christianity, as they gave it a breathing Time from the more fatal Persecutions and even Adulterations of its own Priests; who, while the civil Sword was over their Heads, being obliged to abscond or fly, could not throw about their Balls of Contention and War; and, therefore, against their Will, left Religion to flourish, as it always did, under those Pagan Persecutions, which their own turbulent and seditious Behaviour had often brought upon it. This is indeed their highest Praise, that the Church reap'd Good from their Wickedness.

The Pagan Persecutions no sooner ceased, but the War of the Christian Priests recommenced; and the Persecutions rais'd by them were ever more merciless and more dreadful than those which were rais'd by the Heathen Princes, forasmuch as they added, as far as they could, the Destruction of the Soul to that of the Body: So compleat was their Vengeance! And, besides, it had no End. The Severity of the Heathens had long and frequent Intermissions; but the Cruelty of the Priests was insatiable.

The Persecutions practis'd by the Pagans had, moreover, this Mitigation, that they were occasion'd for the most Part by the Words and external Behaviour of Christians, who contemn'd their Gods, neglect'd their Temples, and ridicul'd their Manner of Worship: In all which, tho' they had Reason and Truth on their Side; yet they provok'd by so doing these ignorant Bigots, whose false Religion laid no Restraint upon their Passions, but on the contrary greatly inflam'd them. But the priestly War was waged against the Mind it self; the free and independent Mind! They would be controuling the voluntary, necessary and invincible Motions and Operations of the Soul, and be putting Bonds upon the Imagination, which is as ungovernable as the Wind or the Sea. You must say after them, nay you must think after them, and believe by their Direction; and either be Slaves or Hypocrites. A terrible and inflexible Tyranny! It was to no purpose to alledge, that you could not perform Impossibilities, nor see with other Mens Eyes: You must be punish'd for what you could not help; you must be deliver'd to Satan, in spite of your Innocence, and rewarded with Hell for your Sincerity, and well Meaning: And the same honest Qualities which entitl'd you to the certain Favour of God, provok'd the certain Vengeance of his pretended Ambassadors, to whose Empire, Vertue and Truth are ever the most formidable Foes. To compleat this ghastly Barbarity, not appeas'd by Death and Damnation; your good Name must be murder'd with your Body, and your Memory loaded with monstrous Calumnies, and bitter Defamations; which merciless Treatment could be expected only from that accursed Spirit who has been a Lye and a Murderer from the Beginning; or from those who are acted by him. To pity you, was unpardonable, and to speak well of you, was to involve all those who did it, in your Doom. Thus holy Wrath is, of all others, the soonest

kindled, the fiercest while it burns, and the slowest in going out, if ever it goes out.

It would be endless to give Instances of the bloody Spirit of such Sort of Churchmen. They are the only Body of Men upon Earth, who possess least of human Compassion. They have been even ingenious in Cruelty, and shew'd vast Invention in their rigid, various, implacable and exquisite Manner of executing it. *Ita feri, ut se mori sentiat*, seems to have been the Doctrine and Delight of the Church, as well as of *Caligula*. Neither He, nor *Phalaris*, nor *Perillus*, nor *Nero*, nor any other Pagan Monster, who made himself Sport with human Agonies and Misery, has exceeded them in the Variety and Inhumanity of his projected Tortures, nor equall'd them in the Length.

It is a melancholly Observation, that the *Mahometans*, who by Principle use the Sword, as their great and most prevailing Apostle for the Propagation of their Religion, do yet frankly tolerate Christianity and every Sect of it, all over their Dominions; and that, on the contrary, *Christians*, who by the Doctrine of the Gospel are allowed the use of no Means but those of Gentleness and Perswasion, to promote the Faith of *Jesus Christ*, do yet exercise Fierceness and Barbarity upon all who differ from them, wherever the Mercy of the Government does not restrain the Cruelty of the Clergy. Thus far the *Turks* act as if they were conducted by Grace, and obey'd the Precepts of our Blessed Saviour; and thus far the *Christians* act, as if they had adopted the Spirit and Fierceness of *Mahomet*, and renounced the Gospel for the *Alcoran*.

However, that I may not seem partial to the *Mahometans*, I shall add this mournful Reflection, namely, that too many of the Christian Clergy do justly share with these Infidels, the infamous Praise of having almost despoiled the Earth. The Infidels have slain their Thousands, and they their Ten Thousands. They have been the great Promoters of Cruelty and the Sword; they have been the constant Patrons of Arbitrary Power, that mighty Engine for rendering Mankind few and miserable; they have been the continual Authors of Wars, Famine and Massacres; and in fine, they have been the great Instruments of driving Virtue, Truth, Peace, Mercy, Plenty and People, out of the World. *Kill all*, said the Abbot *Arnold*, a Monk militant, to the Army which being employ'd by the Church to slaughter the poor pious *Albigenses*, had taken the City of *Bezair*, and being Laymen, were inclining to have some Mercy; *Kill all*, cried this bloody Priest, *God knows his own, and will reward them hereafter*. Accordingly, Two Hundred Thousand of these conscientious Christians, and Catholicks mixt with them, were instantly butcher'd for the Church.

To conclude, our modern Claimers of Church Authority, do but contend for the same Power and Advantages which enabled and prompted these their Brethren to execute such numerous and melancholly Mischiefs; and whether they ought to possess that Power and these Advantages, or no, I take to be the great Point in Debate between the *Bishop of Bangor* and his Adversaries.

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, October 26. 1720.



THAT Religion or the Worship of a Deity is natural to Man, is confes'd by Mr. Hobbe's himself in his *Leviathan*, wherein he endeavours to assign the natural Causes thereof: And no History or Voyages give us an Account of any Country, in any Manner civilized, without Religion, as well as Priests or Ministers, and Temples or Places of Worship. Men have been in all Ages so prone to Religion, that rather than not have one, they have been contented to worship the most abject Beings in Nature; and indeed, nothing seems to have been too absurd and ridiculous for them to believe and practice, under the Direction of any Men, who had Confidence enough to take upon them to be spiritual Guides of the People. It was ever sufficient, to pretend to teach Religion, to make any Thing to be received as Religion.

*The Egyptians worship'd Dogs, and for
That Faith made intestine War.
Others adored a Rat, and some
For that Church suffer'd Martyrdom.
The Indians fought for the Truth
Of the Elephants and Monkeys Tooth.
But no Beast ever was so slight,
For Man as for his God to fight.
They have more Wit, Alas! and know
Themselves and us better than so.*

Hudibras.

Nor is this Disposition at all abated in the World. The Pagan Part is much the same. And many Christians are more prone, if possible, to Absurdity and Folly, than the Pagans. The Popish, Greek, and several other Christian Sects worship a Breaden God; And, besides other numerous Absurdities and Follies, exceed them in that grand One of all, of *delivering up their Persons, Estates, and Consciences to the Priest, and of hating, damning, persecuting, and burning one another, and all who have any difference in Opinion with them as he inspires them*: Wherein they
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outgo both the ancient and modern Pagans, who have generally given Toleration to Men of different Religions from themselves, and have in no Place gone those Lengths in Persecution which some Christians (or rather some Persons pretending to be Christians) have done.

As a farther Proof that Religion is natural to Man, I observe that no History informs us that ever Atheism (by which I understand, a direct denial of the Existence of a Deity, a Providence, and Worship) was able to introduce it self among the People of any Country whatsoever.

Religion is not only natural to Man, but esteem'd necessary to Government by Princes and States, who, whether they themselves have believed any Religion or no, have established Forms of Religion, and been willing that their Subjects should obey them and defend their Country upon a Principle of Religion, as knowing its powerful Operation on the Minds of Men.

And besides, Religion has a great Support from Priests or Divines, who are very numerous every where, and have a Zeal for every Form they profess equal to the Interest they derive from it: And if the Interest of one Form runs low, many of them can change their Party, and become zealous for another Religion; as they did three times, in the Compass of five Years in *England*, in the Reigns of *Edward the Sixth, Mary and Elizabeth*, the non-complying Clergy never amounting to two hundred under any of those Changes.

Great Complaints indeed have been and are daily made in relation to the mighty Growth of Atheism. But those Complaints seem to me for the most Part, if not altogether, groundless, and to be generally Calumnies of High-Church Priests, and High Church Men, upon the best Christians, *viz.* Such who profess themselves ready to submit to the Authority of Jesus Christ, but refuse Submission to any Priests, whether they be



be the Greek, Muscovite, Roman, Dutch, Scotch, or English.

There is not therefore, and cannot be any Danger of the Overthrow of Religion, as long as Men continue Men; Religion will necessarily prevail amongst us, and every where else in virtue of Mens general Disposition to Religion, either under one or several Forms, according as the Civil Magistrates of the World are more or less persuaded, that they themselves are to dictate (or to dictate after a Priest) Religion to their Subjects.

The noisy Outcry therefore of the Danger of Religion from *Atheism* or *Irreligion* is a meer Chimera of the High Priests; which, in all likelihood, they start to put Men on a false Scent, and to disguise and carry on their own Designs of Power and Wealth: For while People are alarm'd with the Fears of *Atheism*, they are disposed to fall into all the pretended Measures of the Priest to suppress it, and to become zealous for him, who never fails to make Use of the Panick or Madness of the People (which is his Opportunity) to establish Doctrines and Practices for his own Advantage, which at his Suggestion they falsely suppose to be most opposite to *Atheism*, and to be the best Means to suppress it.

But the constant Danger, and the great and only Concern we ought to have, is, lest, under the Colour and Name of Religion, or the Worship of God, we have not only Falshood and Superstition put upon us, but the most detestable and wicked Practices introduced; such as tend to the Destruction of all Peace, both Publick and Private; all Virtue, Learning, and whatever is Praise-worthy among them. This is Practical Atheism: This is the Atheism to be dreaded and feared: This is the Atheism whereof we are in Danger: This is the worst Consequence we have to fear from speculative Atheism; for no Man can say worse of speculative *Atheism*, than that it leads necessarily to all Immorality; and in fine, this *Atheism* the Priest has, in most Places of the World, introduced as Religion, to the utter Overthrow of true Religion; (which consists chiefly, if not solely, in such Particulars as are for the good of Society) for by making Men wicked out of Conscience, and upon a Principle of Religion, he as effectually destroys true Religion, as if he introduced speculative *Atheism*. What is it to a Believer in Christ, whether he be persecuted for his Religion by a *Papist*, who does it religiously, and upon a Principle of Conscience; or by an *Atheist*, who does it either to Protect himself, or to get Credit in the World, or to go Snacks with the Priest, in the Advantages arising from Persecution? Do Men suffer less by a Civil or Foreign War, begun by Zealors, on a Principle of Religion, to promote Religion, than if begun by *Atheists* for the Sake of Ambition, Glory, Power, Rapine, or Murther? Are the Feuds, Animosities, and

Passions, stirred up by Priests on Account of Religion, fewer and less disturbing of the Publick Peace, than those of Men left to the Conduct of *Atheistical* Principles? Is it not equal to Husbands to be wronged by *Atheists*, who need no Pardon, as by *Papist* Priests, who can pardon one another, or High Churchmen, who, notwithstanding such Actions, can be countenanced by the Priest, and merit greatly with him, on account of his Zeal for the Church, that is, the Priest? Nay, is not the Danger of Cuckoldom equal from a *Papist* Priest (who, by his Power of confessing and absolving the Woman, has so glorious an opportunity) as from an *Atheist*? And would our High Priests, if they could, get the Nation to be persuaded that they have the same Power of confessing and absolving, (as they have of late been attempting to do in their Books and Sermons) be less Cuckold-makers than *Papist* Priests and *Atheists*?

Could an *Atheist* be a greater Calumniator than Dr. S — e? Could an *Atheist*, who thinks no Deference due to a Bishop, have less Regard for the Honour of a Christian Bishop than Dr. S — e, who pretends to think Bishops have Divine Authority? Could an *Atheist*, after he had been convicted of Calumny, and forced to confess his Evidence for the Calumny failed him, be more hardened in Villany, than to make no Satisfaction to, and ask no Pardon of the Person injured, but persist in supposing that Time will discover his Charge to be true? Could a Set of *Atheists* have patronised Calumny more, than to have called a certain Doctor to be the Head of their Society; and might they not with equal Regard to Virtue and Religion, have chosen a Highwayman, or a Pick-pocker, who gives his Money for the Augmentation of poor Livings? Has a Modern Bishop more Satisfaction in being thus attacked by a High-Church Priest, supported and abetted by others; or is the Society less disturbed by such Proceedings, than if such Priests were all *Atheists*?

Lastly, Is it not equally destructive of Liberty and Property, for Ecclesiasticks to use religious Cheats and Tricks to get Money from the People, towards raising and maintaining a needless Army of Black Coats, to live lazily in Monasteries, and other Religious Houses; as for *Atheists* to use any civil Tricks to maintain a needless standing Army of Red Coats, or by their Arts to plunder the Publick for any of their other Purposes?

The Design therefore of some following Papers shall be to shew how the High Church Jacobite Clergy promote true *Atheism* and Irreligion: That the Laity may be put on the true Scent of *Atheism*: That they may have a just dread of the true *Atheism*: That they may cease to be *Atheists* or Worthippers of the Priest, and cease to receive Religion on his Authority; and that they may return to God and Christ, the sole Authors of all true Religion.

T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, November 2. 1720.



Proceed, as I promis'd in my last, to shew by an Induction of Particulars, how the High-Church Priests promote *true Atheism* or Irreligion, by which I mean *Practical Atheism*.

And, first, I will begin with Perjury, or Swearing.

I will venture to lay it down as a Truth in Politicks, that Oaths (or something equivalent to them) are, on many Occasions, necessary in Government; and that Peace among Neighbours, Punishment of Rogues, and the Settlement of Property, depend upon them. In the next Place; I will lay down as religious Truths, that an Oath is a solemn Act, both of natural and reveal'd Religion; that Oaths to a Government are to be kept; that there is no greater Irreligion, no greater Affront to God, no greater Infincerity and Injustice to Man, than Perjury; and no Point of Religion, upon which the Honour of God, and the Welfare of Mankind, are more highly concern'd, than in keeping Oaths; that Oaths of Allegiance to a Government intend Loyalty; that Oaths are, to be taken in the Sense of the Imposers; that the Heart is to concur with the Lips in repeating them; that Men are to have no mental Reserves in taking Oaths; and that they must not design to break them, nor take them with Design to repent of them.

And yet on this Head, *Atheists* cannot be guilty of greater Irreligion than some of our High-Churchmen (under the Conduct of our High-Church Jacobite Priests) who sometimes are not for restraining our Kings by their Coronation-Oaths, and, at other times are not for restraining the People, by their Oaths of Allegiance; that is, they are at one time for breaking Oaths, by contending for unlimited Power, and unlimited Obedience; and at another Time for breaking Oaths, by retrenching the Authority of the Prince, and Allegiance of the Subject. Under this Reign, they are for the latter Perjury; as appears by their open Rebellions; their irreverent Discourses of the Person, and Family, of his Majesty; their Endeavours to alienate from him the Hearts of his Subjects; and inspiring the People with Disaffection to his Government; their inventing and reporting defamatory Stories, to blemish his Character and weaken his Authority; their rejoycing at any publick Distractions; their taking sides with the *French, Turks, Swedes, Spaniards* and *Muscovites*, whenever any of these Nations are in Measures contrary to the Interest of his Majesty; and lastly, by their ridiculing and cracking Jestts upon the State-Oaths, and citing as a sort of Scripture, these Verses of *Hudibras*.

*He that Imposes an Oath makes it;
Not he that for Convenience takes it:
Then how can any Man be said
To break an Oath he never made?*

And

(Price Two-pence.)



And these Things are done by them, not after an Atheistical Manner; not under the Appearance of attacking and ridiculing Religion and Virtue, the Joys of Heaven, and the Fears of Hell: But almost as if Slander and Calumny, Treason and Seditious, were Articles of their Church, which they were in Duty oblig'd to perform. They pretend all the while to be religious Men, good Churchmen; concern'd for the Church's Safety; Enemies of false Religion, and particularly of Presbyterianism; and Zealous for the Orthodox Faith, contain'd in St. ATHANASIUS's Creed. And tho' the High-Church Jacobite Priests have not as yet written any Books to defend this Manner of taking and keeping Oaths: Yet they take a Method, no less effectual to recommend it. They not only do not bear their Testimony against this open Wickedness, this open Practical *Atheism*, (as is their Duty) but are Active themselves in the same Practices, and countenance the Guilty, by the Credit and Applause they give them, and the Distinction they shew towards them, recommending them as good Churchmen, and reviling others, principally, for being Faithful to the Oaths they have taken to the Government. All which is more effectual to promote Perjury than direct dogmatizing in behalf of it; for this sly way gets them the Applause of many, and prevents the Clamour of others against them; who would be generally detested, notwithstanding the Devotion of the People towards them, if they openly defended Perjury.

Now, pray, what is the Difference between these High-Churchmen and *Atheists*? Can *Atheists* be less bound by Oaths? Can *Atheists* be worse Subjects? Are not *Atheists* detestable, because it is suppos'd they cannot be bound by Oaths? And are others less detestable, whom Oaths do not bind? Can any Thing be said worse of *Atheists*, than what Mr. LESLEY says (in his Answer to King's State of the Protestants in Ireland) that *the Parliament cannot make an Oath which the Clergy will not take*? Had not King GEORGE Reason to apprehend as much Mischief from his Swearing—Religious,—Factionary,—Rebel—Church Subjects, as he could have from Swearing—Rebel—*Atheists*? Was the Case of the Dissenters, and other good Subjects, who were plunder'd before the Rebellion for their Loyalty, or suffer'd in the Rebellion, better, for receiving such Usage from the Hands of High-Churchmen, than from *Atheists*? They are plainly as bad as *Atheists* can ever be suppos'd to be; worse than *Atheists* acting by

by the Principles of Ease and Self-Preservation, which may be suppos'd to be the most general Principles of Action in *Atheists*; and, in fine, worse than any profligate Libertines (I ever met with in *Italy* it self, that Seat of High-Churchship) whom I never heard talk so irreligiously about Oaths, as I have heard some High-Churchmen, or deliver such open Perjury as Parson B—se. What adds to the Wickedness and Guilt of these High Churchmen is, that they pretend to be Christians, and to take their Religion from the New Testament; that they are of a Church, whose distinguishing Doctrine is Loyalty to the Prince, and which they extend so far as to allow Resistance in no Case to be Lawful; and that they have a Sovereign, against whom they have nothing to object but his Virtues, his mild, equal, impartial, and just Administration of Government; for as to his Title (which is the best of Titles, *viz.* The voluntary Establishment of a free People by an Act of their Legislature) these Swearing High-Churchmen can have no just Scruple.

These High-Churchmen therefore are *true Atheists*; They are Practical *Atheists*. The Speculative Difference between them and *Atheists*, is a Matter of small Moment. For what is it to their Neighbours, while they act like *Atheists*, that they believe in God and Religion? For while they act like *Atheists*, they do all the Mischief that *Atheists* can do, and all those Things for which alone *Atheism* is so justly detestable. For if Speculative *Atheism* did not lead Men to Immorality, to Faction, to Rebellion, &c. it would be so far from being detestable, that it would be preferable to any Religion that spoil'd Men's Morals, and made them bad Subjects: And I would rather have a Speculative *Atheist* for my Neighbour, and Fellow-Subject, and run the hazard of his being a vicious Man, than an Orthodox-Religious Man, whose Religion made him Vicious.

ADVERTISEMENT.

This Day is publish'd,

†† The BATTLE of the BUBBLES. Shewing their several Constitutions, Alliances, Policies, and Wars; from their first sudden Rise, to their late speedy Decay. Also how Oceana, the grand Bubble, out of Envy, praying to Jupiter, to destroy Thamefis, and her Sisters, had her Prayer answered, and perished her self, in the same common and miserable Fate. By a Stander By.

Πομπή του ὁ Ἀρχεμ. Plaso.
Sold by J. Roberts in Warwick-lane.

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THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, November 9. 1720.

THE next Article of *Atheism*, that I charge upon High-Church Priests and High-Churchmen, shall relate to the very Being of Religion, and that is, *Toleration of Religion*; for unless there be a *Toleration of Religion*, Religion, which is a Matter of Choice and Conscience, is almost excluded the World.

It is asserted by Mr. HOBBS, that the Civil Magistrate of every Country is the Legislator in Matters of Religion; that his Subjects ought to obey him therein; and that, if they do not, they should be compelled by Force to profess that Religion he enjoins. Which Doctrine implies *Speculative Atheism*, as it destroys God's Dominion, by subverting his Authority and Laws, and by making a God of the Magistrate; and as it roots out all Religion, by taking away Mens Right to follow their Consciences therein; which constitutes the very Essence of Religion: And it must introduce *Practical Atheism*, if follow'd; by disturbing, distressing, imprisoning, and taking away the Lives of the best Men; by setting Men at Variance with one another, and causing Civil Wars on a religious Account; and by leaving Men to be govern'd only by the Laws of the Civil Magistrate, and taking away all Motives to good Actions drawn from Conscience towards God.

Now the *Speculative Principles* of High-Church Priests, and those of *Atheists*, differ but little from each other: And the *Practices* following from both their Principles are the same; that is, the High-Church Priests must be no less *Practical Atheists*, than the *Speculative Atheists* themselves.

1. For, First, as to the *Speculative Principles* of High-Church Priests. Tho' the High-Church Priests contend for a *Law of God*, a *Bible*, and a *Conscience*: Yet they as effectually subvert those good Things, as the *Atheists*, by asserting, at the same time, a Right in the Civil Magistrate to compel Men by Laws or Force to embrace the true Religion. For what is the difference between a Right in the Magistrate to compel Men to embrace the true Religion, and a Right in the Magistrate to compel Men to embrace his Religion, which he will always think the best and true Religion?

All the Arguments of High-Church Priests for Church-Authority and Church-Unity imply the same *Atheism*. For do they not therein contend for *Submission to Men* in Matters of Religion, and for the Sacrifice of some Mens Consciences to the Judgments of other Men? Which is subverting the *Law of God*, the *Bible* and *Conscience*, no less, than vesting the Power of Compulsion in the Civil Magistrate.

But their Arguments against all Innovations, in Matters of Religion, are most *Atheistical*. They contend so generally against Innovations, that they cite with Approbation MECENAS'S Advice to AUGUSTUS, viz. That he should follow constantly the establish'd Religion of his Country; for all Innovations would foment Sedition in the State, and be a Means to subvert his Government. Which Advice (tho' it so manifestly

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asserts *Atheism* and *Hobbism*, and implies, that neither AUGUSTUS, in whose Reign our Blessed Saviour CHRIST was Born, nor any other Pagan Prince, ought to permit Christianity, which is the most pure and peaceable Religion, to become the establish'd Religion of their Country) Dr. Dawson has lately had the Confidence to lay before the Present Archbishop of Canterbury; whose Conduct and Writings, before he was promoted to that See, gave not the Dr. the least Ground to suspect that worthy Prelate would approve such *Atheism*, Irreligion, and *Anti-Christianism*; and no Man dares say they have done so since.

2. Secondly, The Practices following from the Principles of High-Church Priests, are the same with those following from the Principles of *Atheism*. For do not many Christian Civil Magistrates exercise the Right asserted by High-Church Priests to belong to them, and fine, burn, imprison, inflict corporal Punishments, take away Mens natural Rights, merely because Men follow their Consciences in what they are perswaded is the Law of God? And what more can be done in Virtue of any *Atheistical Principles*? Nor do the Notions of a *Bible*, a *Law of God*, and a *Conscience* (however inconsistent such Notions are with making penal Laws in Matters of Religion) render High Churchmen less Persecutors, than if they were acted by any *Atheistical Principles*; as is manifest from what is done in most Countries, where, in Proportion to the Power and Influence of High-Church Priests, Degrees of Violence upon Mens Consciences prevail: Nor do the Precepts of Christ; who requires all Men to search the Scriptures, and to believe and live according to the Rules there laid down, and who never sends Men to the Magistrate or establish'd Priests for the understanding of the *Bible*; in the least abate their persecuting Zeal. Nor lastly, does the most perfect Morality taught by CHRIST; who every where inculcates Love of Mankind, *Forbearance*, (and Forgiveness even of many Immoralities) and universal *Charity*, and who has said, *By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another*; restrain the High-Church Priest from stirring up in Mens Minds the utmost Hatred, Malice, and Fury of Men against one another; who seem to learn little else from their Priest as Matter of Religion, but the *Doctrine of Malice* against those whom he dislikes. Which *Doctrine* they practise with such Warmth and Zeal, as if it was the Principal or only Article of Religion. And therein do more Mischief than Men acted by *Atheistical Principles* can be suppos'd to do; for *Atheism* is as incapable of making Men uncharitable to one another, on Account of Religion, as it is inconsistent with true Religion to be uncharitable.

How these *Atheistical Practices* have prevail'd in England, even since the Reformation (for I will not mention the times before, wherein this *priestly Atheism* was rampant) is apparent from our History, which gives an Account of the burning, hanging, flogging, imprisoning, starving in



ly as their Judgments direct them; as we see they do prevail in Countries of Liberty and Toleration, in Proportion to the Degree of Liberty and Toleration allow'd?

What Work is there at this Time, how many Volumes are there daily publish'd, and how deeply concern'd is all *England*, about certain Speculations, whereof the People can understand nothing, and about which the Priest confounds himself? Can the People understand any of the various Schemes and Hypotheses invented by Divines, in relation to the Trinity in Unity, and the Incarnation of God? Does *Dr. Waterland*, who is a very learned, acute, and ingenious Person, and has writ two great Books on this Subject, know what he contends for himself, when he expresses the Sum of his Doctrine of the *Trinity in Unity*, in these Words, *that each Divine Person is an individual intelligent Agent: But, as subsisting in one undivided Substance, they are all together, in that respect, but one undivided intelligent Agent?* That is, One Individual is Three Individuals; One undivided Agent is Three undivided Agents, and One Person is Three Persons? And can any Mortal suppose the People to be in the least concern'd about such sophistical Chimeras, crabbed Notions, bombastick Phrases, and Solecisms? And must not Zeal about Ceremonies, and unintelligible Speculations, as much supplant and take the Place of Morality, as ever *Rites* did among the *Jews*, or the religious Trumpery of the Pagans did among them? Even Zeal for Truth in certain Points, is not of such Importance as is commonly suppos'd. I have been much pleas'd with the Judiciousness and Charity of the following Passage in a Sermon of the Present Archbishop of *Dublin*, the most worthy and truly profound *Dr. King*. *Let us suppose one who takes all the Descriptions we have of God in Scripture literally, who imagines him to be a mighty King that sits in Heaven, and has the Earth for his Footstool; that at the same time has all Things in his View which can happen; that has Thousands, and Thousands of Ministers to attend him, all ready to obey and execute his Commands; that has great Love and Favour for such as diligently obey his Orders, and is in a Rage and Fury against the Disobedient: Could any one doubt but he, who in the Simplicity of his Heart should believe these Things as literally represented, would be sav'd by Virtue of that Belief; or that he would not have Motives strong enough to oblige him to Love, Honour, and Worship God? The Imperfections of such Representations will never be imputed to us as a Fault, provided we do not wilfully dishonour him by unworthy Notions, and our Conceptions of him be such as may sufficiently oblige us to perform the Duties he requires at our Hands.* The like may be said of a Man who has mistaken Notions of the Trinity in Unity, and of the Person of Christ; provided he does not wilfully dishonour God and Christ by his Notions, and conceives Christ to be a Legislator, and a Ruler sent from God; than which Conception, nothing can more oblige us

to perform the Duties, that both God and Christ require of us.

3. *Thirdly*, There is no Crime, but what has, at Times, and on certain Occasions, the Support and Encouragement of the Popish Priest; as there is no Virtue which he does not at Times, and on certain Occasions, discourage. Let a Man be Whore-master, or Drunkard, or Lyar, or Slanderer, or Passionate, or Revengeful, or Cheat; and he may meet with fair Quarter from the High Priest, be seldom or never reprov'd by him, have his Esteem and Countenance, and the Character of a good Churchman from him, and be sure of Priestly Absolution at last; provided he Heartily espouses the Interest of the Priest, that is, contends for his Power and Wealth. On the other side, let a Man have ever so many virtuous Qualities, and let him also be a sincere Believer in Jesus Christ; but without the Quality of espousing the High Popish Priest's Interest; and he will never stand so fair in the Priest's Eyes as the aforesaid Profligate—Good—Churchman. This Conduct of the Priests has a mighty Influence on the Actions of Men, and tends to make them as bad as their Inclinations, and Temper, dispose them to be; inasmuch as the general Esteem and good Name of most Men will depend on the Characters given of them by the Priests, who are the general Gossips, and are revered every where for their inward Sanctity, and external long Gowns, and broad brim'd Hats, the latter sufficiently manifesting the former. I will not deny, but that the Priests had much rather their Followers were Virtuous than otherwise; they well knowing, that Credit is to be got by having such Men among them, and that the best Harvest is to be made of the Weakness and Superstition of virtuous Men. But the Bulk of Men being Vicious, and the virtuous Men of Sense being in the Interest of Religion, and against Priestcraft; the aforesaid High Priests are reduc'd to the Necessity of countenancing the Vicious, to carry on their own Interest with a sufficient Party.

4. *Fourthly*, High-Church Priests, by the Weakness of all Popish States, except the Commonwealths of *Venice* and *Norcia*, and of the Protestant States, are let into too great a Share of the Civil Governments of *Europe*; and thus by becoming Acting Politicians, confound all National, Publick, and Political Morality. For, as the late Bishop of *Sarum* observed, *the Priests have a Secret to make the Natives of a Country Miserable, in Spite of any Abundance, with which Nature has furnish'd them. They have not Souls big enough, and tender enough for Government: They have both a Narrowness of Spirit, and a Scourness of Mind, that does not agree with the Principles of Human Society: Nor have they those Compassions for the Miserable, with which wise Governors ought to temper all their Counsels; for a stern Sourness of Temper, and an unrelenting Hardness of Heart, seem to belong to that Sort of Men.*

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, November 23. 1720.



PECULATIVE Atheists exist but in few Places, and have never been numerous any where, even tho' all those be accounted such, upon whom Atheism has ever been charged. But where they do exist, they seem to me to owe their Rise principally to Superstition and Priestcraft; and the higher the Church and Priest have been, the more numerous have been the Atheists: Nay, there seems to me more just Cause to suspect the High Church Jacobite Priests of Atheism, than any other Men.

1. Whoever reasons himself into Atheism, undoubtedly reasons very wrong, and either proceeds on false Principles, or makes wrong Conclusions from true ones. But among the several false Arguments, by which the Atheists and loose People impose on themselves, and endeavour to seduce others; there is none more frequently urg'd, than that the current Absurdities and Superstitions taught by Priests, and the Priests Hypocrisy and Villanies, are sufficient Reasons to make all Religion be deem'd a Cheat, and Priests of all Religions to be deem'd the same. The Poet says in the Person of a Libertine,

*We know their holy Jugglings,
Things that would startle Faith, and make us deem,
Not This, or That, but all Religions false.*

This indeed is pitiful Reasoning, and ought to be extended no further than to those Doctrines and Priests, against whom the Objections lye. But so it is Men reason; and Experience will prove, that 'tis the High Church Priest, and his Proceedings, which make the Atheist. But before I proceed to that Experience, I will say this in behalf of this Argument for Atheism, that the Evil apparent in the World (which some urge as an Argument against the Existence of a Deity) seems to me most visible in the Actions of Priests, who do, in my Opinion, create the greatest Disorder among Men.

The late Bishop of Sarum tells us in his Travels, That a Man of Quality at Rome, and an eminent Churchman, said to him, that it was a horrible Scandal to the whole Christian World, and made one doubt of the Truth of the Christian Religion, to see more Oppression and Cruelty in their Territories, than was to be found even in Turkey. He says, some Physicians in Naples are brought under the Scandal of Atheism; and it is certain, that in Italy, Men of searching Understandings, who have no other Idea of the Christian Religion, but what which they see receiv'd among them, are very naturally tempted to disbelieve it quite; for they believing it all alike in gross, without distinction, and

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finding such notorious Cheats as appear in many Parts of their Religion, are upon that, induced to disbelieve the Whole. And it is an Observation of Dr. GEDDES, that there are more People of no Religion in Italy, than in all the World besides. (Tracts. Vol. 3.) England is also said by our High Church Priests, to abound with Atheists no less than Italy. But if there be such People among us, they are entirely owing to the Conduct of some of our Priests, who, I will be so bold as to affirm, are as impudent in their Preences to Power and Authority, as the Italian Priests dare to be; (which, tho' at first sight, it may seem Matter of Admiration, that they should be so in such an inlighned Country as England, where so many understand right Reasoning and true Christianity; yet it is natural enough, if it be consider'd, that it is the last struggle of Priests for Popery and Slavery;) who contend for the most ridiculous Things, as necessary to Salvation; and who, by their Pervarications about Oaths, and Shiftings about Doctrines according to their Interest, dispose Men to make the same Inference, as the Men of Quality, and Men of searching Understandings do in Italy. And some among us may perhaps make that Atheistical Inference, considering how the Nation had been managed in the High Church Reign of King CHARLES the Second, when the Design, according to the late Bishop of Sarum, seem'd to be to make us first Atheists, that we might more easily be Papists.

Dr. HICKES tells us, that the Practices of the Swearing Clergy, since the Revolution, who had preached Passive Obedience before, have tempt'd loose and unprincipled Men to turn Atheists; and that those Clergy have set open the Flood-gates to that Deluge of Atheism and Impiety, that now overflows the Nation. And he cites another Author with Approbation, for saying, This Change has made many sober Men sceptical, and gone further towards eradicating all the Notions of a Deity, than all the Labours of Mr. HOBBS. I have been ready to suspect, that Religion it self was a Cheat; and others, of my own Knowledge, have the same Temptations to question Religion it self.

Mr. LESLEY says, The Carriage of the Clergy in the Revolution, has given greater Occasion to the ENEMIES OF THE LORD TO BLASPHEME, and turn'd more Men from the Church of England, to the Church of Rome, and EVEN TO ATHEISM; has overturn'd, ruin'd, divided, and dishonour'd our Church more; than if that Persecution, which some feared or pretended, had fallen upon them. He says, the Clergy banter and mock God to his Face; and that Atheism is a smaller Sin than this, since it is better to have no God at all, than to set up one, to laugh at him; and



and that the greatest Danger to which we are now exposed by the Defect of so many of our Clergy, is a Contempt of all Religion, which is now spread over the Land, in a manner unheard of in former Ages.

Lastly, The late Bishop of Sarum tells us, that since his Conversation with Wilmot Earl of Rochester, he had had many Occasions to discourse with People tainted with wicked Principles; and says he, I do affirm, that the greatest Prejudice these Persons have at Religion, at the Clergy, and at the Publick Worship of God, is this, That they say they see Clergymen take Oaths, and use all Prayers both ordinary and extraordinary for the Government, and yet in their Actions and Discourses, and of late in their Sermons, they shew visibly that they look another Way; from whence they conclude, that they are a mercenary sort of People without Conscience.

Atheism being, in my Opinion, a most unnatural Thing, and a Crime, which, for its Madness as well as Guilt, ought to shut a Man out of Civil Society. I am not disposed to lay it to any Man's Charge, tho' a vicious Person, much less to any sober Man's, without his open Profession of it, or an evident Proof of it upon him. But if consistently with Charity, we may suspect any Men of Atheism, who deny themselves to be Atheists, we may certainly suspect such Priests, who live viciously; who play with Oaths; who, tho' swearing to the Government, are Jacobites in their Hearts (as Dr. HICKES says, I hope falsely, *the main Body of the Clergy, God be thanked, are;*) who are uncharitable in their Censures, and Persecutors; who defend plain Absurdities; who dispute against the Reasonableness of Reason; who contend for human Authority, that is, their own, in Matters of Religion; and argue for the Belief of unintelligible Propositions or Mysteries: (For Men of common Sense and common Honesty, can hardly be supposed to join real Belief and such Things together.) And above all, such Priests, who are constantly charging others with Atheism (and those oftentimes the most Learned, Best, and most Religious Men, as Cudworth, Tillotson, and Locke;) upon whom we may justly return the Charge of Atheism, in the Words of a modern Philosopher; *How, says he to a high Presbyterian Priest, could you think me an Atheist, unless it were because finding your Doubts of the Deity more frequent than other Men's are, you are thereby the apter to fall upon that kind of Reproach? Wherein you are like Women of poor and evil Education when they scold; amongst whom the readiest disgraceful Word is Whore. Why not Thief, or any other ill Name, but because when they remember themselves, they think that Reproach the likeliest to be true?*

And as many Priests give such Cause of suspicion; so I would fain know what Mr. LESLEY must esteem the Priests of our Church to be, when he says, *That the Parliament cannot make an Oath which the Clergy will not take?* And whether many of our Clergy must not be esteemed Atheists, according to the Saying of the late Bishop of Worcester, *It was a great Providence of God, that so many of the Clergy refused the Oaths to the Government, lest People should think that there was no such Thing as Religion, and incline to Atheism?* And lastly, what can be thought of the reverend Author of the *Tale of a Tub*, a known High Priest; or of the Majority of a Lower House of Convocation, who in their Re-

presentation of the present State of Religion, with regard to the late excessive Growth of Infidelity, Heresy, and Profaneness, fell upon the truly religious (tho' erroneous) Books of Mr. Whiston and others, but passed over the *Tale of a Tub*, a Book of a reverend Brother; tho' that Book was the sole open Attack that had been made upon Christianity since the Revolution, except the Oracles of Reason; and was not inferior in Banter and Malice to the Attacks of CELSUS, or JULIAN, or PORPHYRY, or LUCIAN? And what can we think of the Majority of another Convocation, which a worthy Member spoke to in these Words, *With what Face or Conscience, Mr. Prolocutor, can we offer to complain of the Licentiousness taken by Lay Writers, and yet connive at the like Offences given by the Ministers of our Church, I doubt greater Offences? For if all the ill Books against Religion, Scripture, &c. were here packed up together, I would undertake to pick out the worst of them, by pointing at those written by Clergymen, even of the most prophane Drillery, as well as the most serious Heresy?* So that upon the whole, the High Church Jacobite Priests seem to me to derive a mighty Benefit from Atheism. They have it chiefly among themselves, and protect one another in it; and thereby have the Profit of Atheism, arising from taking false Oaths, and from doing many Things without Scruple of Conscience; as also the Pleasure as some of them esteem it (See Dr. ATTERBURY's Sermon on BENNET's Funeral) arising from the Practice of Vice. And at the same time they themselves stand clear of the Imputation of Atheism, and brand those they do not like, with it, who are oftentimes the best Men and the best Christians.

P. S. The Author of this Paper having received two very modest and religious, though anonymous Letters, which take Offence at an Expression in the *Independent Whig*, N^o. 33. viz. *I doubt there are very few of these sort of People, who can give a Reason why the great God should be better pleased with a sorrowful Heart, than a sore Ankle:* He thinks himself obliged to explain his Meaning, which he thought he had fully done in the same Paper, where he has these Words; *But from what Principle of Reason or Religion do we find that we must work up our Passions beyond their natural Pitch, and destroy the Calm and Serenity of our Minds, to do Homage to the Deity, who will accept no Worship but what flows from a SINCERE and CONTRITE Heart, raised and elevated by a due Contemplation of the divine Perfections, and the Benefits receiv'd from our great Creator; or HUMBLLED by the Consideration of humane Infirmities, and not intoxicated with various Musick, pompous Shews, delicate Banquets, or Bottles of Brandy; or sunk and depressed by Mortifications, Pennances, Fasting, or unwholesome Diet? &c.*

So that, Sorrow for our Sins is not there opposed, but Mechanick Sorrow, and such as proceeds from wrong Causes; and the Author only supposes that such enthusiastick People, as he has before described, knew not the true Principles of Repentance, which he himself has describ'd, as above cited.

In fine, as to godly Sorrow, Sorrow for Sin; I know it to be so much a religious Duty, that I know there can be no Religion without it.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, November 30. 1720.



Will in this Paper shew that there are no Priests or Sacrificers in the Gospel Dispensation, in any other Sense; than as every Christian may be called so, as he offers up to God the Sacrifices of Praises and Thankgivings, and a pure and contrite Heart; and, in this Respect, St. Peter calls all Christians, *a Spiritual House, an Holy Priesthood, to offer up Spiritual Sacrifices, a Chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an Holy Nation, a Peculiar People, God's Heritage, or more properly, God's Clergy.*

It is undoubtedly true, that all Power, Superiority, or Distinction amongst Men, must be derived either from the positive Institutions of God, or the Consent and Agreement of one another; and therefore, whoever demands any Authority over others, their Goods or Possessions, must support his Pretences by such Proof as the Nature and Importance of the Claim requires; and it must be very glaring and undeniable, when it is levelled at the temporal and eternal Happiness of all Mankind.

It is a severe Circumstance, which attends those, who oppose receiv'd Opinions, that they must not only contend against popular Prejudices, and long imbibed Notions, against the Interests and Passions of great Numbers of artful and combining Men, but in most Countries against the Weight and Force of Publick Authority. The labouring Oar too will always lie upon you: You must disprove what has no Proof to support it, and bring Clouds of Arguments to maintain what are really self-evident Propositions; a bare Possibility that you may be mistaken, shall be deemed a full Conviction; and sometimes the clearest Demonstration on your Side, shall be called only carnal and humane Knowledge, not to be used about Spiritual Things; and even when the irrefragable Strength of your Reasoning forces Consent, you will have no Thanks for your Pains, but will be esteemed officious and factious, and be said *quædam movere*, if by Chance you should escape the Censure of promoting the Cause of Deism or Atheism.

However these Claims in the Popish and Popishly affected Clergy are so enormous, the Consequences of them so fatal to Christianity, and the Arguments pretended to be brought from Reason and Authority for their Support, so weak and contemptible, the whole Design and Current of the Gospel being directly against them, that I shall do my utmost totally to de-

mollish and throw down the tottering Building, and shew it has no Foundation in common Sense or Scripture.

No Proposition can be more evident, than that before any positive Institution, every Man must have been his own Priest, and alone must have offered up his own Prayers and Thankgivings; but when God Almighty instituted the Jewish Dispensation, which consisted of numerous Rites, Ceremonies, and Sacrifices, he also appointed Persons to officiate and execute these Duties for the People as well as for themselves, who were called Priests or Sacrificers, with particular Salaries or Dues annex'd to their Office, and they were to be only chosen out of one Tribe.

Accordingly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. 5. v. 1. and chap. 8. v. 3. a High Priest is defined as *one taken up from amongst Men, and ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God, that he may offer Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins*: So that the Business of the Priesthood was for expiating Sin, and reconciling Men to God by offering Gifts and Sacrifices; and the Apostle adds, v. the 4th, *That no Man could take this Honour to himself, but he which was called of God as Aaron was*, whose Commission was couched in the plainest and most express Words imaginable, and the Peoples Duty and Obedience prescrib'd even to the minutest Circumstance.

As the Jewish Rites and Ceremonies were almost endless, and consisted of so many minute Particulars, that it was next to impossible not to commit some Breaches of their Law, therefore God appointed Atonement to be made for the lesser Transgressions of it, by Gifts and Offerings, and the Persons aforesaid to make those Offerings; but for the greater Sins, such as Idolatry, Perjury, Murther, Adultery, breaking their Sabbath, &c. no Sin-Offerings or expiatory Sacrifices were allowed; and for this Reason the Apostle, chap. 7. v. 18, 19. argues *there is verily a Disannulment of the Commandment going before, for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof; for the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.*

He adds, chap. 9. v. 9. *That Gifts and Sacrifices could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience, And chap. 10. v. 4. That it is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins, And v. 6, 8. That in Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices for Sins, God has*



no Pleasure; and he argues from thence, chap. 5. v. 9. 10. and chap. 7. from the 11th v. to the 19th, a Necessity that another Priest should arise after the Order of Melchisedeck, which was an higher Order, and that he should be perfect (being to become Author of eternal Salvation to all them who obey him) for if Perfection was in the Levitical Priesthood (under which the People received the Law) what need was there that another Priest should arise after the Order of Melchisedeck, and not after the Order of Aaron, for the Priesthood being changed, there is made a Necessity of the Change also of the Law.

And then he observes many Differences between our Saviour's and the Jewish Priesthood.

1st. That this Priest was not made after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endless Life.

2. That he was made a Priest, not without an Oath, which the Jewish Priests were not, vers. 20, 21.

3. That they were many Priests, because they were not suffer'd to continue, by reason of Death; but this Man, because he continueth, hath an unchangeable Priesthood: Wherefore he is able to save them to the utmost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them, vers. 23, 24, 25.

4. That the Law maketh Men High Priests, which have Infirmary; but such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners, and made higher than the Heavens, who needeth not daily to offer up Sacrifices, first for his own Sins, and then for the People's; for this he did once, when he offer'd up himself, vers. 26, 27, 28.

5. That he obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much he is Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises; for if the Covenant had been faultless, then should no Place have been sought for the second; for finding fault with them, saith the Lord, I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts, and they shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the greatest to the least; for I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Iniquities I will remember no more; in that he saith by a New Covenant, he hath made the first old, and that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away. Chap. 8. vers. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13. and chap. 10. vers. 16, 17.

6. In chap. 9. the Apostle compares the Rites and bloody Sacrifices of the Law, and shews how far inferiour they are to the Blood and Sacrifice of Christ, who not by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood, enter'd at once into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us; for if the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifyeth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offer'd himself, without blot, to God to purge your Conscience from dead Works, to serve the living God? vers. 12, 13, 14.

7. In Chap. 10. he shews the Weakness of the Law-Sacrifices, which being offer'd up Year by Year continually, could not make the Comers thereto perfect, for then they would have ceased to have been offer'd, because that the Worshippers, once purged, should have had no more Conscience of Sins. Vers. 1, 2. Then said he, Lo I come to do thy Will, O God: He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second; by the which Will we are sanctified, through the Offering of Jesus Christ, once for all. Every Priest standing ministering and offering the same Sacrifices, which can never take away Sins, but this Man, after he offered one Sacrifice for Sins for ever, sat down at the right Hand of God; for by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, that is, those who obey his Commands, vers. 9, 10, 11, 12, 14. And in vers. 13. he tells them where Remission of Sins is, there is no more Offering for Sins.

In the rest of the Chapter, the Apostle exhorts the Hebrews, whom he calls his Brethren, to have the Boldness to enter with him into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus; and having a High Priest over the House of God, to draw near with a true Heart in full Assurance of having our Hearts sprinkled from our evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water, and to hold fast the Profession of our Faith, without wavering; and to consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to good Works, not forsaking the assembling our selves together, as the Manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the Day approaching; and he enforces his Argument, by telling them that if we sin wilfully after the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins.

Now in all this Epistle, where this Matter is so fully and at large explained (as well as in many other Parts of Scripture where the Jewish Priesthood, Rites and Ceremonies are plainly abolished) there is not one Word or Hint given of any other to be established upon the Ruins of it. In all the Chapters, I have quoted, no Priest, Sacrificer, Prophet, Mediator, Intercessor, Reconciler, Benedicor, Embassador, or Spiritual Prince is once mentioned, but Jesus Christ alone; though one might have expected to have met with him, or to have heard of him here, if there was to have been any such Person in Nature. On the contrary, the Apostle himself addresses to the Hebrews as his Equals, and claims no Right, Privilege, or Superiority over them; talks to them always in the Plural Number; nor does he in the Modern Phrase say, *But ye*, &c. but joins himself with them in every Act of Love and Duty.

If this was the Case of the Hebrews, who were Parties to the *Horeb* Contract, by which God became their Temporal King; and consequently they became bound, and Subjects to all the Laws of *Moses*: The Argument is much stronger in behalf of the *Gentiles*, who were never any way concerned in the Jewish Priesthood, Rites and Ceremonies; and there must be therefore a very plain and positive Institution and Establishment found out in Scripture, before they can be subjected to it.

This Subject shall be continued in my next.

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, December 7. 1720.



HERE is nothing in the Four Gospels to Authorize or Countenance the distinction of Ecclesiastical and Civil; for as our Saviour renounced all Worldly Power himself, so he gave none. He neither used nor allowed the use of Force and Violence, to coerce and conquer Subjects to his Kingdom, which he declared was not of this World. As the Religion he taught was not to consist of outward Actions and Ceremonies, like the Worship of the Gentiles, but was to reside in the Mind, so he chose proper Means to attain his End: He knew the Sword might make Hypocrites and Slaves, but never Converts; therefore he instructed his Apostles to win Mens Affection by Love and Gentleness, to allure them by Example, and convince them by the Reasonableness of his Precepts, and he enabled them to prove their Mission by Wonders and Miracles; all which are directly contrary to the Proceedings of Mahomet, whose Aim was Temporal Dominion, and his Religion Imposture; and consequently Violence was necessary to propagate both; for Absurdity can no way be supported but by Tyranny, but Truth can ever defend itself, and desire nothing but a fair Examination, a free Stage and equal Favour.

He takes every Occasion to caution his Apostles against spiritual Pride, and claiming Superiority over others, or one another: The Powers he gave them were of another Kind, such as were proper to overcome the Prejudices of the Innocent and Well-meaning, though misled People, and to confound the Malice and Subtility of the governing Priesthood, (viz.) *A Power against unclean Spirits, and to cast them out, to heal all Manner of Sickness, and all Manner of Diseases, and to raise the Dead.* Sure no Clergyman pretends to these Powers.

He bids them provide neither Silver, nor Gold, nor Brass in their Pockets, nor Skins for their Journey, neither two Coats, nor Shoes, nor Staves: Much less Coaches. I presume no Clergyman desires these Powers.

He orders them when they come into any House, to Salute it, and if they do not receive them and bear their Words, to depart from that House, and shake off the Dust of their Feet: The Popish Clergy are for setting Fire to such an House (as they did lately to several) and for burning and damning every one within it.

The Apostles Commission was to preach Christ to all Nations in Mathew, and in Mark to go into all the World and to preach him to every Creature. The Popish Priest stays at Home, and preaches himself only, to his own Parish for Money.

Those who believed in the Apostles and were baptized, had the Power of casting out Devils in Christ's Name, and speaking with new Tongues; They could take up Serpents, no deadly Thing then drank could hurt them; they laid Hands upon the

Sick, and they recovered. Those who believe in the Popish Priest are the best Friends the Devil has, and instead of casting him out, for the most part bring him in: They can speak Sense with no Tongue, nor dare venture on any Poison, but what proceeds from Gluttony and Drunkenness, with which they give their Voracious Diseases, instead of recovering them.

The Apostles were to be Witnesses of all which they had heard or seen, said or done by our Saviour; and who else could be so? But the Popish Priest has no other Means of knowing Christ than any Layman of equal Abilities and equal Application; nor can have any greater Motive or Inducement to preach him, except his Hire; which as it first stubborn'd his Predecessors to betray his Person, and take away his Life, so it has ever since been the Occasion of Crucifying him a-new by misrepresenting his Doctrines, and making them subservient to worldly Ambition and Interest; which is so Universal that no Englishman can set his Foot out of his own Country, but he sees the Clergy perverting the Scripture and abusing the People.

Our Saviour himself appointed the seventy Disciples, whom he sent before him two by two in every place where he intended himself to go, and gave them Powers almost equal to the Apostles, (viz.) *to heal the Sick, to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the Power of the Enemy, and that nothing should hurt them;* but he was so far from giving any worldly Authority, that he tells them he sends them forth as Lambs amongst Wolves; that they should carry nothing with them, but whatsoever House they came into they should say Peace to that House, and should eat and drink such Things as the People gave them; and whatever City they came into, they should eat such Things as were set before them, for the Labourer is worthy of his Hire; (here it seems the People were to judge what Wages and Hire they deserve) and if any Persons refused to receive them, they were to go into the Streets and shake off the Dust of their Feet at them, which was all the Excommunication they were directed to use, and was nothing else but to leave them in their Sins, and preach to them no longer.

Whatever is meant by the figurative and abstruse Texts of binding and loosing, remitting and retaining Sins, is evidently confined to those it is spoken to, and seems to have Relation to the other World alone.

Now I would be glad to know by what Rules of Construction can the Powers now claimed by any Set of Clergy in the World, be brought from these Texts, or in what Sense can any Clergyman be said to be a Successor of the Apostles, more than every Layman of equal Qualifications.

If our Saviour had intended to have conveyed down any Powers to any Man, or Set of Men whatsoever, it is impossible to believe but he would have expressed himself in the fullest and most significant Words, and left no doubt behind him what those Powers were, and to whom they belonged. No Statute enacted amongst Weak Mortals is penned so loosely: What



Lawyer in Westminster-Hall could have found out Sovereign Power in the Precept, *Feed my Sheep?* Or in our Saviour's Promise to assist the Apostles in these Words, and perhaps all Christians in general, *I will be with you to the End of the World?*

The Priests of Delphos uttering, for the most part, their Oracles in sorry and balderdash Poetry, gave rise to a waggish Jest amongst the Ancients, viz. that Homer could write better Verses than Apollo, who inspired him. But sure no one amongst Christians will be so profane, as to give Occasion to the Suggestion, that the Attorney-General can draw up a clearer and more intelligible Commission than the Apostles.

But though there is nothing in the Gospels to justify or excuse the Priestly Demands upon the Laity, yet there are many Texts expressly against them, in which our Saviour disclaimed all Authority over Men; forbids his Disciples and Followers assuming Superiority over their Brethren, or of censuring, judging, or using any one ill, for not receiving, or for opposing them.

In Luke the 12th, v. 13. A Man desires of our Saviour to speak to his Brother to divide his Inheritance with him; and his Answer is, *Who made me a Judge, or a Divider over you.*

In John, chap. 12. v. 47, 48. our Saviour declares, *If any Man bears his Words, and believe not, that he will not judge him; for he came not to judge the World, but to save the World.* And in the next Verse, leaves him to the Judgment of the Father, and tells him what will be his Doom.

In John, chap. 18. v. 36. he was brought before Pilate for speaking Treason against Caesar, and claiming the Temporal Kingdom of Judaea; and he took that Occasion to renounce all Barthy Sovereignty, by declaring, *His Kingdom was not of this World,* and gave his Reason for it; which so satisfied the Roman Governour, ever jealous of his Master's Authority, that he pronounced him innocent, and would gladly have released him, if the Jewish Priests would have suffered it.

In Matthew, chap. 7. v. 1, 2, 3. he says to his Disciples, *Judge not, lest ye be judged; for with what Judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and what Measure ye meet shall be measured to you again, &c.*

In Luke, chap. 9. v. 53. James and John desired of him, that they might command Fire from Heaven to punish the Samaritans for not receiving him; which he was so far from consenting to, that he reproves them for it; and tells them, *Ye know not what Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy the World, but to save the World.*

In the same Chapter, John said to him, *Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy Name, and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is for us.* A plain Precept for Christians to tolerate one another.

Through the whole 18th Chapter of Matthew, our Saviour exhorts his Disciples to be humble, and to forgive Offences. And in the 15th Verse tells them, *If thy Brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone; but if he will not hear thee, take one or two more with thee, &c.; and if he shall*

neglect to hear thee, tell it to the Church, or Congregation: And if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee like a Heathen or Publican; that is, have no more to do with him. And in the two Verses after, he tells them what a Church is, viz. *When two or three are gathered together in my Name, I will be in the midst of them;* whose Presence, methinks, should be effectual to constitute a compleat Church, though a Parson is not one of the Company.

Indeed the whole New Testament is a Lesson of Humility, Humanity and Morality; the Sermon upon the Mount is nothing else; and we every where find constant Precepts and Cautions against Pride and Domination.

In the 23d of Matthew, our Saviour spake to the Multitude, and to his Disciples, bidding them *not to be called Master, for one is your Master, even Christ, all ye are Brethren; but he that is greatest amongst you, shall be your Servant; and whoever does exalt himself, shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.*

In Luke, chap. 20. v. 46. he warns his Disciples to beware of the Scribes, who desire to walk in long Robes, and love Greetings in the Markets, and the highest Seats in the Synagogues, and the chief Places at Feasts, (hear, O ye Popish Bishops, Priests and Deacons) who devour Widows Houses, and for a shew make long Prayers.

In Luke 22. v. 24, 25, 26. There was a Strife amongst the Apostles which should be the greatest. And Jesus said unto them, *The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Authority over them; and they that exercise Authority upon them, are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the Younger, and he that is Chief, as he that does serve.* The same in Matthew, chap. 20. v. 25, 26, 27. And he enforces this Precept in Verse 28. from his own Conduct, viz. *Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister.*

Our Saviour did not, like others, preach Doctrines to his Disciples which he refused to practice, but teaches them Modesty and Humility by his own Example: For in the 13th of John he washes their Feet himself, and bids them wash one another's. How different is this from the proud Spirit of his pretended Successors, who take Place of the Nobility and Gentry, and make the great Men of the Earth kiss their Slippers; salute them upon the Knee, as if they were Gods below, or Sovereign Princes; nay, more, set themselves above the Crown itself; for what else do they mean after saying Grace, and in their Cups by putting the Church (by which they mean themselves) before the King and Royal Family? We all know too well their Kindness for the People (who are the Scripture and Legal Church) to suspect that they mean them,

Not many Years since, the constant Health amongst them was, King, Queen and Church; but now all the High Clergy are guilty of the same Crime for which Cardinal Woolsey ought, and in all likelihood would have lost his Head, if he had not prevented it, as it is said by Self-Murther, viz. of setting themselves above the Crown, and, *viva voce*, crying out, *Ego & Rex meus*, when they are in the Humour of owning him as such.

I shall hereafter write a Paper on purpose on this Subject; but in my next shall shew, that the Acts and Epistles no more favour their wild Pretensions than the Gospels.

THE Independent Whig.

Wednesday, December 14. 1720.

The Reader is desir'd to take Notice that this Paper should have been publish'd in its natural Order last Wednesday, being mark'd No. 47. and design'd to introduce the Two that were to follow, containing Proofs from Scripture, mark'd 48 and 49. But the former of these was publish'd, by mistake, last Week, and the other will come out this Day Sennight.

This Oversight, as well as several literal and verbal Errors, through the whole, shall be corrected and removed, when a Volume is printed off.



HAVE fully shewn, in my last Paper, that as there is but one Sacrifice in the Christian Religion, so there is but one Sacrificer or Priest, who, as our Church declares in the *Communion-Service*, made one Oblation of himself, and once offer'd up a full, perfect, sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World; and agreeable to this Declaration, in the 13th Article, she calls the Sacrifices of the Popish Priests *dangerous Deceits*, and *blasphemous Fables*.

I cannot with my best enquiry find out, that in the whole Christian Religion, there are any new Rites or Ceremonies appointed, or any Offices erected; nor in the *Gospels*, *Acts* or *Epistles*, does any thing like an Institution occur, except that of Deacons; which Office is now quite laid aside, unless it may be said to be revived by virtue of the Act of Queen Elizabeth, which appoints Overseers of the Poor; for as to the modern Ecclesiastical Deacon, he has no resemblance to the Scripture Officer, who was appointed to serve Tables, upon Complaint of the Grecian Widows, who were neglected in the daily Ministration, which the Apostles were not at Leisure to attend, because of the preaching of the Word, and therefore directed the Congregation to choose others, whose Business it should be. *Acts* Chap. 6.

I shall therefore enquire how the Popish World came to be blessed with such a long Train of spiritual Equipage; and see what can be found in the Scriptures, to warrant or countenance their present Pretensions. In order to it, I shall observe, that Promulgation is of the Essence of a Law, which cannot be without Plainness and Perspicuity: It must not be express'd in doubtful and equivocal Terms: It must not depend upon critical Learning, or different Readings, nor receive its Explanation from the mysterious Gibberish, and unintelligible Jargon of the Schools; but ought to be such, as a plain, open, simple-hearted, sincere Man may easily discover, amidst the numerous and contradictory Schemes of the Ecclesiasticks.

Weak and corrupt Men may, through Ignorance or Design, frame and enact Laws obscure and unintelligible, but the Almighty cannot intend to mislead his Creatures, or want proper Words to express his Meaning: Even such humane Laws as enact Penalties, or restrain the natural Liberty of Mankind, are always construed strictly, and extended no farther than the Letter expressly warrants; and 'tis much more reasonable it should be so understood in divine Laws, upon which the Temporal and

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Eternal Happiness of all the World depends; not only because of the Importance of the Subject, but as there can be no unwary Omission, or Defect in Words chosen by the Holy Ghost; we may therefore be very sure, that whatever is not expressed in Scripture, plain and clear to common Understandings, was not intended for our Instruction, or can become a Duty.

With our Eyes thus cleared up, we will view those Texts and Parts of Holy Writ, brought together to support this unwieldy Fabrick: And here, for some Time, I must beg leave of my Reader, to stand amazed, and be at a Loss, which most to admire, the Stupidity and Acquiescence of the Popish and popishly affected Laity, or the daring Insolence and Impiety of their Ecclesiasticks, that without Reason, or the Appearance of Reason, without Scripture, or the Colour of Scripture, but directly in Defiance of them both, they could be able to form so compleat an Empire over the Bodies and Minds of the greatest Part of Christendom; rob them of their Goods and Possessions, and make them Instruments of their own Ruin, hug their Chains, and mortally hate, murder, or ruin every one who would set them free.

But before I enter upon a particular Disquisition of the Texts produced, I would first enquire what Benefit can accrue to Christianity, by such Powers in the Christian Clergy. A Roman Judge is honourably mentioned by Cicero, for always asking *cui bono* an alledged Action was done; by which he could make some Judgment whether it was done or not, and who did it. The same is a reasonable Proceeding in this Case; for, though it is no Objection to the Truth of what God has said, that it is not agreeable to the Sentiments of weak Men; yet whilst it remains a Question, whether God said it or not, there cannot be a stronger way of Anguing used, than to shew that it is unworthy of the divine Wisdom and Goodness, who can say nothing which is trifling and impertinent, or make any Ordinances useless or mischievous to his Creatures.

Nothing can come from God, but what is Godlike; and therefore when any Number of Men combining together, dare tell me any thing in his Name, of no use to Religion or Virtue, and yet of apparent Advantage to themselves or their Order; I shall always believe it to be an Invention of their own, forged to gratifie their Ambition and Avarice, and shall ever vindicate the Almighty from the imputed Calumny.

Now of what use is it to Religion and Virtue, that the Clergy should always make one another? Whether the Imposition of Hands be esteemed

esteemed



esteemed barely a Ceremony, to denote a Person appointed to an Office, or be the Appointment it self? Or whether he be chosen by laying on of Hands, or by any other Ceremony? Will the same Person, with the same Qualifications, be a better Man, better Christian, or abler Divine, if he receives his Orders in a direct Line from the Apostles, through the Canal of a Popish, High-Church, or Presbyterian Priesthood, or if only from the Civil Magistrate, or Voluntary Societies? Or is it possible to believe, that whilst he is administering the Offices of Religion, and doing the Duties of the Gospel, that the devout Christian People shall loose the Effects of their Piety, and the Benefit of Christ's Promises, for the Defect of any Circumstance, or any Omission or Superfluity in his Adoption, which they could neither prevent nor know? Sure we have not so learn'd Christ.

Can we suppose that Almighty God should make such an Establishment of Christianity, as must destroy Christianity it self; and put it under the sole Guidance and Direction of a Society of Men, who will have a perpetual Interest to overturn or pervert it, and ever did so when they had Power?

What can be suggested more absurd, than that the good God should send his Son from Heaven, to teach Virtue and Goodness to Men, to manumit and set them free from the Superstitions of the Jews, and the Idolatries of the Gentiles, who whilst upon Earth should not only disclaim all Power and Dominion himself, but suffer an ignominious Death, to make Mankind happy; and yet subject, and put them under a Yoke, the most Arbitrary, and Tyrannical in the World, without Redress, without Remedy; where the Governours have constant Temptations and Motives to oppress, and the Governed no means to resist or oppose; for no less than this are the Popish and High-Church Demands upon us, and are the inevitable Consequences of their wild and wicked Hypothesis.

If they are an Order of Men, appointed directly by God, and have the Government of the Church by divine Right in all Things, which relate to Spirituals, (that is in all Things wherein their own Interest is concern'd:) If they are to be sole Judges of their own Powers, and what Doctrines they are to teach; that the People are to receive them implicitly, and to submit and be concluded by their Determinations, and that no humane Authority must controul them; which I think those I write against all claim; (tho' scarce two of them agree in whose Hands, or in what part of the Clergy, these Powers are vested) then 'tis plain they are possessed of the most despotick, unlimited, and uncontrollable Sovereignty in the Universe, and which of necessity must and actually ever has proved the most Cruel and Tyrannical in the Exercise.

But if they have not this Power, they can have none at all, but what the Civil Magistrate or Voluntary Societies trust them with; for, what is the Name of a Power, which every Man is a Judge, whether he will submit to or not? Or how can that be said to be Divine, which the Civil Magistrate can controul at his Plea-

sure? There can be no Medium in Nature betwixt another's judging for me, and my judging for my self: If another is to judge for me, I must submit to his Determinations, let them be ever so absurd, monstrous or wicked; but if I have a Right to re examine them, they can amount to no more than Advice, and my own Judgment alone must determine me.

As I think I have amply proved that 'tis inconsistent with the Goodness of God to trust the Powers so claimed with the Popish Clergy, so in my two next Papers, I will as fully prove that in Fact he has given them no Authority at all.

Indeed, to do them Right, the Popish Priests do not pretend to offer any direct Texts to their Purpose, expressing particularly the Powers given them, and the Persons in whom they are to be vested, as might be reasonably expected in a Case so nearly affecting the Liberties of all Mankind; and was actually done in the Jewish Dispensation, where every Circumstance relating to their Worship and the Priest's Office was minutely described; but instead thereof they pick up scatter'd and disjointed Sentences, and set them together by the Ears, to try what they can get by the Scuffle: They argue from Types, Antitypes, Parables, Metaphors, Alligories, Allusions, Inferences, Patterns, Resemblances, Figures and Shadows, and by such Means can fetch every Thing out of every Thing.

The Bible is a Miscellaneous Book, from whence craz'd or designing Men, by joining or disjoining; by various Readings, corrupt or ignorant Translations; by far fetch'd Interpretations, and putting different Meanings upon Words in Scripture from what they signify in any other Parts of Language; by trifling and knavish Distinctions, metaphysical Subtilties, no Definitions, but shifting the Significations of Words as they have Occasion; by References to ancient Customs, and Twenty other Theological Systems of Reasoning, may always fetch Materials to serve their loose or wicked Purposes, as we actually find an Hundred different, and many of them almost contradictory, Religions are pretended to be reduced from that Book; and if the Priests were let alone, they would find a Thousand more, and burn for them all, (I mean other People.) But if Men would be contented to judge of the Gospel Style, by the same Rule as they do of other Writings: If they could be perswaded that God Almighty, when he condescends to make use of humane Language, intends to be understood, and consequently uses Words in their common Acceptation; that when he designed to reveal his Will to Babes and Sucklings (that is, to the Ignorant and Unlearned) he did not chuse to do it in Riddles, to make way for Interpreters, and that the Popish Clergy might have a Pretence for picking the Laity's Pockets; then, I affirm that the Bible is the Plainest, Openest, most Moral, Significant and Intelligible Book in the World, in all Things which can be the Duty of Mankind to know; and in no part of it more so, than in the present Dispute, which has been rendered so perplex and intricate by Craft and Artifice: And I undertake in my two next Papers to make this out.

T H E

Independent Whig.

Wednesday, December 21. 1720.

SO many are the various and contradictory Opinions and Reasonings of Men, that no voluntary Society, or Assembly, can act, or long hold together without establishing certain Rules and Orders amongst themselves, regarding the Common Interests and Conduct of the Society; and appointing Persons whose Duty it shall be to see those Orders put in Execution; and if any Member does not think it lawful or expedient to submit to the publick Regulations, they must have a right to exclude him, or in other Words, to excommunicate him from their Body, if he does not chuse to separate himself.

If the Design of the Meeting is to worship God, to join in the same Prayers, and for Exhortation and Edification, (which Assembly is called a Church) there must be Time and Place appointed when, and where, they are to meet, and Persons to prepare, and keep in order all

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Things necessary for their meeting: There must be one or more appointed to read those Prayers to the Congregation, in which they are to join, and to do all those Offices, which can be performed only by single Persons, and if the Society would avoid the Loquacity and Interruption of ignorant and conceited Members, they must confine Exhortation to one, or to a few Persons of approved Gravity and Wisdom. There must be also some Means of conferring and agreeing together, to support the common Expences of Buildings, Repairs, Utensils, &c. and consequently there must be Debates, which cannot well be carried on without a President, Chairman, or Prolocutor, to regulate them, collect their Voices, and pronounce their Resolutions; without which Precautions they will be more likely to fight than pray.

If several of these Churches, residing at too great a Distance from one another to meet together, should esteem it their Duty or Advantage

tags to join in the same Form of Worship, and unite in a common Interest to support it, they must find out some Means of Communication, and contrive some Cement of their Union, otherwise they would soon separate again: This may be done by chusing Deputies to represent them, and concert common Measures, or by submitting themselves to the Conduct and Determinations of one, or more Persons, chosen by common Consent in all such Matters as do not interfere with their Duty to God; and the Persons so chosen can have no more Power, nor of longer Duration, than their Principals think fit to give them.

If these Churches think it their Duty or Interest to enlarge their Bottom, and make Converts, they cannot take a more effectual Method to do it, than to choose, appoint, or ordain discreet and honest Men, who are acquainted with their Way of Worship, their Ordinances, and the Reasons of them, and send them forth to teach, persuade, and convince others; to exhort them with Meekness and Love, (the likeliest Way to gain them) and afterwards to preside and watch over them, and thereby prevent their Straying and Apostatizing.

This was the Case in the Beginnings of Christianity, before National Churches were established, as well as the present Case of independent voluntary Societies. The Apostles Commission was to go into all the World, and preach Christ to every Creature. Which was impossible for them to do in their own Persons; and therefore as they made Converts, they exhorted them to convert others, as Acts 8. v. 1, 4. When the Apostles were left at Jerusalem, the Church was scattered abroad through all Judea and Samaria, and those who were scattered abroad preached the Word, Acts 11. v. 13, 14. They that were scattered abroad upon the Persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phoenice and Cyprus, and preached the Word to none but the Jews only, and some of them when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, Chap. 4. v. 4. Peter and John converted Five Thousand, and v. 31. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with Boldness.

And they were all enabled to prove their Mission, by having the Power of working Miracles, for Mark 16. v. 17, 18. These Signs were to follow those who believed in Christ's Name;

They could cast out Devils, They could speak with new Tongues, They could take up Serpents; no deadly Thing could hurt them; They could lay their Hands on the Sick and recover them. John, Chap. 24. v. 12. Our Saviour says to his Disciples, Whoever believeth in me, the Works that I do shall he do, and greater then these shall he do; which Gifts would have been unnecessary, if they had been to have made no Use of them; and by Virtue of these general Powers given to all Christians, Philip and Stephen, who were chosen by the Congregation to the menial Office of serving Tables, preached, baptized, and did many Wonders and Miracles, Acts, Chap. 6. v. 8. Chap. 8. v. 7.

But besides the common Right which every Man had to preach Christ, and propagate his Kingdom, the Apostles prevailed with particular Persons to undertake it, and make it their Business, who were to assist and oversee the Brethren, as a Shepherd does his Sheep. Having the Gift of discerning of Spirits, they knew who were fittest for the Employment, and who would engage in it without any sinister Views, but 'tis plain they gave no Gifts or Advantages to them above other Christians. They could not give the Holy Ghost, which Power was confined to the Apostles alone, and as far as appears, was bestowed without Distinction upon all who believed and were baptized.

The Power of speaking with Tongues, as is abovesaid, was given to all Believers, which appears to be in Scripture, one constant and inseparable Mark of having received the Holy Ghost.

In Acts the 2d. v. 4. The Holy Ghost fell on the Apostles, and they spake with Tongues. In Acts 10. v. 46. While Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the Word, and the Jews were astonished when they heard the Gentiles speak with Tongues. Chap. 19. v. 6. Paul lays his Hands on certain Disciples, and the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with Tongues and prophesied. Acts the 11th, v. 15. Peter justifying himself to the Jews, for preaching to the Gentiles, says, And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the Word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with Water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; for as much therefore as God gave them (viz. those who believed) the like Gift as he did to us, who

be-

believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was it that I should withstand God? So that here from the Mouth of Peter himself we have it, that the Gentiles who believed, had the same Gift as the Apostles. Chap. 3. v. 14. *When the Apostles at Jerusalem had heard that the Samaritans had received the Word, they sent to them Peter and John, who laid Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, which they had not received before, tho' they were baptized by Philip.* In Chap. 2. v. 38. Peter says to them of Israel, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost; and ver. 41. They gladly received the Word, and the same Day were added to them about Three Thousand Souls, who must have all consequently received the Holy Ghost.* Chap. 3. v. 8, 9. Paul speaking of the Gentiles, says, *viz. God which knoweth the Hearts, bear them Witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no Difference between them and us, purifying their Hearts by Faith.*

Therefore it appears plain to me, that all who believed, especially by the Apostles Ministracion, received the Holy Ghost, and could do Miracles; and consequently the Persons aforesaid, by whatever Names they are called, were not designed to be an Order of Men distinct from other Christians, with different Powers and Privileges. They undertook a Burthen, not a Command. They were better and poorer than other People, not their Lords and Masters; nor is there a Word in Scripture, whereby we can guess that they were intended to be Successors to the Apostles, much less that the Successorship was to continue to the end of the World; and 'tis evident in Fact, that there were no such appointed, because the Power of giving the Holy Ghost, and in consequence of doing Miracles, soon ceased in the Church.

With this View, let us now examine the *Acts* and *Epistles*, and see what there is which contradicts it.

Acts 14. v. 23. Paul and Barnabas ordained Elders in every City; and Chap. 20. v. 17. Paul calls the Elders of the Church of Ephesus together; and v. 28. tells them their Duty, (*viz.*) *Take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the Flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.* Here luckily the Word *Episcopus* is translated *Overseer*, and not

Bishop, because it is explained in the Text to import no more, than to feed the Church of God, that is, to assist them, to preach to them, to exhort them, to advise them, and give them good Examples; but all this implies no Jurisdiction, nor had the Apostles any to give.

Thessalonians, chap. 5. v. 12. *And we beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.* Here Paul, with all Humility, entreats the *Thessalonians*, that they will know, that is take Notice of, and hearken to, those who labour for their Sakes, who watch over them, and admonish them to mend their Lives.

Ephesians, Chap 4. v. 7, 11. *Unto every one is given Grace, according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ; and he gave some Apostles; and some Prophets; and some Evangelists; and some Pastors, and Teachers; and in the next Verse tells for what (*viz.*) for the perfecting the Saints, (that is, all the Faithful) for the Work of the Ministry, and for the edifying the Body of Christ.*

Romans, chap. 10. v. 14, 15. *How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed, and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a Preacher, and how shall they preach unless they be sent?* This relates plainly to the Teaching of the Apostles, who were sent to preach the Gospel to the unconverted World, that otherwise could have known nothing of it, and possibly in a larger Sense may be extended to all Christians who had the Power as well as the Means to preach it, and consequently might be said to be sent to do it; but I should be glad to know by what Skill in Chymistry it has been discovered, or how it came to be guessed, that the Clergy of the many Nations in *Europe*, as by Law severally established, were the Persons meant; or if only one sort of them, which that is, when 'tis plain they have no other Means of knowing Christ than the Laity have, and for the most part, can tell them no more than they know before.

Hebrews, Chap. 13. v. 7. *Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation; and v. 17. Obey, by others translated be persuaded by, them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls as those who must give Account:*
Here

Here it seems the Editors of our *English Bible* do not think fit to stand to their Translations, for in the Margent, against the Words *Rule over you*, in both Verses, they have inserted the *Word Guides*, which does not give us altogether so frightful an Image.

The Word translated *Obey* in the last Verse, is explained by the Word *Remember* in the first, and the Reason given in the One is, *because you are to consider the End of their Conversation*, and in the other is, *because they watch for your Souls*; so that the *Hebrews* were exhorted to *remember*, hearken to, or be persuaded by their *Guides*, who had spoke to them the *Word of God*, which was the end of their Conversation, and who watch'd for their *Souls*; and I think all good Christians ought to do so still, when they know where to find them, and the Clergy have agreed amongst themselves who they are.

At the latter end of the second Epistle to *Timothy*. in our Edition of the Bible, he is said to be the first *Bishop* of Ephesus, by which, we are to understand, if we please, that he was in Possession of the Authority and Dignity of a Modern Prelate; but the Text says no such Matter: Indeed *Paul's Epistle* 1st, ch. 1. v. 11. says, that the *Glorious Gospel of Christ* was committed to his Trust, that is, he was intrusted to preach it; and Verse 18, he commits the same Charge to *Timothy*; but in Chap. 4. v. 12, 13. he tells him what he is to do, (viz.) he is to be an Example to the Believers in *Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity, and till he comes himself, he is to give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine, and the rest of the Epistle* is spent in telling him what Doctrine he is to preach.

In his 2d Epistle, *Paul* says unto him, *And the Things thou hast heard from me amongst many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also*, which he expresses summarily before in these Words, *Lay on hands suddenly on no Man*, a Ceremony always used amongst the *Jews*, to denote a Person appointed for any Purpose, as well as on many other Occasions; so that *Paul* himself knew, by Inspiration, who was fit for his Charge, and *Timothy* was to make good Enquiry after faithful Men; but there is no Power here given but to preach the Gospel, and to employ others to do it, which I have shewn

every one was at liberty to do; though all had not an equal Call, or were equally qualified for it, and therefore it was certainly good Advice to endeavour to find out such as were, and prevail upon them to undertake it.

In the Epistle to *Titus*, who it seems was another Bishop, he is directed to set in order the Things which are wanting (the Business amongst us of Church-Wardens and Vestry-Men) and to ordain Elders in every City, as *Paul* had appointed him; which alludes to private Directions before given, and proves nothing, but that *Paul* took the best Precautions, and most prudent Measures to propagate Christianity, by reducing his Converts in every City, into orderly, though voluntary Societies, by finding out and appointing discreet and honest Men to assist and superintend the rest; and it cannot be doubted but the People who knew him to be inspired, would be advis'd by him, accept his Recommendations, and consequently hearken to, trust their Affairs, and be directed by the Wisdom of Persons so powerfully recommended; which Respect and Deference has been always paid by every Sect that ever appeared in the World to their first Founders, and for the most part to their after Leaders too.

These are all the Texts that I can at present remember, which are usually brought to support the Priestly Claims, except such as plainly relate to our Saviour himself, or his Apostles; but if any others occur hereafter, I shall take Notice of them in proper Time.

But what has all this to do with a formal and solemn Institution, an established Form of Government, a Political Oeconomy, or in Ecclesiastical Language and Stile, a Spiritual Hierarchy.

What, must sovereign and independent Power, (without which, as I have shewn in my 48th Paper, there can be in this Case no Power at all) depend upon figurative Expressions, and Allusions to Seniority of Age, as *Elders*; to mean and low Professions, as *Guides, Shepherds, Pastors, Teachers, Overseers*, notably translated *Bishops*? Or upon the critical Knowledge of antient Eastern Terms, of doubtful and disputed Significations, which would put it in the Power of the very few Men said to be skilled in the Oriental

tal Tongues (which, for the most Part lick out all their Brains) to settle what Establishments or Religion they please.

The Prophets and Evangelists often speak after the Manner of the Eastern Nations, which was for the most Part figuratively; where, for ever, to the End of the World, and such like Language, was frequently used to denote a long space of Time; and therefore general Expressions in Scripture are not always to be taken strictly; as *Covetousness is the Root of ALL Evil: Swear not AT ALL: Children and Servants obey your Parents and Masters in ALL things. Take no Care for to Morrow: Take no Thoughts for your Life, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, or what you shall put on: Whatever you ask of my Father in my Name, he will give it you. Submit your selves to one another: Ye younger be subject to the elder; Ye be subject to one another: And there were many other Things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written, the whole World could not contain the Books*; and more than an hundred others of the same kind: When such Passages occur, we must construe them by the Rules of Eternal Righteousness, the Reason of the Thing, and the general Bent of Scripture, and then we cannot mistake their Meaning, but in such Cases as are of no Consequence, whether we do or not.

Besides, almost all Words vary their Meaning by Time, and every one of the least reading, knows that there is scarce a Word in Nature, (except the proper Names of Persons, Places, and Things) that is answer'd by any other in a different Language, so as to comprehend exactly the same Number of Ideas; nor is it probable that any two Persons of the same Nation ever used one such Word minutely to the same

N. B. It being very observable, That many of the High-Church Clergy, who were silent whilst the Author of this Paper attack'd Superstition, only from the Principles of Reason, and the Constitution of our National Church, (which did not seem to interrupt their Repose, as thinking themselves much above such low Considerations) yet appear to be thoroughly provok'd, since he has fully shewn to the World that the Scripture is as much against their wild Pretensions, as common Sense and the Law of the Land; and therefore now, with open Mouths, roar aloud, that the Craft is in Danger: And the Author having but Four Papers left to finish his present Design, resolves to publish them twice a Week, viz. Saturdays, and Wednesdays, that the World may the sooner see who are Advocates for Religion and Virtue, himself or his Adversaries.

He has in this, as well as in his Three last Papers, given some Account of the Scripture Low-Church; and therefore in his next, he will give a Specimen of Three High Churches in England, which are not Scripture-Churches: In his second, he will make an Analogy between Antient Heathenism and Modern Popery. In the third, he will shew upon what Springs or Imbecilities of Humane Nature, the Pagan and Popish Priests have been able to form their Enthusiastick Empire. And, as in the Course of his whole Design he has endeavour'd to expose Superstition and Imposture; so in his concluding Paper, he undertakes to shew wherein, and wherein alone, consists true Religion.

Purpose; but if they were ask'd to give an adequate Definition of what they meant by it, would differ in some Particular; therefore 'tis absurd to suppose that Mens Duty and Eternal Salvation should depend upon the nice Signification of single Hebrew and Greek Words, Languages so long since out of common Use, and dead.

The Almighty is too merciful to his Creatures to leave them at such Uncertainties, which is in effect to let them throw Cross and Pile for their Religion: When he makes an Establishment, and gives Laws to Mankind, he always expresses himself in a manner not to be misunderstood: So he did in the Jewish Dispensation, where there was no dispute about the Meaning of their Law, though there were endless ones about their Traditions. And so he has done in this Case; for though there is nothing in Scripture to countenance these Pretensions, yet the Gospel almost every where forbids them, as I have partly shewn in my last Paper, and shall unanswerably make out hereafter, when I shall more fully consider the *Acts and Epistles*; and then I will shew that the Apostles themselves claimed no Authority over other Christians, or any Power but of Persuasion. I shall endeavour to shew what is meant by Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and do undertake to prove, that the Clergy have no more Power to administer them by Scripture, than any Layman, and that nothing is meant by Excommunication, but not keeping ill Company: I will shew too that the Clergy, in the first Ages of Christianity, were always chosen by the People, and lived upon their Alms, and by what Steps of Impiety and Forgery the Popish Priesthood came to be Lords of so great a Part of the Terrestrial Globe.

L O N D O N: Printed for J. ROBERTS, in *Warwick-Lane*: Where Advertisements are taken in.

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T H E Independent Whig.

Saturday, December 24. 1720.

HAVING in my former Papers given some Account of the Scripture Church; I shall in this, give an Account of the *Three High-Churches in England*, which are very different from it. And tho' in order to this, I shall be oblig'd to take in a good deal of Matter, and reveal many *High-Church* and *Jacobite Secrets*; yet, I hope to give the Town a clear Notion of them, in the compass of one Paper. I shall, *First*, state what the *true Church of England* is; and then describe the *Three High-Churches of England*, shewing how they differ from one another, and from the *true Church of England*.

I. *First*, What the *true Church of England* is. All Churches by Law establish'd, are Creatures of that State, where they are so establish'd. For whatever is establish'd, necessarily depends on the Legislature, which can and does repeal and enact whatever it thinks fit, and always calls its present Constitution in Religion, *The Church by Law establish'd*. The Church of England therefore by Law establish'd, is whatever the Legislature has enacted, and continues in Force, in relation to Religion, together with whatever is enjoined by the Authority of the King, or is determin'd by the proper Judicatories, acting by the Authority of, and in Subordination to, the Legislature. Thus the Act of Parliament requiring the Subscription of the *Thirty-nine Articles*; the Acts of Uniformity, and the Act of Toleration; the King's Injunctions, the Canons of Convocation confirm'd by the King; the Sentences of the Delegates; and the Determinations of the House of Lords, constitute the Church of England: And the Members thereof are good and true Members, who confirm their Belief and Practice to the several Particulars aforesaid: As on the other side, they fall short of being good and true Members, who recede from any Particular establish'd and settled as aforesaid. Nor can those be truly said to agree with and conform to a Church, who do not agree with and conform to it in the Sense intended by the Makers of the several Constitutions of that Church. This last is so plain a Truth in it self, and so manifestly imply'd in taking all Oaths, and making Subscriptions and Declarations, that it would have been needless to

have observ'd it, had it not been for the Equivocation and Jesuitism of so many of our Priests, who think they may take Oaths, and make Subscriptions, in Senses contrary to, and different from, the Intention of the Imposers, and yet be good, and true, and perfect Members of the Church.

II. Now the High-Churches, which differ from this Establishment, are *Three* in Number; which I shall rank under the Names of the most remarkable Leaders in them. 1. Dr. Bungey's High-Church. 2. Mr. Lesley's High-Church. 3. And Dr. Brett's High-Church. The Two last are in an open Separation from one another, as well as from the true Church of England. But Dr. Bungey's High-Church has as yet made no Separation from the *True Church*. He and his People are only Schismatics in the Church, (as were those upon whom St. PAUL charges *Schism*, when they were met together in the same Church, 1. Cor. 11. 18.) being, as his present Grace of Canterbury describes some High-Church Priests, *a new sort of Disciplinaryans risen up among our selves, who seem to comply with the Government of the Church, as others do with that of the State; not out of Conscience of their Duty, or any love they bear to it, but because they cannot keep their Preferments without it: They hate our Constitution, and revile all such as stand up in good earnest for it; and yet for all that go on to Subscribe and Rail*; which Passage, from so great an Authority, cannot be too often quoted.

But to proceed to the Description of these Three High-Churches, in their Order.

1. Dr. Bungey's High-Church stands distinguished from the *True Church of England*; by their *Arminian Doctrines*, contrary to our old *Orthodox Calvinistical Articles*; by their Enmity to the Act of Toleration, and to the Principles on which it is grounded; by their claiming an Independent Power in Priests to make Laws, and govern the Church; which is contrary to the Laws of England, that place the Power of making Church Laws in other Hands; and particularly contrary to the Oath of Supremacy, which makes his Majesty Supreme Head of the Church; by teaching the Doctrines of Hereditary Right and Passive Obedience, contrary to the Judgment and Practice of the Legislature at and



Since the Revolution, and to the Determination of the House of Lords, on the Impeachment of Dr. SACHEVEREL, and their Condemnation of the Oxford Decree: And lastly, by a Spirit of Faction against the present Establishment in State, and against his Majesty's Measures; by Rebellion and Perjury, by Uncharitableness to all Foreign, and more especially to Domestick Protestants; and by an implacable Fury and Malice towards all Dissenters among us, besides Jews and Papists: In which last they act contrary to the known loyal Principles of our Church; to its Opinion of all Foreign Protestant Churches, which it esteems true Churches; to its Principles, which all tend to preserve Liberty and Property; and to its known charitable and peaceable Temper, and Regard to tender Consciences.

2. The Second High-Church is, Mr. LESLEY's High Church. At the Revolution several Bishops, who were deprived by Act of Parliament, for not taking the Oaths to the Government, made an open Separation from the Church of England; and pretended, that they and their Adherents were the Church, charging those who fill'd their Sees with being Usurpers, and setting up Altar against Altar; and also charging them and their Adherents, together with all the other Bishops, Clergy and Laity, who join'd in the same Communion with the usurping Bishops, with Schism. Hereby also they distinguish'd themselves in Principles from the Church of England; which being a legal Establishment, asserts to the Legislature, which has a Right to preserve the Peace, a Right to deprive Bishops for Crimes against Law. They do not indeed so much distinguish themselves in Principles from Dr. Bungey's Church, as they do from the true Church of England: For the Doctor's Church equally contends with Mr. Lesley's Church against the Parliaments Right to deprive Bishops, and calls it Usurpation on the Rights of the Church; but is for Submission to such usurp'd Exercise of Power; and contends Schism to be on the side of those, who separate on a Principle of defending the Rights of the Church, against an Usurpation of those Rights.

This New separate Church agrees with Dr. Bungey's Church, in the other Principles before mentioned, which distinguish the Doctor's Church from the true Church of England. But in point of Honesty or Adherence to those Principles, it greatly differs from the Doctor's Church, which goes on to *Subscribe*, and Swear, and Practise contrary to what they do *Subscribe* and Swear; Mr. Lesley's High-Church honestly practising according to its villanous Principles.

3. Proceed we now to Dr. Brett's High-Church. Soon after King GEORGE's Accession

to the Crown, the Bishops of the last mention'd High-Church did all, except one, assemble in a Synod, where they resolv'd upon making Four Alterations in the Common Prayer Book, viz. 1. To mix Water with the Wine in the Sacrament. 2. A Prayer for the Dead. 3. A Prayer for the Descent of the Holy Ghost, upon the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament. 4. An obligatory Prayer; which goes upon the Ground, that the Eucharist is a proper Sacrifice. All which Dr. Brett is not only an Advocate for, as an Author, but (perhaps) as Titular Archbishop of Canterbury exercised his Authority in enjoining. This has split the last High-Church into two Churches; Dr. Brett and his Followers adhering to the Bishops, or Church Governors of their Church, in behalf of Wine and Water, &c. and Mr. Lesley and his Followers adhering to one Bishop only, in behalf of Wine, &c. contrary to the Determination of their own Bishops, and all their own Principles, about the Authority of Bishops and Clergy.

To render my Account of our several High-Churches of England more compleat; I shall by way of Supplement observe, that there is a Distinction in Dr. Bungey's Church; and his High-Church may be divided into Two High-Churches. Some of his High-Church are Swearers to the Government, and say the Church Prayers for his Majesty King GEORGE and his Family, continuing at the same time disaffected to him, and Enemies to his Legal Title. Others of the Dr's High-Church are Non-Swearers, and, tho' they come to Church, disown joining with the Swearers in the Prayers for the King and his Family; whose Practice the profound Mr. DODWEL has defended in a Book, (whose Title I shall upon Memory venture to give the Reader) intitled, *A further Prospect of the Case in View; Proving, that it is our Duty to be present at sinful Prayers, made sinful by the Mistake of Fallible Superiors, who have a Right of imposing Prayers.* So that, I think, the High-Churches of England may not improperly be reckon'd Four in Number; which may be justly distinguish'd by Things, as well as by Names of Men, after the following Manner.

- I. The Swearing and Forswearing High-Church.
- II. The Non-Swearing High-Church, that contends for being present at the *sinful Prayers* of the Church.
- III. The Non-Swearing Wine and Water Church.
- IV. The Non-Swearing No Water Church.

T H E Independent Whig.

Wednesday, December 28. 1720.



AS Extremes meet in a Point, and Corruption in Terrestrial Bodies, is the next State from Perfection; so all the Commands and Denunciations of Heaven have not been able to keep the Christian Priesthood, in most Countries, from running headlong into the Superstitions and Follies of the *Gentile* Idolaters: By a strange sort of Fatality, they have jump't in the same Thoughts, and play'd over and over again the same Tricks; inso-much that if we but make small Allowances for the constant Alterations of Time, and such as must necessarily result from different Languages and Fashions, the present Romish Churches might be easily mistaken for Heathen Temples, and the Services performed in them for *Pagan* Worship.

The Devil, as subtle and cunning as he is represented to be, with all the Assistance of corrupt Priests, has not been able to find out a new Device, but has ever danced the Hay, and made his Rounds within the same Circle: The same Arts and Stratagems have been always made use of to seduce and delude Mankind; the same Advantages taken of their Weaknesses and Passions, and in all Times equally applied to destroy true Religion, advance the Priesthood, and make the honest and industrious, but unthinking, Part of the World, the Prey and Property of Hypocrites and Impostors.

The All-powerful, All-wise, and All-merciful God himself, is too often represented like the Heathen Deities, to be revengeful, cruel, capricious, impotent, vain, fond of Commendation, and Flattery; and, in effect, subject to all the other Passions and Imperfections of the weakest Men: His Being, which is boundless as Extension, and which the whole World cannot contain, is pretended to be confined to single Structures, and narrow Edifices built with Hands; nay, to Parts of those Edifices; where he is supposed to be pleased and gratified, like frail Mortals, with costly Furniture, gilded

Roofs, engraven and polished Marble, fine Carving, and other curious, though banbling Workmanship of Mechanicks and Artificers.

I confess I am not wise enough to find out any essential Difference between the present, and the old *Roman* Worship: They both dedicate their Temples to dead Men and Women, which one call Saints, and the other Demi-Gods and Goddeses: The former used Forms of *Hocus Pocus*, which they called Consecrations, and were intended to conjure and call down their Deities to inhabit personally their Temples, their Images and Idols; the Popish Priests consecrate their Churches for the same Purpose, *viz.* to obtain the more immediate Presence of the Deity: Like the old *Romans* too, they erect Altars in their Temples, where they worship Saints with Supplications, Tears, Grimaces, antick and distorted Faces and Gestures, Musick, and Ceremonies, and tender Offerings and Oblations to them; and, like the others, often make Processions, Cavalcades, and Shews in their Honour; and sometimes go in Pilgrimages to them to obtain their Favour.

The Popish Priests have prophaned the plain and simple Direction of our Saviour to his Disciples, for commemorating the Benefits we have received by his Death, by turning it into an old *Roman* Sacrifice: Amongst them, the Pipers and Harpers were the Fore-runners of the Shew; and before the modern Sacrifice, the Organs strike up a Tune: There the Priests went up to the Altar in a white Garment free from Spots (being an Emblem of Innocence); in new *Rome* the Priest wears a white Surplice: The Heathen Priest turned about to the East, being the Region of the Rising Sun, and bowed; the Popish Priest does the same: The Horns of the Beast sacrificed were mark'd with Gold, and his Blood received in Golden and Silver Vessels; here the pretended Christian Sacrifice of the real Body and Blood of Christ, is poured into the same costly Cups, or laid upon as rich Plates and Dishes: The old *Roman* Altar was raised, by several Steps, above the Floor

of

(Price Two-pence.)



Of their Temples; so is the present: The Priest amongst them, made a crooked Line with his Knife from the Head to the Tail of the Victim; the Popish Priest plays Tricks of *Legerdemain* with his Fingers over the Elements: Lastly, When the Beast was consecrated and killed, the Heathen Priests regaled themselves upon what was left, after their Gods were served; the Romish Priests make it prophane for any Layman to drink of the consecrated Wine, or for any one even to eat the Bread but the Communicants.

The old Romans had different Orders of Priests, with different and distinct Offices and Revenues, viz. the *High Priest*, the *Luperci*, the *Augurs*, the *Haruspices*, the *Pontifices*, the *Flamines*, *Salii*, *Feciales*, *Sodales*, the *Duumviri*, *Decemviri*, *Quindecenviri*, the Keepers of the *Sybilline Books*, the *Corybantes*, &c. The present Romans (besides the several Sorts which are in Use and Fashion amongst us) have a *Pope*, *Cardinals*, *Dominicans*, *Franciscans*, *Jesuits*, *Carmelites*, *Benedictines*, *Mendicants*, *Capuchins*, *Cistercians*, *Observantins*, *Augustines*, *Servites*, &c. In imitation also of the Vestal Virgins, in old Rome, they have founded several Orders of Nuns, who take a Vow of Chastity, for the breach of which they are immured, as the others were burned alive: And as they had a Right to deliver from the Hands of Justice any Malefactors they casually met in their Walks; so the present Roman Priests claim and exercise an equal Right to protect all Criminals who can fly to them for Protection, which is borrowed from that of the old Roman Asylum.

The old Romans had their *Dies fastos* & *nefastos*, their Fasts and Feasts, their *Sacrificias*, their *Epulas*, their *Ferias*, in Honour of their Gods and Demi-Gods; the present Romans also make distinctions of Days a great part of their Religion; they have too their *Dies fastos* & *nefastos*, their stated Fasts and Feasts in Honour of their Saints, or to commemorate and condole past Misfortunes, or rejoice over signal Successes; and some of their Feasts, and particularly their Carnivals, exceed in Lewdness and Prodigality the *Bacchanalia* of the Ancients.

The Heathens had their *Deos Tutelares*, to whom the Defence of certain Countries were committed, and their *Deos Presides*, who had the Safe-guard of particular Cities; the Popists have Saints who supply the same Offices: Artificers and Professions have also their particular Saints who preside over them; Scholars have their Saint *Nicholas*, and Saint *Gregory*; Painters

Saint Luke; as Soldiers and Lovers had formerly their *Mars*, and *Venus*: Diseases too have their Saints to cure them, as the Pox, *Saint Rock*; the falling Evil, *Saint Cornelius*; the Tooth Ach, *Saint Apollin*; and even Beasts and Cattle have their's: *Saint Loy* is the Horseleech, and *Saint Anthony* the Swineherd.

As the Heathen Priests would suffer none to come into their Sanctuaries but themselves; neither will the Popish Priests permit any Layman to come within the Rails of the Altar, and with unhallowed Feet Profane that Holy Holy Place; As the Ancients obliged all who were initiated into their Mysteries to confess, under the most severe Denunciations, all the Secrets of their past Lives, by which Means they were so much in their Power, that they never afterwards durst blab out what they saw, nor give the least Opposition to their Designs; so the Romish Priests trust their Mysteries only to the *vere Adepti*, and have made the same use of Confession, (the loss of which is certainly lamented by others;) for they oblige, upon the Penalty of Damnation, all their Voraries to confess not only their private Sins, but secret Thoughts, as well as every Thing else they know of other Peoples, which may any way regard the Interests of their Order; and so have Possession and fast hold of all Families, and become acquainted with all Designs, which may ever thwart their Pride; and consequently have secured their own Domination, and the Peoples Misery, beyond almost a possibility of Redress.

Lastly, as the Heathen Priests sacrificed Goats to *Bacchus*, for browsing his Vines, and Men to *Pluto* and *Proserpina*, and other angry Deities, to appease their Wrath, and avert Evils from themselves; so the Popish Priests sacrifice and devote their Enemies, under the Names of *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks*, to the infernal Fiend: And as those Idolaters were allowed to know when was the most proper Time to make their Sacrifices to their Deities, and what Victims would be most acceptable to them, as being presumed to understand best the Minds of their provoked Gods; so the present Ones are in Possession of the sole Judgment of what is Heresy, and by that Means of sacrificing whom they please to their Ambition and Revenge, which equally subjects the unhappy Laity to them.

They have also imitated the Heathens in making every Foible and Imbecility, as well as every common and uncommon Appearance in Nature, contribute to their Interests; which shall be the Subject of my next Paper.

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T H E Independent Whig.

Saturday, December 31. 1720.

THERE is not a living Creature in the Universe, which has not some innate Weakness, or original Imbecility co-eval to its Being; that is, some Inclinations or Disgusts, some peculiar Desires or Fears, which render it an easy Prey to other Animals, who, from their constitutional Sagacity or Experience, know how to take Advantage of this Infirmary; of which it would be needless, as well as endless, to enumerate Particulars; my Purpose being only to shew, that all the Dignity of human Nature, and the Superiority which Almighty God has given to Man above other Beings, has not exempted him from this Imperfection; which probably was left in his Fabrick, to put him in Mind of his Mortality, humble his Pride, and excite his Diligence.

The peculiar Foible of Mankind, is Superstition, or an intrinsic and pannick Fear of invisible and unknown Beings. It is obvious to every one, that there must be Causes in Nature for all the Good or Evil which does, or ever can happen to us; and it is impossible for any Man so far to divert himself of all Concern for his own Happiness, as not to be solicitous to know what those Causes are; and since for the most Part, they are so hidden and out of sight, that we cannot perceive or discover them by our own Endeavours, we conclude them to be immaterial, and in their own Nature invisible; and are for the most part ready to take their Accounts, who have the Dexterity to make us believe, that they know more of the Matter than we do, and that they will not deceive us.

To this Ignorance and Credulity joyned together, we are beholden for the most grievous Frauds and Impositions, which ever did, or do yet oppress Mankind, and interrupt their Happiness, viz. for the Revelations and Visions of Enthusiasts, for all the forged Religions in the World, and the Abuses, and Corruptions of the true One; as well as all the idle and fantastical Stories of Conjurers and Witches, of Spirits, Apparitions, Fairies, Dæmons and Hobgoblins, Fortune-Tellers, Astrologers, and the Belief in Dreams, Portents, Omens, Prognosticks, and the several Sorts of Divinations, which more or less disturb the greatest Part of the World, and have made them the Dupes and Property of Knaves and Impostors in all Ages.

Every Thing in the Universe is in constant Motion, and where-ever we move we are surrounded with Bodies, every one of which must, in a certain degree, operate upon themselves and us; and it cannot be otherwise, that in the Variety of Actions and Events, which happen in all Nature, but some must appear very extraordinary to those who know not their true Causes: Men naturally admire what they cannot apprehend, and seem to do some sort of Credit to their Understandings, in believing whatever is out of their reach to be Supernatural.

(Price Two-pence.)

From hence perpetual Advantages have been given to, and Occasions taken, by the Heathen and Popish Priests, to circumvent and oppress the credulous and unwary Vulgar; what fraudulent Uses have been made of Eclipses, Meteors, epidemical Plagues, Inundations, great Thunder and Lightnings, and other amazing Prodiges, and seeming Menaces of Nature? What juggling Tricks have been or may be acted with Glasses, speaking Trumpets, Ventriloquies, Echoes, Phospheries, magick Lanthorns, &c. in the ignorant Parts of the World? The Americans were made to believe that Paper and Letters were Spirits, which conveyed Mens Thoughts from one to another, and a dancing Mare was not many Years since burnt for a Witch in the Inquisition at Portugal.

Nature works by a Thousand Ways imperceptible to us: The Loadstone draws Iron to it, Gold Quicksilver; the sensitive Plant shrinks from the Touch; some Sorts of Vegetables attract one another and twine together; others grow farther apart. The Treading upon the Torpedo affects, and gives raging Pains to our whole Bodies; Turky-Cocks and Pheasants fly at a red Rag; a Rattle Snake by a Sort of magical Power in its Eyes (as it is said) will force a Squirrel to run into his Mouth: Musick will cure the Bite of a Tarantula. The Frights and Longings of Women with Child, will stamp Impressions upon the Babes within them. People in their Sleep will walk securely over Precipices, and the Ridges of Houses, where they durst not venture when awake: Lightning will melt a Sword without hurting the Scabbard.

There is something within us, which we all feel, that baffles and gets the better of our best Reasonings and Philosophy; and this shews it self in Love, in Fear, in Hatred, Ambition, and almost every Act of the Mind; but in nothing so much as in Superstition: Sometimes we find a secret Pannick, and at other times a strange and uncommon Energy, or Feeling of a mighty Power within us; and not being able to account, by any Conduct of Reason, or other Causes in Nature, for such Perceptions, are easily perswaded to believe them to be Supernatural; and from hence great Philosophers, Poets, Legislators, famous Conquerors, and often Madmen, have been thought in many Ages, by themselves as well as others, to be inspired; and even Distempers, such as, Apoplexies, Epilepsies, Prophetick Fits and Trances have been deemed Miraculous.

Nothing strikes so strongly upon our Senses, as what causes Surprise and Admiration? There are very few Men, who are not affected with unusual Sounds and Voices, the Groans of others in Misery, the Solemnity of a Coronation, or any publick Shew, the Power of a Funeral, the Farce of a Procession, the Power of Eloquence, the Charms of Poetry, the rich and splendid Equipage of Great Men, or the solemn Phiz and Mien of an Enthusiast: Who-

ever

ever therefore can find out the Secret of hitting luckily upon this Foible and native Imbecility in Mankind, may govern them and lead them as he pleases; and herein has consisted the greatest Skill and Success of crafty Priests in all Ages: They have made use of this Power, to turn us and wind us to all their Purposes, and have built and founded most of their Superstitions upon it, and consequently have ever adapted their Worship rather to catch our Passions, than convince our Minds, and enlighten our Understandings; all which is directly contrary to the Spirit of Christianity and the Precepts of our Saviour, as shall be fully shewn in the next Paper.

For this Reason, the Heathens built their Temples, in Groves, in solitary, dark and desert Recesses, by or over Caverns, Grottoes, or in the midst of echoing and resounding Rocks, that the hideous and dismal Aspect, and often hollow and hoarse bellowing of such Places, might strike a solemn Awe and religious Horror into their Votaries, and sometimes help their Imaginations to hear Voices, and see Forms, and so intimidate and prepare them for any Stories and Impressions, which they should think it their Interest to make.

The Popish Priests have admirably well aped these their Predecessors, by building their Churches dark and dismal, with figured and painted Windows to let in a false and glimmering Light, arched and contrived in such Manner, as to rebound the Voice hollow and shrill, with many private Apartments, Cemeteries for their Saints, proud Inscriptions, whispering Places, secret Chappels for Confessions, saying Masses, Dirges, Penances, &c. Like the Heathens too, they build their Temples solemn and magnificent, in antic and uncommon Figures, adorn them with Silver and Gold, rich Carpets, curious Statues, and Images stuck about with Jewels, and their Priests appear in gaudy Vestments, and fantastical Robes and Capps, and perform their Worship with Musick and affected Ceremonies; all which Pageantry and Farce is calculated, and intended to act upon the Passions attract the Eyes, amuse, lull and suspend the Understanding, and draw Admiration and Reverence to those who preside in these haughty Fabricks, and this pompous Adoration: Their Bells too, which call the People together, are contrived to emit such Sounds, as affect the Minds of most People, with a Sort of Superstitious Melancholly.

Indeed as the Romish Priests are more numerous, have vastly larger Revenues, and more Leisure, so they have greatly improved upon the Heathens in this Art of deceiving; insomuch that there is scarce an Imperfection or Error of human Nature, which is not adopted into their Scheme, and made subservient to their Interest. Men of sprightly Genius and Courage are caught by their Ambition, are highly honoured, flattered, and raised up by their general Voice to the highest Dignities, and then are indulged in all their Passions, and gratified with Confessors, who are not only to overlook or pardon, but assist them in their vicious Pleasures; by which Arts those great Talents, in-

stead of being nobly employ'd to free Mankind from sacerdotal Usurpations, are meanly perverted to support and aggrandize the monkish Empire.

Men of violent and impetuous Tempers, are suitably employ'd to execute their Tyrannical Designs, and to take Vengeance of their Enemies; and the Debauched and Wicked are made to buy their Peace of Heaven, by giving Money and Lands to the Priests; but none contribute so much to advance their System as Visionaries and Enthusiasts: There are in all Countries Multitudes of People, whom Ignorance, Pride, Conceit, ill Habit of Body, melancholy and spleatick Tempers, unfortunate Circumstances, causeless and secret Fears, and a pannick Disposition of Mind have prepared to be the Objects, as well as Instruments of Delusion, and they have been ever made use of accordingly.

Some of these are thrust or decoyed into religious Houses, or persuaded to lead retired, recluse and austere Lives, and to torture and punish themselves with Whippings, Penances, Fasting, and to walk Barefoot, to astonish the gaping Multitude, and thereby gain Reverence to the Priesthood, for their fancied Holiness, whilst the governing Ecclesiasticks feast and riot in delicious Banquets, ride in State with Coaches and Six, attended by numerous Servants in costly Liveries; and Earth and Sea is ransacked, and Heaven it self profaned, to maintain their Luxury and Pride.

Such amongst them as are disposed to hear Voices and see Forms, shall hear and see enough of those, which are real ones, and afterwards be made use of to divulge them; and in order to it, their Sanctity shall be proclaimed abroad, and their mad and incoherent Speeches be called Revelations, heavenly Dispensations, and incomprehensible Mysteries: Such crazed and fanatical Men and Women have been the Founders of most of the Colleges, Monasteries, and Nunneries of the Romish Church, (to say nothing of others) and their Follies and Madnes been the Support of the Papal Dominion.

But this artificial Devotion, this mechanick Religion has nothing to do with Christianity; which is natural Religion restored and improved, and consists in Vertue and Morality, and in being useful and beneficial to one another, as I shall shew in my next Paper.

The Prophets have taught us the same Lesson: The First Chapter of *Isaiab* fully shews, that Religion does not consist in *Sacrifices, in Burnt-offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts, in the Blood of Bullocks, and of Lambs, and of He-Goats, in vain Oblations, Incense, New Moons, Sabbaths, and Calling of Assemblies in appointed Feasts, or many Prayers*; but in doing Good to Mankind. The Prophet sums up our Duty in these Words, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow*; for as another Prophet says, *What doth the Lord require of thee, O Man, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* *Micah* Ch. 6. v. 8.

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Have undertaken in this Paper to prove, what, methinks, should want no Proof; namely, that the All-powerful God is not a whimsical and humorous Being, that governs his Creatures by Caprice, and loads them with arbitrary and uselefs Burthens, which can serve no good Purpose in Nature.

The Almighty is infinitely happy in his own Perfections, and cannot receive Pleasure from such Things or Actions, as only the weakest Men are fond of, and the wisest contemn. He is not capable, like Mortals, of being ruffled by Accidents, or surprized by Disappointments. Wisdom, Goodness and Felicity, are essential to his Being; and consequently, he could have no View in creating Mankind, but their own Happiness; for we can neither add to his, nor take away from it.

It is absurd therefore to suppose, that there can be any Merit in bare Opinions and abuse Speculations; or, in the Performance of indifferent and uselefs Actions; or indeed, that any thing can be Part of true Religion, but what has a tendency to make Men virtuous and happy. The Father of Mercies will never perplex our Minds, or burthen our Bodies, with any thing that signifies nothing.

Moses indeed gave to the Jews a carnal Law, a Law of Bondage; a Yoke, which neither they, nor their Posterity could bear: Statutes which were not good, and Judgments by which they could not live. But these were

given them for the Hardness of their Hearts, and as Punishments for their manifold Sins and Iniquities. And besides, they were only to last for a Time, and afterwards give way to a simple, pure, and perfect Law, to a spiritual, innocent, and undefiled Religion; free from their own fond Superstitions, and the stale Idolatries of the Gentiles; not loaded either with Priests, Sacrifices, or Ceremonies; a Religion, which was to consist in Spirit and in Truth, and intended to make Men wiser and better.

It seems plain to me, that there is but one Article of Faith in all this Religion, and that Essential to the very Being of it; namely, that *Jesus is the Messiah*: Without this preliminary Acknowledgment, his Mission could not have been owned, nor his Precepts obeyed; which are nothing else but Exhortations to Love, and Directions for social Happiness; and which he has enforced, by annexing eternal Rewards to the Observance of them. Hitherto Virtue had expected its Reward in this Life; but our Saviour gave new Sanctions to it, by *bringing Life and Immortality to Light*.

There is no Proposition in all Scripture more evidently reveal'd, or laid down in more positive and express Terms, than that the Confession of this Truth, was the Basis and Support of Christianity, the *unum magnum* requisite to be believed: Every thing else is practical Duty, and Belief is no farther concern'd in it, than as it produces Practice. For, before we can think our selves obliged by a Precept, we must be satisfied of its Reasonableness, or of the Legislator's Authority.

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(Price Three-pence.)

The World had been so long corrupted by Superstition, and deluded and abused by selfish and lying Priests, who taught Wickedness for Virtue, and Nonsense for Philosophy; and placed Devotion in foolish Ceremonies and Sacrifices, and in ridiculous Cringes, antick Vestments and Grimaces; that nothing less than a Divine Legislator, with the Power of Miracles, could restore Men to their Senses and to natural Religion. The sole Article therefore that our Saviour made necessary to be believed was, That he came from God, and acted by the Authority of God. Then every one would see the Impossibility that he could deceive or mislead Men, and consequently would take his Word for every thing else, in the Sense he understood it.

And this Proceeding was agreeable to eternal Reason; to wit, to make nothing necessary in Belief; which was not necessary to Practice; for what Purpose could be served in obliging Men to believe, or rather to say they believed, mysterious and unintelligible Propositions: Such Articles are only the Watch-words of a Party, and can never be the Objects of real Assent; for no Man can be said to believe what he does not understand, and has not suitable Ideas of, as far as his Belief goes. We must understand the Meaning of every Term in a Proposition, before we can assent to it or dissent from it; for Words, of which we do not understand the Signification, are the same to us as if they had no Signification at all. How much therefore more honest and prudent would it be to own at first, our Ignorance concerning certain abstruse Speculations, than to form Propositions about them, pretend to define and explain them, and then confess that we do not understand our own Definitions and Explanations; and call out Heresy and Atheism, when we are desired to speak intelligibly, and tell what we mean?

But to the Proofs from Scripture; *John* iii. 8. says, *He that believeth in him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already.* And *Ver.* 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life, and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see Life.* And *Chap.* vi. 40. *Every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may live eternally.* And *Ver.* 51. *I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any Man eat of this, he shall live for ever.* And *Acts* x. 43. *To him all the Prophets bear Witness, that through his Name, who-*

ever shall believe in him, shall receive Remission of Sins. And *Chap.* 16. v. 31. *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House.* And *Rom.* *Chap.* 10. v. 9. *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart, that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved.* 1st *Epistle* of *John*, *Chap.* 4. v. 2, 3, and 15. and *Chap.* 5. v. 1. to the same purpose.

These, with many more plain and direct Texts, make only this Article necessary to be believed, and supersede all others. Nor is this required of us, barely because it is true, or to gain adventitious Honour to the Deity, who wants not the Applause of poor mortal Men; for such Belief could signify nothing: But it was required of us to obtain Obedience to his Commands and direct our Practice, to promote virtuous Actions, and the Principles which produce them. *John*, *Chap.* 5. v. 24. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting Life.* And *Chap.* 8. v. 31. *Jesus said to those Jews which believed in him, if ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed.* So that Faith in Christ is not enough, unless we obey his Word; or rather, we cannot be truly said to believe in him, whilst we reject his Commandments. 1st *Epistle* General of *St. John*, *Chap.* 2. v. 3, 4. *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him. But who so keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

Let us therefore see what are those Commands, in the Observance of which Christianity consists. It does not consist in the observance of *Days, nor Months, nor Time, nor Years*, *Gal.* 4. and 9. And *Rom.* 14. v. 5. *One Man esteemeth one Day above another; another Man esteemeth every Day alike: Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind.*

It does not consist in positive Institutions, in Forms and Ceremonies. 1 *Cor.* *Chap.* 7. v. 19. *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the Commandments of Christ.* And *Gal.* 6. v. 15. *In Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumcision, but*

a new Creature. Gal. v. ver. 6. to the same Purpose.

It does not consist in Meats nor Drinks, in Fish nor in Flesh. 1 Cor. Chap. 8. v. 8. Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat are we the better; nor, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest this Liberty of yours become a Stumbling-Block to them that are weak. And Rom. 14. v. 17. The Kingdom of God is not Meat nor Drink; but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.

It consists not in long Prayers, nor in many Prayers. Mat. 6. v. 7. When ye pray, use not vain Repetitions as the Heathens do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like them; for the Father knoweth what Thing ye have need of before ye ask. Indeed, it seems plain to me from this Text, as well as from the Reason of the Thing, that Prayer itself becomes chiefly a Duty, as it raises our Minds, by a Contemplation of the Divine Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, to an Acknowledgment of his repeated Bounties to Mankind; disposes us to an Imitation of those high Perfections, and to be merciful and beneficent to one another. For it is absurd to suppose that we can direct the All-wise Being in the Dispensations of his Providence; or can flatter or persuade him out of his eternal Decrees. If therefore any Texts in Scripture seem to carry a contrary Implication, I conceive they ought to be understood with the same Allowances as those are which speak of God's Hands and Feet, and of his being subject to human Passions.

It does not consist in Sacrifices performed in pompous Churches and magnificent Buildings, or in consecrated Trinkets. Acts 17. v. 24, 25. God that made the World, and all Things therein, seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, neither is worshipp'd with Mens Hands, as though he wanted any thing, seeing he giveth to all Life and Breath, and every thing. Acts 7. v. 48, 49, 50. The most High dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands. Heaven is his Throne and Earth is his Footstool; what House will ye build to me, saith the Lord? or, where is the Place of my Rest? Hath not my Hand made all things?

His Being is universal, not confin'd to Churches, Chappels, Choirs, nor Altars;

but his Presence is every where alike; and not more immediately in one Place than another. Acts 17. v. 27, 28, 29. He is not far from every one of us, for in him we live and move, and have our Being, as certain also of your own Poets have said, for we are his Offspring; for as much therefore as we are the Offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by Art or Man's Device.

The Almighty has no Favourite Opinions, Sects and Nations. Acts 10. v. 34, 35. And Peter opened his Mouth and said, Of a Truth, I perceive that God is no Respector of Persons; but in every Nation he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him. Rom. 2. v. 11. There is no Respect of Persons with God. Colos. 3. v. 11. There is neither Greek, nor Jew, Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free, but Christ is all, and in all. Gal. 3. v. 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female, for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.

How therefore shall we worship him? how know his Will? St. John tells us, chap. 7. v. 16, 17. If any Man will do God's Will, he will know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God or not: That is as much as to say, 'Make use of the Judgment which God has given you; and see whether the Doctrine taught you, be worthy of an Omnipotent Author; see whether it teaches Peace and Love to your Neighbour, Compassion to all in Distress, Forbearance of Injuries, Humanity and Indulgence to all who differ from you, Duty to Parents, Submission and Obedience to the Laws of your Country, and Charitableness and Benevolence to all Mankind, and even to the Brute Creation; then you may be sure such Doctrine comes from God: But if it breaths forth Revenge, and implacable Hatred; if it raises Mobs, Civil Wars, and Persecutions for trifling Opinions; if it has for its End Ambition and worldly Pride, and overturns every thing Sacred and Civil, which stands in its Way; if it encourages the worst Men, and oppresses the best; if it discourages Industry, and depopulates Nations; then there are plain Traces of Satan's, or the Popish Priest's Foot in it, and such a Religion can never come from God.

When

When you have made this your best Use of the Faculties God has given you, your Endeavours will certainly be accepted by him ; and you will meet all the Reward which attends the judging right, since you have done all in your Power to do so : For God puts upon no Man the *Ægyptian* Task of making Bricks without Straw ; nor requires any thing which you cannot perform. *Rom.* chap. 2. v. 10, 11. *Glory, Honour, and Peace to every Man who worketh Good ; to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile ; for as many as have sinned without Law, shall be punished without Law : and those that have sinned in the Law, shall perish by the Law. And, vers. 14, 15. For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things of the Law, they are a Law unto themselves : Which sheweth the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing them Witness ; and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.*

So that the *Gentiles* themselves are to be judged by their Sincerity, and not condemned for involuntary Errors. *Rom.* 14. v. 10, 11, 12, 13. *Why dost thou judge thy Brother ? As I live, saith the Lord, every Knee shall bow to me, and every Tongue shall confess to God ; so then every one of us shall give an Account to God. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more. And, ver. 22. we are told who will be judged to Happiness ; happy is he who condemneth not himself in that Thing which he alloweth. 1 Epistle General of St. John, Chap. 3. v. 21, Beloved, if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.*

Cornelius, tho' a Heathen, is commended in *Acts* the 10th, vers. 2. as a devout Man, and one that feared God with all his House, which gave much Alms to the People, and prayed to God always : And *Lydia*, a Seller of Purple, tho' neither a Jew nor a Christian, is said to be a Worshiper of God, and one whose Heart God had open'd, before she heard the Preaching of Paul, *Acts* 16. 14.

This comprehensive Charity, this Spirit of publick Beneficence, runs every where through the New Testament ; nor can I find any Precept there given but what is manifestly advantageous to Mankind, conducing to their present Happiness, and deducible from eternal Reason, and the Result of it. *Mat.* 22. v. 35, to 39. *A Lawyer ask'd of our Saviour, which is the great Commandment of the Law ? And Jesus*

said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great Commandment : And the second is like unto it ; thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self : Upon these Two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Another Lawyer asks of him, (*Luke* 10. 25.) *What shall I do to obtain eternal Life ? and he said unto him, What is written in the Law ? how readest thou ? and he said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Soul, and all thy Strength, and all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thy self. And he said unto him, thou hast answered right : Do this and thou shalt live. And chap. 18. v. 18, and 20, &c. a certain Ruler ask'd him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal Life ? And Jesus said, thou knowest the Commandments ; Do not commit Adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false Witness ; honour thy Father and thy Mother. He indeed adds afterwards another Condition, which was to sell all he had and give it to the Poor ; which the Ruler could not bring himself to comply with ; tho' I dare say he would have promised to have believed Creeds by the Dozen, if those would have done him any service : But I cannot find, that in all Scripture, our Saviour does impose upon us the Belief of one Modern Creed, or of any other but that He was the Messiah.*

Chap. 18. v. 8. *Zaccheus, a Publican, saith unto the Lord, half of my Goods I give unto the Poor ; and if I have taken any thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him four fold : And Jesus said unto him, this Day is Salvation come unto thy House ; without asking him one Question about his Faith.*

Rom. 13. v. 8, 9. *Owe no Man any thing but to love one another ; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law : For this, thou shalt not commit Adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false Witness, thou shalt not covet ; and if there is any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self. The same Doctrine in another Place, is thus shortly described ; By this all Men shall know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another : So that the Love of God, and of our Neighbour, is the Whole Duty of a Christian. The first implies the Worship of God, or rather is the true and very Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth ; and the latter*

ret comprehends all the Moral and Social Virtues. 1st Epistle of John, Chap. 4. v. 7, 8. *Beloved, let us love one another, for Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.* Vers. 16. *God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* And, Chap. 5. v. 3. St. John defines what the Love of God is; namely, *for this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.*

This will appear still more evident, when we examine, for what Virtues and Crimes Men will be rewarded, and punished, Eternally. Matth. Chap. 25. v. 31. *When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before him shall be gather'd all Nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as the Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats; and he shall set the Sheep on the Right Hand, and the Goats on the Left. Then shall the King say to them on the Right Hand, Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World; for I was hungry, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; in Prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall he say also to them on the Left Hand, Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; for I was hungred, and ye gave me no Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in Prison, and ye visited me not.*

But the Want of Faith is here objected to no Man: No one is rewarded, or punished, for believing, or not believing, in Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, or the Real Presence; in Predestination,

or Free-will; or for having, or not having, right or wrong Conceptions of the Trinity in Unity, the Incarnation, Hypostatic Union, Infinite Satisfaction, &c. Nor is the Divine Right of Bishops, Presbyters, and Tithes, once mention'd. Not a Word about Obedience to Spiritual Sovereigns, and Ecclesiastical Princes; or about our receiving the Sacraments from a regular Priest, descended in a right Line from the Apostles.

Such a Religion as this which I have described, is agreeable to the Divine Justice; which does not punish any Man for speculative Opinions, and especially for Opinions which neither do Good nor Hurt to any one, and for Opinions which no one can help. 'This is a Religion every Way worthy of its eternal Author; and we may know by the Doctrine, that it comes from God. It is a Religion for Men of Sense, for Philosophers, for honest Men, and comprehensible too by the meanest Vulgar, without a Guide; a Religion of Reason, free from the blind Mazes, and studied Intricacies of Popish Priests, and beneficial to Society at first View. It despises apish Gestures, and external Buffoonery; and effectually prevents, and puts an End to, all inhumane Fierceness, and holy Squabbles, ever occasioned by the selfish Religions of corrupt Priests. It leaves not unhappy Men in perpetual Doubts and Anxieties, nor tosses and tumbles them, for Relief, out of one Superstition into another; but esteems them all alike.

'In short, this is a Religion, which every wise and honest Man would wish to be Religion; a Religion of Charity, the Religion of JESUS; and this is THE INDEPENDENT WHIG'S Religion.

P O S T S C R I P T.

The Author of this Paper having gone through most of the general Heads of Superstition and Priestcraft, by which the Pagan and Popish Clergy have, for so many Ages, deceived and afflicted Mankind; and having, as he conceives, unanswerably shewn, that they are all in-

consistent with the Establishment of our National Church, and in direct Opposition to Common Sense, as well as the Scriptures, lays down this Paper. It will depend upon the Behaviour of the High-Clergy, whether he will ever resume it, or not. If he should not, he

promises to publish a Dissertation, more fully and at large, to prove from the whole Scope and Intent of the Gospel, as well as from express Texts, that the *Apostles* themselves had no other Power over their Fellow Christians, but that of Persuasion; that they left no Successors behind them; and consequently, that all those who have the Presumption to pretend to that Honour, have no Power, Authority or Jurisdiction, but what they receive from the Laws of the several Christian Countries, or the Consent of voluntary Societies; and receive Pay for doing that which every Christian is at Liberty to do, where he is not restrained by humane Laws.

All the several Papers which have been printed Weekly, shall be speedily published in a Volume, with a Dedication to the Lower House of Convocation: Shewing the Author's Reasons for his Undertaking; with some seasonable Cau-

tions for their future Conduct in this enlightened Age, and in this Protestant Country.

I shall only add in the Author's Behalf, that as his worldly Circumstances could suggest no Motives to him to set up for Independency; he hopes his Countrymen will do him the Justice to believe, that he has acted by the superiour Principles of Religion and Virtue, in daring to attack Vice and Corruption in all their Shapes. He persuades himself, that no Man will doubt but he had his Eyes open, and well saw how many, and how formidable Enemies he should list against himself, by so romantick an Undertaking: As he is therefore very sure, on one hand, to meet all the Resentment and Indignation, which exposed Imposture and disappointed Pride can suggest; so he hopes, on the other, that those who approve his Performance, will give it the Encouragement they think it deserves.