

A D D R E S S

• TO THE
M E M B E R S

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

OF

M A R Y L A N D,

C O N T A I N I N G,

An ACCOUNT of the *Proceedings* of some late CONVENTIONS both of CLERGY and LAITY, for the Purpose of organizing the said Church, and providing a Succession in her Ministry, agreeably to the Principles of the *American Revolution*.

Published by a COMMITTEE of Clerical and Lay-Members, appointed for that Purpose, by a Convention held at Annapolis, June 22d, 1784.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A S E R M O N,

Preached at the Opening of the said Convention,

By WILLIAM SMITH, D.D. PRESIDENT OF THE SAME.

B A L T I M O R E :

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM GODDARD

M D C C L X X I V.

*At a Meeting or Convention of CLERGY and
LAY DELEGATES of the Protestant Epis-
copal Church of Maryland, at Annapolis,
June 22d—24th, 1784. Agreed—*

“ **T**HAT a Committee of three *Clerical* and
“ three *Lay* Members be appointed to
“ digest and publish the *Proceedings* of *this* and
“ such Parts of the *Proceedings* of the former
“ CONVENTION, as they may judge necessary to
“ lay before the Public; and to confer and treat
“ with any *Committees* that may be appointed in the
“ *Sister-States*, for considering and drawing up a
“ Plan of such Alterations in the *Liturgy* of the
“ Church, as may be necessary under the *American*
“ *Revolution* for *Uniformity of Worship*, and *Church*
“ *Government.*”

The Committee of this CONVENTION appointed
for the above Purposes, are—

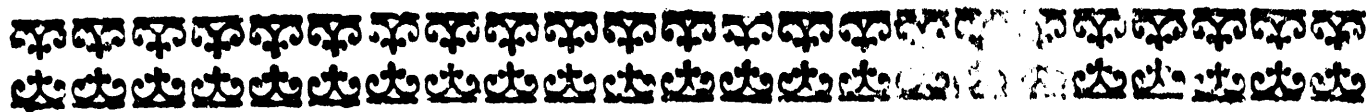
Rev. { WILLIAM SMITH, *D. D. President*,
WILLIAM WEST, *Secretary*, and
JOHN ANDREWS, *A. M.*

RICHARD RIDGELY, *Esq*;
JOSEPH COUDEN, *A. M.* and
Dr. THOMAS CRADOCK.

They are empowered to nominate any Members
of their own Body, not less than *three*, to transact
Business if more cannot possibly attend.

A true Copy.

W M. WEST, *Secretary.*



A N

A D D R E S S

T O T H E

MEMBERS *of the* PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL
CHURCH *in the State of* MARYLAND, &c.

THE Proceedings of the *Clergy and Laity* of this Church, at sundry *Conferences, Meetings, or Conventions* (both jointly and severally) during the three last Years, having no other Object than is in general set forth in the *Title-Page*, and *Minute of Convention*, prefixed to this Address; and our Business, as a *Committee* being to digest and publish those Proceedings, for the Information of all whom it may concern; We shall begin with the first *Petition* to the General Assembly of this State, for a Law towards the Support of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, agreeably to the Provision made in the Bill of Rights. It was the separate Act of a very considerable Number of Vestries, wholly in their Lay Character, and was in the following Words; viz.

To the Honorable the GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of the State of MARYLAND.

The PETITION *of the* VESTRY *and* CHURCH-
WARDENS *of the* Parish of *****
County.

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

THAT it is manifest from *Reason*, as well as the clearer Light of *Revelation*, that the Worship of the ALMIGHTY CREATOR and GOVERNOR of the Universe, is the indispensable Duty of his *dependent* Creatures, and the surest Means of procuring their *temporal* as well as *eternal* Happiness: That, where RELIGION is left unsupported, neither LAWS or GOVERNMENT can be duly administered; And, as the Experience of Ages has shewn the Necessity of a Provision for supporting the Officers
and

and *Ministers of Government*, in all civil Societies; so the like Experience shews the Necessity of providing a Support for the Ordinances and Ministers of Religion—because if either of them [viz. Religion or Government] were left wholly dependent on the Benevolence of Individuals, such is the Frailty of human Nature, and the Averseness of many to their best Interests, that the *Sordid* and *Selfish*, the *Licentious*, and *Prophane*, would avail themselves of such Liberty to shrink from their Share of Labor and Expence, and thereby render that, which would be *easy* when borne by *All*, an intolerable Burden to the *Few*, whose Conscience and Principles of Justice would not permit them in this, or any other Case, to swerve from their Duties, Civil or Religious.

That our pious Ancestors, the worthy and respectable Founders of this State, convinced of the foregoing Truths, and declaring that, “ In every well-grounded Commonwealth, Matters concerning *Religion* ought, in the *first Place*, to be taken into Consideration, countenanced and encouraged; as being not only most acceptable to God, but the best Way and Means of obtaining his Mercy and a Blessing upon a People and Country,” (having the Promises of this Life and of the Life to come) did frame and enact sundry Laws for creating *Churches and Places of public Worship*, the Maintenance of an orthodox Clergy, the Support and Advancement of Religion, and the orderly Administration of its divine and saving Ordinances.

That the Delegates of this State, at the great *Era of our Independence*, in free and full Convention assembled, for the Purpose of establishing a *new Constitution and Form of Government*, upon the Authority of the People, appearing in their Wisdom to have considered some Parts of the said Laws as inconsistent with that *Religious Liberty and Equality of Assessment*, which they intended as the Basis of their future Government; Did, by the 33d Section of the DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, abrogate all such Laws theretofore passed, as enabled any County Courts, on the Application of Vestrymen and Church-Wardens, to make Assessments or Levies for Support of the *Religious Establishment*; but not with a View of being less attentive, than their pious Ancestors had been, to the Interests of RELIGION, LEARNING and GOOD MORALS. On the contrary, by the very same Section, an express Recommendation and Authority are given to future Legislatures, “ At their *Discretion*, to lay a *general and equal Tax* for the Support of the Christian Religion,” agreeably to the said Declaration.

That your Petitioners are sensible of the many urgent civil Concerns, in which the honorable and worthy Legislatures of this State have been engaged, since the Commencement of the present

present great and trying Period; and how much Wisdom and Deliberation are at all Times necessary in framing *equal Laws* for the Support of Religion and Learning, *and more especially amidst the Horrors and Confusions of an expensive, cruel and unrelenting War.* But they are sensible, at the same Time (and persuaded the honorable Assembly are equally sensible) that were RELIGION is left to mourn and droop her Head, while her sacred Ordinances are unsupported, and Vice and Immorality gain Ground, *even WAR itself will be but feebly carried on, Patriotism will lose its most animating Principle, Corruption will win its Way from the lowest to the highest Places, Distress will soon pervade every public Measure; our Churches, our Grave-Yards—the Monuments of the Piety of our Ancestors, running into Ruin, will become the Reproach of their Posterity; nay more, the great and glorious Fabric of public Happiness, which we are striving to build up, and cement with an Immensity of Blood and Treasure, might be in Danger of tumbling into the Dust, as wanting the stronger Cement of Virtue and Religion, or perhaps would fall an easy Prey to some haughty Invader!*

Deeply impressed with these momentous Considerations, *and conceiving ourselves fully warranted by our Constituents, in this Application to your honorable Body, having duly advertised our Design, without any Objections yet notified to us—*Your Petitioners, therefore, most earnestly and humbly pray—

That an Act may be passed, agreeably to the aforesaid Section of the *Declaration of Rights*, for the Support of public Religion, by an equal *Assessment* and Tax, and also to enable the Vestry and Church-Wardens of this Parish, by Rates on the Pews, from Time to Time, or otherwise, as in your Wisdom you shall think fit, to repair and uphold the Church and Chapel, and the Church Yards and Burying Grounds of the same; all which, your Petitioners conceive, may be done, not only for this Parish, but at the same Time, if thought best, for every other Parish within this State (which, it is believed, earnestly desires the same) by a single Law, in a Manner perfectly agreeably to the *Liberty* and Wishes of every Denomination of Men who would be deemed good Christians and faithful Citizens of this State. And your Petitioners, as bound, shall ever pray, &c.

In the foregoing Petition, no exclusive Privilege is PRAYED for, only “That a Law may be passed agreeably to the Bill of Rights, “and to the *Liberty and Wishes of every Denomination of Men, who* “would be deemed good Christians and faithful Citizens of this “State.” And some of the Vestries that presented the Petitions, finding the public Difficulties encreasing, soon afterwards
signed

signified their Desire to the *General Assembly* that all further Consideration of the Matter, might be postponed to a Time of less Distress and Danger.

But on the happy Establishment of *Peace*, his Excellency Governor PACA, in Council, with a truly paternal and pious Care for the Concerns of Religion, as inseparably connected with the Interest of the State, was pleased to revive this important Business, in an Address to the General Assembly (May 6th, 1783) as follows, *viz.*

“ It is far from our Intentions to embarrass your Deliberations with a Variety of Objects; but we cannot pass over Matters of so high Concernment as RELIGION and LEARNING. The Sufferings of the *Ministers* of the Gospel of *all Denominations*, during the War, have been very considerable; and the Perseverance and Firmness of those, who discharged their sacred Functions under many discouraging Circumstances, claim our Acknowledgments and Thanks. The Bill of Rights and Form of Government recognize the Principle of *public Support for the Ministers* of the Gospel, and ascertain the Mode. Anxiously solicitous for the Blessings of Government, and the Welfare and Happiness of our Citizens, and thoroughly convinced of the powerful Influence of Religion, when diffused by its respectable Teachers, we beg Leave most seriously and warmly to recommend, among the first Objects of your Attention, *on the Return of Peace*, the making such Provision, as the Constitution, in this Case, authorizes and approves.”

A Copy of this Address, about a Week after it was delivered to the Assembly, came into the Hands of sundry of the Episcopal Clergy*; who, finding the Concerns of Religion so strongly recommended by the *Executive* to the *Legislative* Part of Government, thought it immediately necessary that there should be a *Council or Consultation of Clergy* held, for the Purpose of considering “ What Alterations might be necessary in our Liturgy and Service; and how our Church might be organized, and a Succession in the Ministry kept up, so as to be an Object of public Notice and Support in common with other Christian Churches under the Revolution.”

It was considered that some *Legislative Interposition* or *Sanction* might probably be necessary in the Course of this Business; for as our Church derived her Liturgy from the Church of England, and was formerly dependent on the same Church for

* They were occasionally assembled at the first Commencement in WASHINGTON-COLLEGE, May, 1783.

for a *Succession* in her Ministry, and had certain Property reserved to her by the Constitution of this State, under the Name of the *Church of England*; it became a Question whether, if any *Alterations* should be made in the *Liturgy*, or in the Mode of *Succession* in the *Ministry*, she could any longer be considered as the *Church* described in the *Constitution of this State*, or entitled to the perpetual Use of the Property aforesaid. An *incorporating Act*, or *Charter* was also deemed necessary to enable the *Clergy* or some Representative Body of the Church, to raise and manage a *Fund* for certain charitable and pious Purposes; such *Charters* having been granted to *Christian Societies* of every Denomination in other of the neighbouring States, wherever they have been prayed for.

Such was the Foundation of the following Petition, which has nothing for its Object but *equal Privileges*; and *prays* for nothing but what the Members of our Church consider as their undoubted Right, and which cannot be called in Question by any who claim and enjoy the like Rights, under the Constitution and Laws of this State.

*To the Honorable the General Assembly of the
State of Maryland.*

*The MEMORIAL and PETITION of the Subscribers,
in behalf of themselves and others the Clergy of
the Episcopal Churches.*

S H E W E T H,

THAT the happy Termination of *War*, the Establishment of *Peace* and the final Recognition and Acknowledgment of the *Sovereignty* and *Independence* of these United States among the Powers of the World, yield a favorable Occasion (which this State in particular hath long desired) of making some permanent Provision, agreeably to the *Constitution*, for "the Ministers of Religion," and the Advancement of useful Knowledge and Literature, through this rising American Empire.

That, in Respect to the *Episcopal Churches* in this State (to the Communion of which so large a Proportion of the good People of Maryland belongs) the following Things are absolutely necessary, *viz.*

1st. That some Alterations should be made in the *Liturgy* and *Service*, in order to adapt the same to the Revolution, and for other Purposes of Uniformity, Concord and Subordination to the State.

2^d. That a Method and Plan for *educating, ordaining, and keeping up* a Succession of able and fit *Ministers or Pastors*, for the Service of the said Churches, agreeably to ancient Practice and their professed Principles, as well as that universal Toleration established by the Constitution, be speedily determined upon, and fixed, under the public Authority of the State, and with the Advice and Consent of the Clergy of the said Churches, after due Consultation had thereupon—

Your Petitioners, therefore, humbly pray—

That the said *Clergy* may have Leave to consult, prepare and offer to the *General Assembly*, the Draft of a Bill, for the good Purposes aforesaid—and your Petitioners, as in Duty bound, shall pray, &c.

Signed,

WILLIAM SMITH,
THOMAS GATES.

The PRAYER of the foregoing Petition was readily granted, and at a *Meeting or Convention* of the Clergy which, in pursuance thereof, was held at Annapolis, 13th August, 1783, one Part of the Proceedings, which according to our Appointment, we come now to lay before the Public, was to nominate a Committee,* “ To prepare the Draft of an *Act or Charter of Incorporation*, to enable the *Episcopal Church* of this State, as a Body Corporate, to hold Goods, Lands and Chattels, by Deed, Gift, Devise, &c. to the Amount of ***** per Annum, as a *Fund* for providing small Annuities to the *Widows* of Clergymen, and for the Education of *their* Children, or any poor Children in general, who may be found of promising Genius and Disposition, for a Supply of Ministers in the said Church, and for other pious and charitable Uses.”

These were the Purposes for which the Committee were *instructed* to prepare the Draft of a Bill, and they were further instructed to bring it forward to the Spring-Sessions of Assembly then

* The Committee consists of three Clergymen of each Shore, viz. the same who are here-in-after named as *Examiners of Candidates* for holy Orders.

then following. But as no Spring-Sessions have been held this Year, the proposed Bill could not yet be brought forward. And whenever it shall be offered to the *Legislative Body*, they will be the best Judges of its Propriety; or may, if they think proper, direct it to be published for Consideration before it is enacted into a Law; and then it will be fully seen, whether it hath any Thing for its Object but what is of *equal and common Right*, as hath been already set forth.

The remaining Business of this *Convention* was to deliberate concerning the Mode of obtaining a *Succession* in the *Ministry*, the Choice of fit Persons for the *different Orders* of the same, and some *fundamental Articles* for future *Uniformity, Concord* and *good Government*, for which Purpose the following were unanimously agreed upon and subscribed, viz.—

A DECLARATION of certain fundamental Rights and Liberties of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland, &c.

WHEREAS by the CONSTITUTION and FORM of Government of this State—"All Persons professing the *Christian Religion* are equally entitled to Protection in their Religious Liberty, and no Person, by any Law, [or otherwise] ought to be molested in his Person or Estate on Account of his religious Persuasion or Profession, or for his religious Practice; unless, under Colour of Religion, any Man shall disturb the good Order, Peace, or Safety of the State, or shall infringe the Laws of Morality, or injure others in their natural, civil, or religious Rights:" And Whereas the *ecclesiastical, and spiritual Independence* of the different religious Denominations, Societies, Congregations, and Churches of Christians in this State, necessarily follows from, or is included in, their *civil Independence*.

WHEREFORE WE the Clergy of the *Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland* (heretofore denominated *the Church of England*, as by Law established) with all Duty to the civil Authority of the State, and with all Love and Good-will to our Fellow-Christians of every other religious Denomination, do hereby declare, make known, and claim, the following, as certain of the *fundamental Rights and Liberties* inherent in and belonging to the said Episcopal Church, not only of *common Right*, but agreeably to the express Words, Spirit and Design of the Constitution and Form of Government aforesaid, viz.

- I. WE consider it as the undoubted Right of the said Protestant Episcopal Church, in common with other Christian Churches under the American Revolution, to compleat and preserve herself as an *entire Church*, agreeably to her ancient Usages and Profession, and to have the full Enjoyment and free Exercise of those purely *spiritual Powers*, which are essential to the Being of every Church or Congregation of the *faithful*, and which, being derived only from CHRIST and his APOSTLES, are to be maintained *independent* of every foreign or other Jurisdiction, so far as may be consistent with the civil Rights of Society.

- II. That ever since the *Reformation*, it hath been the received Doctrine of the Church whereof we are Members (and which by the Constitution of this State is entitled to the perpetual Enjoyment of certain Property and Rights under the Denomination of the *Church of England*) “ That there be these “ *three Orders of Ministers in CHRIST’s Church*, BISHOPS, “ PRIESTS and DEACONS,” and that an *Episcopal Ordination and Commission* are necessary to the valid Administration of the Sacraments, and the due Exercise of the *Ministerial Functions* in the said Church.

- III. That, without calling in Question the *Rights, Modes* and *Forms* of any other Christian Churches or Societies, or wishing the least Contest with them on that Subject, we consider and *declare* it to be an essential Right of the said Protestant Episcopal Church to have and enjoy the Continuance of the said *three Orders of Ministers* forever, so far as concerns Matters *purely spiritual*; and that no Persons, in the Character of Ministers, except such as are in the Communion of the said Church, and duly called to the Ministry by *regular Episcopal Ordination*, can or ought to be admitted into, or enjoy any of the “ Churches, Chapels, Glebes, or other Property,” formerly belonging to the Church of England in this State, and which by the Constitution and Form of Government is secured to the said Church forever, by whatsoever Name, the the said Church. or her superior Order of Ministers, may in future be denominated.

- IV. That as it is the Right, so it will be the Duty, of the said Church, when duly organized, constituted, and represented in a *Synod or Convention* of the different Orders of her Ministry and People, to revise her Liturgy, Forms of Prayer, and public Worship, in order to adapt the same to the late *Revolution*, and other local Circumstances of America; which, it is humbly conceived, may and will be done, without any other
or

or farther Departure from the venerable Order and beautiful Forms of Worship of the Church from whence we sprung, than may be found expedient in the Change of our Situation from a DAUGHTER to a SISTER-CHURCH.

SIGNED, August 13th, 1783.

William Smith, President, St. Paul's & Chester Parishes, Kent-County.

John Gordon, St. Michael's, Talbot.

John M'Pherson, William and Mary Parish, Charles County.

Samuel Keene, Dorchester Parish, Dorchester County.

William West, St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore County.

William Thomson, St. Stephen's, Cecil County.

Walter Magowan, St. James's Parish, Ann-Arundel County.

John Stephen, All-Faith Parish, St. Mary's County.

Tho. Jno. Claggett, St. Paul's Parish, Prince George's County.

George Goldie, King and Queen, St. Mary's County.

Joseph Messinger, St. Andrew's Parish, St. Mary's County.

John Bowie, St. Peter's Parish, Talbot County.

Walter Harrison, Durham Parish, Charles County.

William Hanna, St. Margaret's Westminster Parish, Ann-Arundel County.

Thomas Gates, St. Ann's, Annapolis.

John Andrews, St. Thomas's Parish, Baltimore County.

Hamilton Bell, Stepmey Parish, Somerset County.

Francis Walker, now of Shrewsbury Parish, Kent-County.

} Signed,
June 23d,
1784.

The foregoing *Declaration of Rights* being made and subscribed, a Copy of the same was presented to his Excellency the Governor, with the following Address, viz.

To His Excellency WILLIAM PACA, Esq; Governor and Commander in Chief, &c. &c. of the State of Maryland.

WE the Protestant Episcopal Clergy of the said State, at a Meeting or Convention held at Annapolis this 13th August, 1783, (in pursuance of a Vote of the House of Delegates passed at their last Session) in order to consider, make known and declare those fundamental Christian Rights, to which we conceive ourselves

ourselves entitled, in common with other *Christian Churches*; Do hereby, in the first Place, return your Excellency our most sincere and hearty Thanks for your great Concern and Attention manifested for the Christian Church in general and her *suffering Clergy of all Denominations*. We trust and pray that your Excellency will continue your powerful *Intercession* till some Law is passed for their future Support and Encouragement, *agreeably to the Constitution*.

We herewith lay before your Excellency an authentic Copy of a *Declaration of certain Rights*, to which, according to our best Knowledge of the Laws and Constitution of our Country, we think ourselves entitled, in common with other Churches. Should your Excellency, from your superior Knowledge of both, think that the *Declaration* we have made, stands in need of any further Sanction, *Legislative or otherwise*, we are well persuaded that a Continuance of the same Zeal and Regard which you have formerly shewn, will at Length produce the happy Effect which you so anxiously desire.

Praying for a continued Encrease of your Excellency's public Usefulness, and that you meet the Reward thereof in the World to come,

We are, &c.

[Signed by all the Members, as the above *Declaration of Rights* was signed.]

To which his Excellency was pleased to return the following *Answer*, viz.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE attentively considered the Paper entitled "A Declaration of certain fundamental Rights and Liberties of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland." And as every Denomination of Clergy are to be deemed adequate Judges of their own spiritual Rights, and of the ministerial Commission and Authority necessary to the due Administration of the Ordinances of Religion among themselves, it would be a very partial and unjust Distinction to deny that Right to the respectable and learned Body of the Episcopal Clergy in this State; and it will give me the highest Happiness and Satisfaction, if, either in my individual Capacity, or in the public Character which I now have the Honor to sustain, I can be instrumental in

in advancing the Interests of Religion in general, alleviating the Sufferings of any of her Ministers, and placing every Branch of the Christian Church in this State, upon the most equal and respectable Footing.

I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

WILLIAM P A C A.

Annapolis, 20th August, 1783.

The preceeding Address and Communication to the Governor seeks not to obtain any *exclusive* Privileges or Advantages. It only thanks his Excellency for his “ Great Care and Attention “ manifested for the *Christian Church* in general, and her suffering Clergy of *all Denominations*; and *prays* the Continuance of his powerful Intercession till some Law is passed for their future Support and Encouragement, agreeably to the Constitution.” And, in the same *liberal* and *catholic Spirit*, his Excellency is pleased to answer,—“ That it will give him the highest Happiness and Satisfaction, if either in his individual Capacity or public Character, he could be instrumental in advancing the Interests of Religion in general, alleviating the Sufferings of *any* of her Ministers, and placing every Branch of the Christian Church in this State, upon the most equal and respectable Footing.”

Similar to the foregoing *Declaration of religious Rights*, and partly founded thereon, are the following “ *fundamental Rules* “ or Principles agreed upon at a Meeting of Clergymen and Lay-Delegates from sundry Congregations of the EPISCOPAL CHURCH in the State of PENNSYLVANIA, May 25th, 1784,” and which were communicated to this Convention, viz.

- I. That the *Episcopal Church in these States* is and ought to be independent of all *foreign* Authority, ecclesiastical or civil.
- II. That it hath and ought to have, in common with all other religious Societies, full and exclusive Powers to regulate the Concerns of its own Communion.
- III. That the Doctrines of the Gospel be maintained as now professed by the Church of England; and Uniformity of Worship be continued, as near as may be, to the Liturgy of the said Church.

IV. That

IV. That the *Succession* of the Ministry be agreeably to the *Usage* which requireth the *three* Orders of BISHOPS, PRIESTS, and DEACONS; that the Rights and Powers of the same respectively be ascertained, and that they be exercised according to reasonable Laws, to be duly made.

V. That to make Canons or Laws, there be no other Authority than that of a Representative Body of the Clergy and Laity conjointly.

VI. That no Powers be delegated to a general ecclesiastical Government, except such as cannot conveniently be exercised by the Clergy and Vestries in their respective Congregations.

Signed,

WM. WHITE, Chairman.

We have only here to observe that the general Judgment of all our Churches at this Time, so far as it hath been yet collected, is for the invariable Maintenance of the *three distinct Orders* of our Ministry. It is a Matter that cannot concern any other religious Society, and in which, without entering into any Contest, we have certainly a Right to our own Judgment.

Of the Business transacted at the Clerical Meeting or Convention of August, 1783, there remains only to add the following Minute, viz.

“ The Declaration of certain fundamental Rights, &c. having been unanimously agreed to and subscribed as above, the *Convention* proceeded to take into Consideration the present State of the Church, and the great Distress of many Parishes and Congregations, from the Want of Clergy, or proper Instruction in the Principles of Religion; and it was agreed, that until a regular Ordination of Clergy could be obtained, there should be three Clergymen appointed on each Shore, in order to examine such young Gentlemen as may offer themselves Candidates for Holy Orders in our Church: Such Examination to respect their *moral* Character, their Knowledge in the learned Languages, and Divinity, and their Attachment to the Doctrines of the Christian Religion as professed and taught in our Church; and to recommend such Candidates as (upon such Examination, may be thought worthy) to serve as *Readers* in any Parishes that may think proper to employ them; leaving such Parishes, as to the Administration of the Sacraments, and other proper Functions

tions of the *clerical Character*, to the more immediate Direction of such neighbouring Clergymen, as may agree to visit them occasionally for that Purpose."

The Committee appointed Examiners—

Rev'd. { Dr. William Smith,
Mr. John Gordon, } For the Eastern Shore.
Mr. Samuel Keene }

Rev'd. { Mr. William West,
Mr. Tho. Jno. Claggett, } For the Western Shore.
Mr. Thomas Gates }

The Convention then adjourned to the second Week of the Spring Session of the General Assembly, or until specially called by their *President*, or the *above Committee*. As there was no Spring-Session, it was afterwards agreed, that the President should call a Meeting in June, and that the different Parishes or Vestries should be invited to send Delegates to the same; which produced the

Convention of June 22d, 1784.

This Convention being duly formed, their first Business was to take into Consideration the Proceedings of the Clerical Members at their Meeting in August, 1783; and the *Declaration of certain fundamental Rights*, &c. as above inserted, being laid before them, the Lay-Delegates desired Leave to retire and consult upon the same; and on their Return reported, by Mr. Joseph Couden, that they had read and discussed the same, Paragraph by Paragraph, and unanimously approved thereof.

A Committee of *Clergymen* and *Lay-Delegates* was then appointed to essay a Plan of ecclesiastical Government for the Episcopal Church in this State, and to define therein the Duties of *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons* in *Matters spiritual*; and the Rights and Duties both of Clergy and Laity in *general Synods or Conventions* for the Government of this Church, preserving Uniformity of Worship, and the reclaiming or excluding from Church-Communion scandalous Members whether of the *Clerical* or *Lay Order*.

The aforesaid Committee, not having had Time to essay a full Plan for the Purposes above mentioned, reported the following as some of the fundamental Principles thereof, which were agreed to, viz.

I. That

I. That none of the Orders of the Clergy, whether *Bishops, Priests* or *Deacons*, who may be under the Necessity of obtaining Ordination in any foreign State with a View to officiate or settle in this State, shall, at the Time of their Ordination, or at any Time afterwards, take or subscribe any Obligation of Obedience, *civil* or *canonical* to any foreign Power or Authority whatsoever; nor be admissible into the Ministry of this Church, if such Obligations have been taken for a Settlement in any foreign Country, without renouncing the same by taking the Oaths required by Law as a Test of Allegiance to this State.

II. According to what we conceive to be of true *Apostolic Institution*, the Duty and Office of a *Bishop*, differs in nothing from that of other *Priests*, except in the Power of Ordination and Confirmation; and in the Right of Precedency in ecclesiastical Meetings or Synods and shall accordingly be so exercised in this Church; the Duty and Office of Priests and Deacons, to remain as heretofore. And if any further Distinctions and Regulations in the different Orders of the Ministry should afterwards be found necessary for the good Government of the Church, the same shall be made and established by the *joint Voice and Authority of a Representative Body of the Clergy and Laity*, at future ecclesiastical Synods or Conventions.

III. This third Section is intended to define or discriminate some of the separate Rights and Powers of the Clergy, and was proposed and agreed to as follows, *viz.* That the Clergy should be deemed adequate Judges of the Ministerial Commission and Authority which is necessary to the due Administration of the Ordinances of Religion in their own Church; and of the *literary, moral* and *religious* Qualities and Abilities of Persons fit to be nominated and appointed to the different Orders of the Ministry; but the approving and receiving such Persons to any particular Cure, Duty or Parish, when so nominated, appointed, set apart, consecrated and ordained, is in the People who are to support them, and to receive the Benefit of their Ministry.

IV. The fourth Section provides that Ecclesiastical Conventions or Synods of this Church, shall consist of the Clergy and one Lay-Delegate or Representative from each Vestry or Parish, or a Majority of the same; and shall be held annually on the 4th Tuesday in October, unless some Canon or Rule should be made at some future Convention, for altering the Time of Meeting, or for Meeting oftener than once a Year, or not so often, or with a larger or smaller Representation of the Church, as may be judged necessary. But fundamental Rules, once duly made, shall not be altered unless two Thirds of such Majority as aforesaid, duly assembled, shall agree therein.

The remaining Proceedings of the Clerical Meeting of August, 1783, having been read and approved of, and it being thought reasonable that for the future every *third Meeting* should be held on the *Eastern Shore*, the Convention adjourned to meet at the Town of *Chester* the *fourth Tuesday of October* next; when, from the Importance of the Business to be yet settled, it is hoped that there will be a full Meeting as well of the *Clergy* as of *Representatives* from the different *Vestries* and *Parishes*.

WILLIAM SMITH,

R. RIDGELY,

WM. WEST,

THOS CRADOCK.

JOHN ANDREWS,

N. B. JOSEPH COUDON, one of the Lay Committee, had not Notice in Time to attend the other Members at Baltimore for digesting these Proceedings.

P. S. The following *Heads of additional Articles* which could not be taken up at the last *Convention*, have been proposed as *some of the Matters* necessary to be more fully provided for in the Plan of Ecclesiastical Government, by the next *Convention*, and are here added for Consideration, viz.

- I. That the Power and Authority necessary for reclaiming or excluding *scandalous Members*, whether *Lay* or *Clerical*, and all Jurisdiction with regard to Offenders, be exercised only by a Representative Body of Clergy and Laity jointly.
- II That the Power of suspending or dismissing Clergymen from the Exercise of their Ministry, in any particular Church, Parish or District, be by the like Authority.
- III. That all Canons or Laws for Church Government, and all Alterations, Changes or Reforms in the Church Service and Liturgy, or in Points of Doctrine to be professed and taught in the Church, shall also be by the like joint Authority.
[N. B. The fourth Article of the foregoing *Declaration of Rights* seems to provide for this--But it may be further explained if necessary.]

a *Convention* of Clergy and Lay Delegates of the *Protestant Episcopal Church* in the State of Maryland, held at Chester on the 4th Tuesday of October. 1784. in Pursuance of the 4th Constitution made at Annapolis June 22d, 1784.

The following **ADDITIONAL CONSTITUTIONS** or Rules, respecting the future Discipline and Government of this Church, *annual Conventions*, &c. were agreed upon, viz.

I. General Conventions of this Church, consisting of the different Orders of the Clergy and Laity, duly represented (agreeably to the *Fourth Constitution* aforesaid), shall have the *General Cognizance* of all Affairs necessary to the Discipline and good government, of the Church; including particularly——
 the Power and authority necessary for reclaiming or excluding from Church Privileges *scandalous Members* whether *lay or Clerical*, and all Jurisdiction with Regard to Offenders; the Power of suspending or dismissing Clergymen (of all orders) from the Exercise of their Ministry in this Church; the framing, approving of or confirming all Canons or Laws for Church Government, and such Alterations or Reforms in the *Church Service, Liturgy or Points of Doctrine* as may be afterwards found necessary or expedient by our Church in this State, or of the United States in General Conventions. And all Matters that shall come before the Convention, the Clergy and Laity shall deliberate *in one Body*; but if any Vote shall be found necessary, or be called for by any two Members, they shall vote separately; that is to say, the Clergy in their different Orders, according to their own Rules, shall have one Vote; and the Laity according to their Rules shall have another Vote; and the Concurrence of both shall be necessary to give Validity to any Measure or Rule.

II. Future Conventions shall frame and establish Rules or Canons for receiving *Complaints*; and shall annually appoint a *Committee* consisting of an equal Number of Clergy and Laity including the *Bishop*, when there shall be one duly consecrated, among the Number of the Clergy;) which Committee shall have standing authority, Government and Jurisdiction agreeably to such Rules as may be given them for that Purpose) in all Matters respecting the Discipline and Government of the Church, that may arise or be necessary to be proceeded upon, during the Recess or Adjournment of General Conventions; all which Rules shall be framed, and jurisdiction exercised in Conformity to the *Constitution and Laws of this State*.

HIS EXCELLENCY
WILLIAM PACA, ESQUIRE,
GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER IN CHIEF
OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, &c.

THE FOLLOWING
SERMON,
PREACHED

BEFORE A CONVENTION OF CLERICAL AND LAY MEMBERS,

OF THE
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In the said State, at *Annapolis*, June 23^d, 1784,

IS INCRIBED,

IN SINCERE TESTIMONY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT,

AS WELL OF HIS

PUBLIC ZEAL AND REGARD FOR THE INTERESTS OF

RELIGION AND LEARNING

IN HIS COUNTRY;

AS OF THE

PRIVATE FRIENDSHIP AND ESTEEM,

WITH WHICH,

FROM AN EARLY PERIOD OF HIS LIFE,

HE HATH HONORED

HIS MOST AFFECTIONATE

AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



Annapolis, June 22d, 1784.

THE Convention having assembled at the *State-House*, it was “ Unanimously requested That
“ the Revd. Dr. SMITH would open the Business of
“ the Meeting, with a DISCOURSE To-morrow
“ at 11 o’Clock, A. M. and that the Revd. Mr.
“ KEENE would read *Prayers*.”

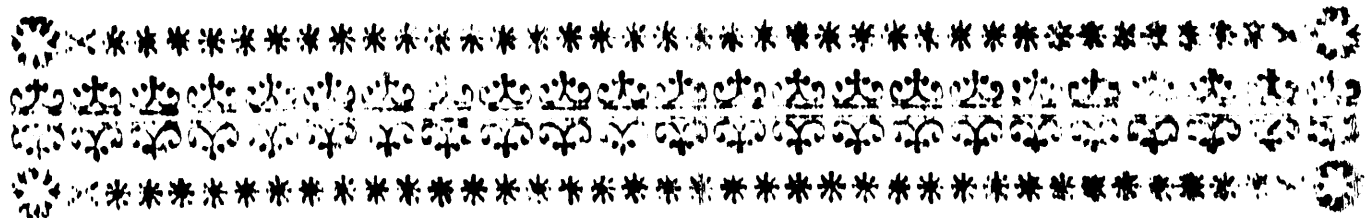
June 23, P. M.

“ The Thanks of this Convention were returned
“ to the Revd. Dr. SMITH for his most excellent
“ DISCOURSE, delivered in the Morning, and a
“ Request was made that a Copy might be given
“ for the Press.”

A true Copy from the Minutes.

W M. W E S T, *Secretary.*





Λ

S E R M O N, &c.

2 Tim. Ch. i. Ver. 13, 14,—and Ch. iv. Ver. 3, 4.

Hold fast the *form of sound Words* which thou hast heard of me in Faith and Love which is in Christ Jesus---That good Thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us-----

For the Time will come when they will not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts shall heap to themselves *Teachers*, having itching Ears, and they shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto Fables-----

IN this very adventurous and inquisitive Day, when Men spurning their Kindred-Earth, on which they were born to tread, will dare, on airy (or *Balloon*) Wing to soar into the Regions of the Sky; were it the Pleasure of our Almighty Creator to purge any of us Mortals of our terrestrial Dross, and to place us, in good Earnest, upon some distant Orb, from which with clear and serene View, *corporeal* as well as *intellectual*, we could survey this World of ours—what a strange Scene would it appear? Itself, in the Rank of Worlds, dwindled into a small Mole-Hill; and Men, the little Emmets upon it, bustling and driving and crossing each other, as if there were no settled *Walk of Life*, no *common Tie*, or “FORM OF SOUND WORDS TO BE HELD FAST OF ALL, IN FAITH AND LOVE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS!

In our *intellectual* View, from this Eminence of Station, we should behold one sett of Men boasting of the all-sufficient and transcendent Power of REASON as their *Rule and Guide*, yet all wandering through *different* Tracts in the same Pursuits of HAPPINESS and PEACE! We should find another sett of Men declaring themselves the special Favorites of Heaven, directed by a glorious INWARD LIGHT, communicated (or as they apprehend, communicated

communicated) immediately from the everlasting *Fountain of all Light*; yet neither should we perceive them to be travelling in the same *common Way*! But, *thirdly*, we should find another Set of Men, and those of truly respectable and venerable Name, professing themselves guided *only* by a *sure* and written FORM OF SOUND WORDS, *revealed* and given to them for their *Instruction* and *Salvation*, by their ALMIGHTY CREATOR himself---Yet, Alas! they would be seen, perhaps, almost as irregular and eccentric in all their Motions as the Rest!

This is a sad View of Things---and as the Poet says---

“ In *Pride*, in *reasoning Pride*, the Error lies,
“ All quit their Sphere and *rush into the Skies*!”

And would to God, therefore, that, in all *Religions* and in all *Sciences*, this accursed Root of *Bitterness* and *Contrariety* could be wholly plucked out. For until HUMANITY and divine CHARITY can have their Sway, until our FAITH is exercised in LOVE, and the TRUTHS of GOD are held in RIGHTEOUSNESS OF LIFE, there will never be a total Harmony among Men!

However strong our *Reason*, however *enlightened* our Souls, however ardent our *Faith*; unless that Spirit of *Love* and *Humility* be in us, which was in CHRIST JESUS, all besides will be of little Value.

With good Reason, therefore, does St. PAUL admonish his beloved TIMOTHY to let his *Faith* be exercised in *Love*, and “ to hold fast the *Form of sound Words* which he had heard of “ him;” for even in those early Days, some had begun to depart from the Foundation laid by CHRIST and his *Apostles*; following “ vain Babblings,” being like withered Leaves, sticking to the Tree, only to be blown away by the first *Wind of Doctrine*; still desiring to hear some *new Thing*; led by the *Ear* and not by the *Heart*, or as it is strongly expressed in my Text, “ heaping “ to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears, &c.”

A venerable old Luminary of our Church, soon after the *Reformation*, preaching even before Princes and Nobles, has a most severe Stroke of *Irony* against this *itching Humour*, according to the honest and indignant (altho’ perhaps blunt) Satyr of the Times. It is to the following * Effect---

“ All

* This Quotation is made from the strong Impression which the Sentiment made upon the Author’s Memory, many Years ago, on reading over the Works of the old Divines of the Church of England; and he thinks the Words are those of *Bishop Andrews*. But as the Author

“ All is HEARING, now a-days--- No *Fruits*---The EAR is all!
 “ and if it were not for our EAR-MARK, no Man could tell we
 “ were CHRISTIANS!”

But, if I may pursue the Allusion, it is not the *Ear-Mark* but the *Heart-Mark*, by which at the great Day of Accounts, we shall be known and acknowledged as belonging to *Christ's Sheep-fold* in the other World; nor is it the despising *sound Doctrine*, nor following vain Fables and still seeking *something new*, that can denominate us of his Flock in this World.

This whole Epistle of St Paul to Timothy (in whose Character as a *Preacher* of the Gospel he appears peculiarly interested) is intended to stir him up, and all Preachers and Friends of the Gospel after him, to Diligence and Zeal in maintaining and enforcing its divine Truths against Heresies and Corruptions.---

“ I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who
 “ shall judge the World at his appearing, and Kingdom”---
 And what does he charge in this awful Manner? It is a CHARGE which, as it may be drawn from the whole of this Epistle, it becomes all the *Preachers* of the Gospel of every Age and Denomination to *hear*, and (thro' Grace) to *follow* with Reverence and Awe.---

“ I charge thee, preach the Word”---even the eternal Word of Truth and Salvation by Jesus Christ, or, as he has it a little above---“ Stir up the Gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my Hands.” Consider thyself as called and separated to this great Work of the Ministry, according to the *true Appointment* of Christ, “ by THE PUTTING ON OF AN APOSTLE'S HANDS.” Wherefore, “ be instant in Season and out of Season.” Let no Occasion escape you either in public or private, in Times of Ease or Times of Difficulty. Be not dismayed, nor fear the Powers of this World; “ for God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear, but of Power, of Love and of a sound Mind;” and therefore, “ Reprove, Rebuke”---Reprove Transgression and Sin, even tho' cloathed with Terror and seated in high Places. “ Be not ashamed of the Testimony of our Lord;” but hold it forth boldly against whatever
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Author never made any *Common-Place* of his Reading, and composed this Sermon, or rather threw it together, on a few Hours Notice, to suit the *Occasion* on which he was to appear; he cannot be sure that he retains any Thing more than the general Sentiments of those respectable *Divines*, upon whose Writings and Sentiments of Orthodoxy, he endeavoured to form himself in his Youth, and which he hath never scrupled *freely to make Use of* in his Pulpit-Compositions. In this Sermon he hath fully delivered his Sentiments, as to whatever may be pretended *new* in the *Divinity* of the Gospel.

is at Enmity to his Cross, and the Truth and Spirit of his holy Religion. Be not weary nor faint in this great Work; but, if thereunto called, “ Be thou Partaker of the Afflictions of the Gospel, according to the Power of God, who hath saved us “ and called us with an holy Calling.”----

Thus, in all Trials and Conditions, continue stedfast in the Faith of Jesus, and “ exhort with all Long Suffering and [soundness of] Doctrine;” leaving the Success and Issue in the Hands of our great Master and Judge----“ For the Time will “ come” (when the preaching of the Gospel may not have any visible Influence on the Hearts of many, nay a Time) “ when “ they will endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts “ shall heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears, and “ shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto Fables.”

In these Words are described with wonderful Majesty and Simplicity, the chief Obstacles to the Success of the *preached Gospel*, and the Establishment of the KINGDOM OF JESUS in the *Hearts of Men*.

They will not endure sound Doctrine. They will not, by Faith resign their Spirits to the holy Influence and Direction of the Spirit of God. Whatever runs contrary to their *carnal and unrenewed Affections*, they wish to reject; never considering that the *Gospel of Christ* was not intended, by its divine Author, to flatter our corrupt Lusts, or gratify the Irregularities of Sense and unsubdued Appetite; but to reform the Heart and regulate the Will; or, as it is more fully and beautifully expressed by our Apostle, “ to cast down Imaginations and every high Thing “ that exalteth itself against the *Knowledge of God*, and to bring “ into Captivity every Thought to the *Obedience of Christ*.”

Thus it is that Men turn away their Eyes from the pure *Light* of the Gospel, because it would render their *Darkness* visible. They seek to follow the Shadow of Truth and “ cunningly devised Fables,” in order to stifle their own Convictions, and gain a *temporary Quiet*, rather than strive, through the Grace offered them, to cast down all vain Imaginations, and yield to their great Creator that pure *Worship of the Heart*, that *Evangelical Obedience* and *Righteousness of Life*, which Christ died to establish; and by which only we can derive true Peace and everlasting Joy;--so true it is (what the Scriptures tell us) that where “ the Gospel is hid, it is hid to them whom the God of “ this World hath blinded.”

This perverseness of Temper subsisted in the Hearts of Men, even before "the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, shone unto them." Men had then, at least, the Light of Conscience and natural Reason (and one People had also the Law and the Prophets super-added) as their Rule and Guide. But these were disregarded by far too many; and when their *Livés* became corrupted, they corrupted their *Reason*, their *Conscience*, their Rules of *Wisdom* and *Religion* also; fashioning the Whole to their own *Imaginations*, and opening the Way to all that **IGNORANCE** and **IDOLATRY**, which *Philosophers* and *Patriarchs*, *holy Men* and *Prophets*, *Patriots* and *Lawgivers*, strove in vain to eradicate or destroy. For, as our Apostle tells us, God did not leave even the Heathen World without a Witness in their Hearts; because "The *invisible Things* of him from the "Creation of the World were *clearly seen*, being [to be] understood by the *Things that are made*; namely his **ETERNAL POWER AND GODHEAD**-----visible and speaking in the Hearts of Men, through his great and gracious *Works of Creation and Providence!*

But Men revolted against the GOD WITHIN THEM, "and became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Hearts were darkened;" so that professing "themselves to be wise [in their own Conceits] they became *foolish*, and changed the Glory of the **INCORRUPTIBLE GOD** into an Image made like unto *corruptible Man*, and *Birds* and four-footed *Beasts* and *creeping Things*."

The like Corruptions (I need not mention it to a Christian Audience) are recorded, for our Instruction, to have taken Place among the *Jewish Nation*, under the *Law and the Prophets*. And, alas! how short a Time was the GOSPEL OF CHRIST received (as we learn from our Apostle and other sacred Writers) before some who had been baptized into the *Name of Christ*, fell from their *Faith*; "denying the Lord that bought them, and through Covetousness, with feigned Words, making Merchandize of Souls." From *SIMON MAGUS* downwards they began to heap to themselves Teachers;" dividing the Christian World with endless Disputes and Speculations about the *Form and Shadow* of RELIGION, neglecting the *Substance*; till, at Length, scarce any where could be found that *Purity of Manners*, that *Simplicity of Life*, that *Spirit of Truth and Love*, that *holy Zeal and Forbearance*, that *Simplicity and Beauty of Holdings*, which were the Glory of **PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY**.

It became almost a *Vain Doctrine*, that Jesus Christ had come into the World to blot out the *Hand-writing of Ordinances*, or nail them to his Cross. For in what was then considered as the

universal Christian Church, the Inventions of Men were more and more multiplied, and the pure Light of the Gospel obscured, until at Length it was almost wholly overshadowed or hid under an enormous Pile of Rubbish, and *Superstition*, and *Pageantry*, and *Idol-worship* and *bodily Servitude*, more monstrous and burdensome than all the *Idolatry* of the Jews, or even the *barbarous Rites* of the GENTILES!

Yet God, of his infinite Goodness, in those corrupt Ages of the Church, did not leave himself wholly without some *chosen Witnesses*, who contended for the FAITH *once delivered to the Saints*, till at Length, after the long Night of *Darkness* and *Error*, the Day dawned, and the glorious SUN OF THE GOSPEL again shone forth under the BLESSED REFORMATION; when our Fathers, the *Founders*, or rather the *Restorers*, of the Church whereof we profess ourselves the Members, bore an illustrious Part (many of them with the Price of their Blood) in throwing down the vast Fabric of *Straw and Stubble*, and *building* again upon the pure and stable Foundation, that *Rock of Ages which is CHRIST!* True Religion again lifted up her radiant Head in ours and other *reformed Churches*, who “Sought the good old Way to walk therein, that so they might find Rest to their Souls.” They turned their Hearts to the TRUTH as it is in JESUS, and did not seek to be *turned into Fables*. For TRUTH is *ancient*, and whatever any *Reformers* may propose that is *altogether new*, we may well suspect to be *altogether false*; the RELIGION OF THE GOSPEL being stamped with this great & character of its adoreable Author, that it is *the same to Day, Yesterday and for ever!*

But it is a Misfortune incident to our *imperfect Condition* in this World, that the best Things may be abused. That LIBERTY which is necessary for repelling *temporal* as well as *spiritual Bondage*---that *Freedom of Debate and Enquiry* which ought to be maintained for the further Investigation and Dissemination of Truth in a liberal, enlightened and philosophic Age---all these may be perverted and abused! Even with the broad Day-light of the Gospel shining round us, and while that CHURCH* which was once the great *Bar* to *Christian Reformation*, is now giving most comfortable and edifying Proofs of a contrary Temper, and of

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* The Rev. Mr. Charles Henry Robertson of Maryland, but late Chaplain to the Roman Catholic Society in the City of Worcester in England, has the following truly candid and liberal Remark, in most excellent “Stating the Motives which induced him to relinquish their Communion and become a Member of the Protestant Church.

“From my own Observation I am happy to assure them, that the Roman Church in this, as well as in *many other Particulars*, is daily undergoing a silent Reformation. The dark Monsters of PERSECUTION and BIGOTRY are retreating gradually before the Light of genuine RELIGION and PHILOSOPHY. Mankind begins to blush that near fifteen Centuries have been necessary to convince them, that HUMANITY and TOLERATION are essential Branches of the RELIGION OF JESUS.”

an enlarged and tolerating Spirit (except so far, Alas! as she yet finds it convenient to accommodate Religion to worldly Purposes)---I say, even amidst this Abundance of *Light* and *Liberty*, this general reforming Spirit, Occasion hath been taken to *reform too much*, to fill the World, as of old, with Disputes and Distinctions totally unessential to *Christianity*, and destructive of its true Spirit, when set in Opposition to the weightier Matters of the Law --- *Vital Piety* and true *evangelical Obedience*.

Thus, too many seem to run a constant Round from Error to Truth, and from Truth to Error back again---

“ As if Religion were intended

“ For nothing else---but to be *mended* ;* ” ---there being scarce a Folly of all the ancient Corruptions of Christianity, which might not be shown to be now acting over again, by some *Novel-Set* or another of the present Day!

How long, Alas! how long shall such Things be! How long shall Circumstantials prevail over Essentials, embittering the followers of the lowly Jesus, and “ enflaming their Breasts with “ a Madness even unto Death?”

The first Christians were the Admiration of the World for their *Love* and *Union* in their humble and *suffering* State. And will nothing less than *suffering*, will not the Spirit of the Gospel itself, prevail on us to remove this Stone of stumbling,---to wipe away this Reproach of our Profession, and to heal our unchristian Breaches!

Why should those part on Earth, who all wish to meet again in Heaven? Although a perfect *Union* in lesser Matters may not be attainable, nor perhaps needful, in this World; yet the Want of this could never lead to a Breach of *Unity in Affection*, if Men would not lay *Stress*, where God has laid none. *Unity of Judgment* is, indeed, a great Ornament of Christianity and needful to its WELL-BEING; but *Unity of Affection* is essential to its very BEING and EXISTENCE, and was the great *Badge* by which Christ declared his Disciples should be known. “ By this shall all Men “ know that ye are my Disciples, if ye *love* one another.” If, therefore, upon every slight Notion or Apprehension, we cast this Badge away, we are none of his.

Those Things which he hath declared necessary to our Salvation, as might well be expected from so wise and merciful a Lawgiver, are so clear as not to be easily mistaken by an honest Mind; and they have all this *plain Mark*, that they tend to make Men *wiser* and *better*; whereas those Things that occasion so much *unchristian Noise* and *uncharitable Censure* in the World, are, for the most Part but Points of doubtful Speculation; in which good Men might suffer each other to be at rest, according to that

that Measure of Light which they have attained. For why should an Agreement in some poor controversial Point of Faith or Doctrine, be set in eminent Place above all other Virtues or Graces, and made the Badge of our Christianity? Surely, Brethren---and I will repeat it again and again---there is a greater Weight of Religion in the evangelic Grace of *Charity*, in one Sigh of *Good-will to Men*, than in all the doubtful Questions about which the Protestant Churches have been puzzling themselves, and biting and devouring each other since the Days of their Reformation!

Thus to seek our Religion in *Things without us*, is to seek the *Living* among the *Dead*. The Gospel of Christ teaches far different Things. It teaches us to look for God and Religion *within us*;---that we are to be renovated and strengthened by the *intellectual Touches* of his *divine Spirit* upon our *Spirits*;---that we are to “taste and see that he is good,”---see with our Eyes, hear with our Ears and handle with our Hands the **WORD OF LIFE**. And the Marks of this *gracious State*, this *experimental Knowledge* and *vital Religion* will be manifested, not in loud and lofty Pretensions to superior Knowledge and Sanctity; but by the calm Fruits of Love and good Works ---in Mildness, Serenity and Resignation of the whole Soul to God.

But too many, letting go their Hold of the *Form of sound Words*, and substituting or mistaking mere mechanical Motions-- the Fervors of heated Imagination ---for the true and active Signs of Grace, those living Impulses of God on the Soul, are often carried into the wildest Extravagances. Fetching the Marks of their Religion from the Notions of visionary or mystical Men, instead of looking for them in the Life and Gospel of Christ, **they** let their Passions to work, and at Length persuade or terrify themselves into all those *Experiences* and *Feelings*, which pass, in their Creed, as the Evidences of Salvation.

Enraged up by such strong Delusions, they think “they have built their Mansions among the Stars, have ascended above the Moon, and left the Sun under their Feet;” while they are still but like their *Kindred-Meteors*, which having scarce mounted to the middle Regions are precipitated downwards again by their own gross and earthly Particles! A Devotion worked up by Fervor, whatever proceeds from the mere Force of animal Spirits is of the *Earth, earthy*; in no Manner like to that true Spirit of Regeneration which is of the *Lord from Heaven*, and begets the divine Life in the Souls of Men. This true *celestial Warmth* will never be extinguished, being of an immortal Nature; and, when once vitally seated in the Heart, it does not work by Fits and Starts, but expands itself more and more, regulating, purifying and exalting the whole *inward Man*!

It is, indeed, of great Importance that we should be grounded in our Principles, and adhere to the *Form of sound Words*, as my Text directs us---But we must not stand still at *Principles* or *Doctrines*, but, “go on to Perfection.” Our *Faith* must not be a mere *empty Assent* to the TRUTH, but the HOLDING THE TRUTH IN LOVE. It is *Love* that shews our *Faith* to be genuine. By this it must work, and by this only can God be well pleased. For *Love* flowing from *Faith* is the Hand-writing of God on the Heart. Whatever proceeds from it will *bear his Image and Superscription*. He will know it as his own, and openly acknowledge as such, before Men and Angels, at the last Day.

This FRUIT of LOVE is what St. Paul every where holds up for the *Trial of our Faith and Spirits*.---“The *Fruits* of the Spirit “are *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Temperance* and the like!” All other Marks of the Soundness of our Faith, except these Gospel-Marks, namely *the Fruits of the Spirit*, are only a dangerous Ministration of Fuel for *inflammable Tempers*, or of *Despair* to those of a contrary Frame.

How think you, Brethren, shall the *Branch* of a *Tree* most safely know whether it derives Sap from the *Body and Root*? Is it by tracing minutely all the *Vessels and Canals* thro’ which the Moisture is ever silently flowing? This would be too intricate a Labor. But to find itself covered with *Leaves, Flowers* and FRUIT, leads to a sure Conclusion.

Far be it from me to question what may pass on the inner Stage of a Man’s Heart; or to deny that God, who pervades and actuates the whole *material World* with his Goodness, should not also delight to influence the *World of Spirits*, and to give *Testimony to the Souls of Men* in every Thing well-pleasing to him. This World were a most gloomy Scene without the Belief of God’s active Presence and applauding Testimony.

My Text is LOVE. I would not do Violence to my Subject. My Disposition forbids uncharitable Censure---I would judge no Man’s Heart, nor seek to weaken those comfortable ~~Workings~~ *Workings* or Experiences which any may apprehend there. ~~But~~ I would warn and exhort all “who think they stand, to take heed “lest they fall.”---And especially, if they think they have ascended high, and skip like *Rees on the Mountains*, let them remember that the greater their Height, the more will it be necessary to have all their own *Eyes* about them. Let them not look down in Scorn upon those who walk humbly on through the *Vale below*; lest thereby they miss their own Tract, and be precipitated with the greater Ruin. Whoever may think to climb up to God, and by *immediate Vision* or Illumination to read in his effulgent Countenance their own *special Favor*, will (it may be

be

be feared) find their Wings scorched, their Wax melted, and fall down from this towering Height of ungrounded Persuasion!

Safer far, most surely it is, to discover the Conformity of our Souls to God's Will, through the reflected Light of his *written Word*. The *Lamb's Book of Life* is a great *Mystery*, reserved for himself to open at the *last Day*. Who, then, shall think to open it *immediately* and read its *awful Secrets*, either concerning himself or others?

All Ages have witnessed numerous Delusions from this Source. The Heart of Man is very deceitful, and *Evil* will often pass upon us for *Good*; even as SATAN, for certain Purposes, will sometimes transform himself into an ANGEL OF LIGHT.

Hence it is that, among Men, *spiritual Pride* will assume the Guise of extraordinary Sanctity; *Censoriousness* will pass for a just *Reproof of Sin*; gloomy Severity for *Strictness of Conscience*; *Backbiting and busy Meddling* with the Affairs of others, as a zealous *Concern for their Reformation*; our own *Prejudices* or *hasty Conceptions*, as *Improvements in the Modes of Faith*; vain *Phantasies* for *divine Impulses*; and a *Fierceness* for the particular *Shibboleths* of Party, as a *Zeal for the Essentials of Christianity*!---But, be assured that none of these Things have the Stamp of JESUS on them. His Wisdom begets and teaches far different Things. It is the modest, humble, ingenuous, charitable Spirit that denominates the true Believer; and whenever we see any Sect or Party of Men more closely linked to each other, by their *peculiarities of Thinking*, than the great Law of GOSPEL CHARITY can bind them to the whole *Houshold of Faith*,---to all sincere Christians---we may well doubt whether such Ties can be of God!

Love and Good-will to our Fellow-Travellers, through this *Valley of Tears* to a better Country, as it is above all speculative Points of *Belief*, so it is the true Mark of our own *Belief*. To multiply *Matters of Faith* by *human Inventions*, and to let our Zeal run out in Things of this Nature, is to weaken Charity and to tempt God. It is to be for ever laying Foundations, neglecting the Superstructure, and forgetting St. Paul's Judgment, that *concerning such Things we trouble not the Brethren*.

We should all be Workers together in building up the *Body of Christ's Church*. But what Sort of Building must that be where the Hearts and Tongues of the Builders are at Variance with each other? Where there is no *Unity of Design*, but Envyings, Strifes and Confusions among the Workmen? Where some Members will attach themselves immoderately to some particular Points of Faith or Doctrine; where they will not bear the *whole Truth*, nor fully ponder the *Form of sound Words*; where they are full of *Censure and Bitterness*; pronouncing even their Instructors *ignorant or carnal*, who labor with all Conscience to lay before them

them the *whole Counsel of God*; and desert their *stated Ordinances*, following after *cunningly devised Fables*, and *heaping to themselves Teachers having itching Ears*?

Can this be the true Fruits of the Spirit, or tend to the Edification, or building up the Body of Christ's Church? I would speak with great Love, but with great Plainness too---This may build up the WALLS OF A BABEL, but cannot rear up the WALLS OF JERUSALEM, which is to be a *City of Peace*, at Unity within itself.

Unbelievers, too, receive great Triumph at this. In vain do we tell them that "our Religion is divine and worthy of all Acceptation." Their Answer is at Hand---"If you would be called the Disciples of Christ, shew us that you have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you. Shew us the Divinity of your Religion by its Influence on your Lives. First be agreed among yourselves what your Religion is, before you press it for our Acceptance. Were it truly divine, it would be so clear and explicit as not to be easily mistaken by an honest Enquirer, nor to admit of the least Controversy in Points of Faith. Would a Religion from God kindle the Wild-Fire of unhallowed Zeal, or Sanctify Wrath, and Railings, and Persecutions, and Frauds, and Perjuries, and even Murders to do God Service?"

These Charges, Brethren, have had their Answers. For from the Abuse against the Use there is no Conclusion. But the most powerful Answer would be in our own Lives as CHRISTIANS; bringing our Religion down from our Heads to our Hearts, and following that divine Law of Love, which is the very Spirit of the GOSPEL!

What need I spend more of your Time in applying the Doctrine of my Text to the present Occasion of our Meeting?---an Occasion (I will only add) on which if you could be indulged to hear the Voice of an Apostle or Angel from God, he would preach to you---LOVE AND UNITY!

Consider that you are Members of a Church, which is acknowledged by all the Christian World to teach the Doctrine of the Gospel, and to hold fast the *form of sound Words*, the Faith once delivered to the Saints---a Church which has given to the World a long and illustrious List of eminent Divines, pious Preachers and even glorious Confessors and Martyrs for the Truth as it is in Jesus.

But in this Country, at present such is her State, that she calls for the pious Assistance and united Support of all her true Sons, and of the Friends of Christianity in general. Besides a Famine of the *preached Word*, her *sound Doctrines* are deserted by many, who “turn away their Ears from the Truth” as taught by her, and heap to themselves Teachers as described in the Text. But let us leave all such to God and their own Consciences---If they have but weighed Matters seriously, and have not suffered themselves to be imposed upon by *cunningly devised Fables*---they have a Right to follow St. Paul’s Advice and to be *persuaded in their own Mind*. If the KINGDOM OF JESUS be promoted, by whatsoever Means and Instruments, let us with the same Apostle have Joy therein; Some, says he, preach Christ even of Envy and Strife, supposing to add Afflictions to my Bonds---Notwithstanding this, every Way, whether in Pretence or Truth, CHRIST IS PREACHED; and therein do I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.---As to those who profess *not to oppose our Church*, but to be *Fellow-Workers* with us in the same great Cause, nay, to go beyond us in all godly Zeal and Holiness--let us be roused by their Example and pray them *God-speed*. A Time will come when whatever is intemperate and new-fangled in Religion will be done away, or lost and swallowed up in *Christian Charity*; and those who have been tossed upon the Ocean of Doubt and Uncertainty, will again seek for Rest and Comfort in the Bosom of the true Church of Christ.

It is not from such that *our Church* receives her chief Wounds. It is from the Luke-warmness and growing Indifference of her own professed Members---who are supplied with the *Word* and *Doctrine*, but know not how to value the Things that belong to our Peace until they are now almost *hid from our Eyes*! Any Excuse of Weather, any worldly Avocation of Pleasure or Profit, any hasty Grudge or Prejudice against the Ministers of Religion, will induce many to neglect the Worship of their great Creator. Too many more are spoiled or staggered in their *Faith* by what is called the *free* and *Philosophic*, but more truly, the *loose* and *libertine* Principles of the present Day. Many others, from a selfish and niggardly Spirit, or from a Dissipation of their Substance in Luxury and Intemperance, will not, or cannot, yield the *Mite* which is necessary for supporting the Ordinances of Religion. Thus they become ashamed to appear in the Place of God’s Worship, leaving the Burden of all upon a few, whose Conscience and the awful Dread of an Account to be given hereafter, will not suffer them to desert their Master’s Gospel, to renounce their *Baptism*, and trample under Foot the *Blood of the Covenant wherewith they are sanctified*.

Hence Religion mourns, and the Houses and Altars of God, erected by the Piety of our Forefathers, are deserted and running into Ruin. The Tempests beat and the Winds howl thro' the shattered Roofs and mouldering Walls of our Places of Worship; while our Burying-Grounds and Church-Yards, the Graves, the Monuments, and the Bones of our Fathers, Mothers, Brothers, Sisters, Children, and Friends, are left open and unprotected from the Beasts of the Field; as if all our Care was only to succeed to the Honors, the Estates and Places of Emolument which belonged to our Friends and Ancestors, without any Regard to their Memories or venerable Ashes!

In the late Times of War, Distress and Confusion, there might be some Plea for this Reproach of our *Christian Name*; but now, with the blessed Prospects of *Peace, Liberty, Safety, and future Prosperity* before us, I trust this Reproach will be speedily done away; to which nothing can so eminently contribute as Love and Union among ourselves joined to a rational and enlightened Zeal and public Spirit. For, in all our Pursuits, we must rest at plain and practical Points at last, which are few in Number, and in RELIGION come to little more than *Solomon* found viz. that "the Fear of God and keeping his Commandments is the whole Duty of Man;" or, in all the Sciences, what another wise Man found as the Sum of his Enquiries---that

TEMPERANCE is the best PHYSIC,

PATIENCE the best LAW,

CHARITY the best DIVINITY!

O Heaven-born CHARITY! what excellent Things are spoken of thee! What a transcendent Rank was assigned thee, when the SAVIOUR of the World gave thee as the Badge of his holy Religion; and his inspired Apostles enthroned Thee as the Queen of all Christian Virtues, declaring that neither the Martyr's Zeal, the Self-denial of the Saint, nor all Languages, nor all Knowledge, nor any Virtue besides, would profit the Man any Thing who is unadorned with thy sweet celestial Garb. Christ himself vouchsafed to wear thee as his own Garb on Earth, and if we expect to be benefited by his Death, it must be by following that great Law of Love, which he enforced with his last Words. All other Virtues shall have their Completion, and be of no Service to us beyond our Pilgrimage on this Earth, But Charity thou shalt endure for ever!---Even as some majestic River, when it comes to mix its Streams with its Parent Ocean, needs no further Supply from the scanty Rills, and tributary Fountains which flowed in its Course from every Mountain Side---So Charity, which is now fed and nourished by the Streams of Faith and Hope in this lower World, when it comes

to its native Heaven shall have no farther need of their scanty Supply, but shall mix and flow for ever undiminished in the unbounded Ocean of the Father's Love.

Wherefore then, Brethren, put on this most excellent Gift of *Charity*. Try the Faith that is in you by this great Test---Hold fast the Form of sound Words, the holy Scriptures, the pure Doctrines, the excellent Forms of Prayer, Praise and Thanksgiving, drawn from Scripture by our Church-- Hold them fast in Faith working by Love. Take them for your perfect Rule and Guide---They will make you wise unto Salvation---What ever is imagined more, or beyond Scripture---all that is beside final Perfection and Salvation, count it vain and superfluous. Seek not to be *wise above what is written*, nor establish any vain Imaginations of your own for the sure Form of sound Words. What you have received, hold fast with a fervent and enlightened, but with a holy and charitable, Zeal. Add nothing; diminish nothing; but let this Lamp of God shine among you till the Day-Dawn, till the Morning of the Resurrection, and walk ye in the Light of it, ~~not~~ kindling any Sparkles of your own to mix with its pure and hallowed Lustre.

Let not your best State too much elevate, nor your worst too much depress, you. Whereunto you have attained, walk; Yet sit not down with Attainments, but forgetting what is behind press still forward, having perfect Holiness in your Eye and Purpose.

“ Remember that Faith without Works is dead. Remember that God commands Works, Grace establishes them, Christ died to confirm them, the Spirit is given to influence them; and that without a holy, humble and peaceable Life, we annul the Law, abuse the Gospel, trample upon Grace, frustrate the End of Christ's Death, grieve the Spirit, dishonor God, and give the Lie to our holy Profession.” If one coming as an Apostle or as an Angel from Heaven were to preach to you any other Gospel than you have received, I trust, you would say, let him not be believed.

Thus, with the Truth in our Heads and Love in our Hearts; with Zeal and public Spirit; with a Concern for Liberty, civil and religious; with Industry and Economy; with a strict Care for the Education of Youth and their Nurture and Admonition in the Fear of the Lord; this American Land shall become a great and glorious Empire!---

Transported at the Thought, I am born into future Days! I see this new World rising in her Glory, and behold Period still bright.