

A B R I E F
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F I R S T R I S E
O F T H E

Name Protestant;

And what *Protestantism* is : with a
Justification of it; and an earnest
Exhortation to all *Protestants* to
persist in that *Holy Religion*.

By a Professed Enemy to Persecution.

LORD BISHOP of C O R K'S Protestant Peace-
Maker. Pag. 128. ——— I am, and must be in the
mind, that the Strength of the Protestant Cause, both
here at Home, and throughout Christendom, lyes in the
Union of Protestants ; and the Glory, Purity, and Pow-
er of Christianity in the World, stands or falls with
P R O T E S T A N T I S M.

L O N D O N, Printed in the Year 1688.

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Protestant Reader.

TH E following Papers were, for the most part of them, writ two Years since, and had then been offered to your view, if they had not been obstructed by some Persons, and for some Considerations, of no use to be here mentioned.

The Author conceived at that time, there was occasion to suspect, that many who pretended to be Protestants, closed with that Profession out of Interest, or something a-kin to that, rather than from Knowledge and Conscience. Many appeared ignorant of the occasion of the Protestant Name, and so understand no better what was Protestantism it self. These seemed to be so wavering and uneasy under their present Circumstances, that little less was necessary to reconcile them to the Roman Religion, than to be certainly secured from the terrible effects of Humane Statutes, provided to deter Men from such Reconciliation.

This prompted the Author (having some undesired vacation at that time, from his usual Employ) to endeavour to contribute something towards the helping of such, who were thus unsteady, to discern what it was they were about to relinquish; and consequently, enquire what it is, on the other side, they must espouse. People, in matters of Religion, ought to be considerate and wary; they should not deal

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with Religion, as they do with their Hats and Cloaths, when out of the fashion. He thinks that Gibbets and Consecrations, and such Engines, are no Gospel Appointments to befriend the True Faith. Yea, he is of opinion, that the Ambition and Sloth of Church-Officers, did first introduce Penal Laws, to defend and guard Christianity, and force People into a Profession of the Truth. And that Christianity made greater numbers of real Protestants, during Constantine's general Toleration, than were made by the Penal Laws under that Emperour's Government, or by all the Penal Laws that ever were made since that time. He thinks that Penal Laws have not wholly rendred Christianity ineffectual; but how much they have impeded its progress, he thinks, is very hard to comprehend. They have certainly very much promoted Hypocrisy and Formality.

The Author is indeed a Conformist, but one that was grieved at the indiscreet, and less charitable censures and carriages of many who boasted of the same character. He was really troubled to see them, who said they were Protestants, behave themselves so unbecomingly towards their fellow Protestants, and so industriously weaken and undermine that very Church they made such a clamour about. He does not impute what they did, intirely to spleen and malice against the Church they pretended to. As for many of them, he apprehends their Intellectuals were so impotent, they had few thoughts of their own; by which to govern themselves, but were wholly under a foreign conduct, which yet they perceived not. How many more were influenced by notions too mean and carnal for any good Man voluntarily to resign himself unto? For the first sort, we may pray, as our Saviour did for his Crucifiers, Lord, forgive them, for they knew not what they did. But as for the other sort, he leaves others to consider what measure of Charity belongs to them, who furiously ruin their Religious Neighbours, and pull down the Church they seem to own, merely to satisfy their own filthy and most detestable Lusts. He manifested some resentment, that Protestantism should be treated with so much harshness, by those who pretended to the same Religion. Which occasioned his having some experience, not only of the reproachful language, but the ruder effects of the misguided vehemence of some of his own Communion. But these things he overlooks, and hopes that others, whose treatment hath not been very obliging, will so forget what is past, as not to insist thereon, to the prejudice and damage of the Religion in common amongst us.

The Prefacer concurring in all these matters with the Author thinks,

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thinks he may, with greater confidence, apply to all sorts of Protestants, in exhorting and beseeching them, that they will not do anything now against, but for the Truth. And more particularly, I would desire;

1. Those who are indifferent and wavering, to consider, and think seriously before they change. Some, it may be, would make no scruple to depart from the Protestant Profession, were it not they were awed with the dread and terror of some future danger in this World, that may possibly overtake them, should they, under present Circumstances, resign up themselves to a Profession our Laws have made Criminal. But true Religion is a matter quite distinct from Humane Laws: it is of most necessary and important concern to Men's Souls, and their Eternal Salvation. And Humane Laws, whether for, or against it, do not alter the Case. And therefore both as Christians and as Men, you ought to consider and weigh things. Where different Religions are propos'd, you must examine the Particulars on each side, by the Only Rule of Religion, and must govern your selves by Evidence. The nature and importance of Religion, and the unvaluable worth of your own Souls, require this. There is nothing so foolish and absurd, as to be of a Religion you do not understand, or to change your Profession, you know not why, nor wherefore. Would you alter, to obtain Preferments and Honours? Alas, how little reason have you to expect these things, whilst there are others of more desert, and who bring better Testimonials with them than you can? For he that changes inconsiderately, gives no proof, either of his Parts, or of his Integrity. Do you hope, by altering your Religion, to escape Troubles and Sufferings? This is an ill course to be taken for such a purpose, and not likely to succeed, because God can find you out, and has ways enough to punish you. Besides, you are assured you shall not be forced to relinquish the Profession or Exercise of your Religion, by a Royal Promise. A Promise, which fully performed, will attract greater repute and glory to the Roman Religion, than all the Arguments and Devices, the most learned and subtil Adherers to that See, did ever invent. So that you have nothing, under which you may shelter your Apostasy, or nothing to patronize your Revolt. And to Apostatise without a Temptation, is at once both a Folly and Wickedness, that nothing can match on either account.

2. Those, who pretending to the Church of England, have by an extravagant fervency, and unneighbourly earnestness, done all that

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that was in their power to impoverish, maim, and render their fellow Protestants uneasy and comfortless: These I would intreat to think with sedateness on what they have done; how much they have injured the Protestant Interest, and what a stroke they have laid the Communion to which they pretended, open unto? 'Tis high time you to betake your selves to a deep Humiliation, godly Sorrow, and sincere Repentance for what you have done; yea, to take care you manifest your Humiliation and Repentance in so solemn and publick a manner, as may bear some proportion to the Notoriety of your fault. What inexcusable wrong have you done to the Protestant Cause? What a dreadful blow have you given the Church of England? Have you not made it thus to totter? Have you not laid it almost irreparably prostrate? What wounds like those which were made by pretended Friends? Go not about to contrive excuses, to palliate the mischief you have done, no verbal Apology can make amends for your Crime. Repent and weep, and pray and reform, and this speedily, thoroughly aggravate your guilt, take shame to your selves publicly, and by hearty Repentance, and thorough Reformation, hasten to put a stop to those Inundations of Judgments you have made way for; this is the least you ought to do. Remember that Heathens and Jews, in persecuting the Old Christians; and the Romanists in persecuting Protestants, have this excuse above you, that they never persecuted for things which they themselves acknowledged to be merely indifferent. As you have not been afraid to commit these evil things against your Fellow Protestants, with a high hand, and in the sight of the Sun; so be not now ashamed to make your Repentance as open and visible: neither be averse, by restitution to the utmost of your power, to make satisfaction for all your unjust and merciless exactions. While you wrong and squeeze from others in an violent arbitrary way? How many have you impoverished, and reduced to almost extremities; and this for things, which at the same time you could not but acknowledge, were not worth one hair of any Man's Head? Suffer not the Wages of unrighteousness to remain in any of your Hands, or in any of your Houses; but by faithful restitution, do the best you can, to secure your selves from the dreadful Recompences such Wickednesses do expose you unto. If you make not the best satisfaction you are able, to those you have wronged, what can you expect, but that God will remember your wrongs against you, and that you shall perish for ever like your
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and doing? He hath swallowed down Riches, and he shall vomit them up again, God shall cast them out of his Belly. Job. 20. 15. Have you not just reason to be afraid, lest Divine Vengeance should overtake you on the sudden; and that God should make the Land spend out such Inhabitants? Wherefore let my Counsel be acceptable unto you, and break off your Sins by Righteousness, and your Iniquities, by shewing Mercy to the Poor, if it may be a lengthening of your Tranquility, Dan. 4. 27.

3. Those who dissent from the Church of England: These I would desire to take care, they do not resent their former unkind Treatment with any exorbitances, nor suffer the remembrance thereof to alienate them from their Protestant Brethren of the other Communion. Do not indulge to your Passions, nor keep at any greater distance than needs you must. Be not hurried into any unadvised compliances, on the one Hand; or stiffness on the other. Permit not wrath or revenge to have any place in you, much less, to transport you into any unchristian indecencies. Fall not your selves into what you have perceived to have no comeliness in the Conformist Party. Fall not out one with another: improve the Ease, Freedom, and Liberty you enjoy, for the real Interest of Religion. Be not concerned to make Parties; neither be over-warm for Notions or Practices which have no plain and express warrant in Scripture.

Let us all unite, and be brotherly affectioned one towards another. Let us lay aside and cast from us, with utmost dislike, all our Animosities, carnal Interests, and unjust Prejudices on every hand. Let us wholly mind the things of Christ, and bear on anothers burthens; leave all Indifferencies just as Christ hath left them; make the Scriptures our only Rule, and lay no more stress on any particulars, than Christ himself hath laid on them. Let us all pray earnestly, improve diligently, both the Instructions of the Holy Scriptures, and the present Calls of Providence. Let us all humble our selves duty under the Mighty Hand of God; search into, and try our Hearts and our Ways, and turn to the Lord from all our evil doings, with our whole might. Let us all be of one mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel; and let us follow after Peace with

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All Men, and Holiness; without which none must see the Lord. Then will the Lord return, and be gracious: And the Ransom'd of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with Songs, and everlasting Joy upon their Heads. They shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away. *Isai. 35. 10.*

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AN ACCOUNT

Of the FIRST RISE of the Name

Protestant, &c.

M *Aimburgh* (in his History of the *League*) having occasion to take notice of a Story, which had been published, and had passed very currently a long time without contradiction, for which he could find no warrant; after he had made a full inquiry about it, makes this Remark: "This in reason should give a caution to such as undertake the writing of a History, not to trust all sorts of Writers, and not ambitiously to swell their Works with all they find written in certain unauthentick Memoirs, without giving themselves the leisure to examine their merit and their quality. *Pag. 169.*"

Had this Author himself exactly remembred, and strictly kept to this hint in all his Writings, he would have done much to have rais'd himself a lasting honourable Reputation, he would have greatly befriended and obliged the present Generation and Posterity, none could have had good warrant to write against him, his Histories would have been more considerable for their Truth, than now they be for their Stile.

And if others, who pretend to dislike *misrepresenting*, had but carefully observed this Rule of *Mainburgh's*, with others of the like import, *Christians*, the most innocent, and of greatest worth, could not have been so injuriously aspersed and belpattered, as of late they have been by several hands.

Whatever complaints and outcries may be rais'd against the *Protestants*, as if they were not candid and just enough in the Accounts they give the World of the *Romanist's* Faith, Wor-

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ship, and Practice; though we should allow, that in some particulars, particular Writers have exceeded, and not kept within such moderate bounds as they would have done, had they followed the examples of our most Learned and Judicious Authors; who beyond contradiction, have proved more against their Adversaries than we do ordinarily expressly charge them with; yet upon supposition that some of our Writers have been faulty this way, they are not the only Persons guilty, and of all people in the world, the *Romanists* have the least reason to insist on a charge of this nature; for though their fault doth not excuse any of our Writers, if guilty in the same manner, yet it renders them very unmeet to upbraid and reproach, and make tragical complaints against others, for what they are more enormously faulty in themselves.

It is but too obvious, that some pains have been taken of late, to misrepresent the *Protestants* all over, and to perswade the world into a belief of very odd and strange things both concerning their Persons and Religion; yea, the very Name by which they are every where known.

Indeed the word *Protestant*, and its Rise, have been so decyphered and represented under such ungrateful Characters, by persons of one complexion and of another, that some (who, it might have been expected, had had more knowledge, and more wit) have been almost, or rather, quite ashamed of that Name which their Ancestors accounted an honour; and by which the Religion they pretend to, is every where known: what thoughts such have of the Religion it self, time may discover. Who would ever have thought that *Englishmen*, who had a long time, or rather, all their time been brought up in the *Church of England*, and would fain have made a Figure in their Countries, should yet be at a loss by what name to call the Religion they did profess; certainly the common name might have past well enough, had not some unjust prejudice prevail'd: And it's very probable, this prejudice did take its Rise from one or others misrepresenting, and giving a wrong account of that Name.

Those who profess true and unmixt *Christianity*, have for a great while, been distinguished in most parts of the World, by the name of *Protestants*; from others, who have mingled with a profession of *Christianity* a great many gross contradictions and inconsistencies: And till now of late, none who owned the

the Religion were ashamed of the Name: Those who liked not the *Romish Communion*, did not think it a reproach to be called *Protestants*. Though the Name might be first devised by the Adversaries of our Religion, and might be used by them at first in scorn and contempt, with reference to those who would not imbrace and submit to all the foreign and unscriptural Notions and Practices which received life and authority from *Rome*; yet the antient love to, and zeal for Religion, only as commanded by divine Authority, and as warranted by those Books which are universally acknowledged by all *Christians* to be writ by men divinely inspired, reconciled our Ancestors to that Name by which the Adversaries of their Religion would have ridicul'd them out of their Profession. And how it is come to pass, that people professing the same Religion, should now appear shy, and boggle at the Name, as if some dreadful and hideous matter were wrapt up in the word *Protestant*, I cannot imagine, unless either their love to, and zeal for their Religion, be less than their Ancestors was; or that some false representations have been made to them of the importance and first occasion of this Name. What sort of writers have contributed most to create prejudices in mens minds against the name *Protestant*, I will not determine: but I do not lay all the fault of misrepresenting in this case, on those who do openly profess themselves of the *Romish Communion*; and yet I cannot wholly excuse them, because of late, they have been at no small study and trouble to perswade people to entertain very wrong Ideas both of the *Protestant* Name and Religion.

We are lately told, that "The *Protestant* Perswasion has its Name, Being, and Support, not from what it is in it self, but from what it is not, in defying and protesting against their Neighbours. *Rep. in behalf of Amicable Accomod.* pag. 17."

Now it may not be altogether improper, in order to the setting of some weaker people right in their apprehensions, to give a short and true account of the first occasion and rise of this Name *Protestant*, and its general use ever since, from Authors of the best credit and repute on each side.

And that this Account may be the more clear and distinct, it will be requisite to observe in general, That a great corruption had for many Ages overspread *Christianity*, in the *Romish Church*. Afterwards we may take notice, how Princes and People were more directly prepared to renounce and cast off those

those Corruptions; and then it will be proper to relate the particular matter of Fact which occasioned this Name *Protestant*: and when these are dispatched, you shall hear what *Protestantism* is, and wherein *Protestantism* doth really consist.

The word *Protestant* is a foreign word, derived to us from other people; and it has been, and is still used with relation to Religion, in all Nations where it is mentioned. So that every where, those who have owned and professed the *Protestant* Religion, have past currently with all sorts of people for *Protestants*. And the *Protestant* Religion is the true *Christian* Religion, rescued and reformed from those Corruptions and humane Additions the *Church of Rome* had for many Ages, without good warrant, intermixed with it.

The Mystery of Iniquity, which began in the Apostles days, did by degrees increase to that height in the *Roman Church*, that it almost overwhelmed true *Christianity*, and made Religion appear, and be in the world little else than a trick of policy, and a meer piece of Pageantry. And when the people had been a great while inured to nothing but lifeless Superstitious Formalities, and were brought up blindly in a superstitious, carnal, gay sort of practice, which was called Worship, the Bishops of that *See* did by several artifices and tricks, first acquire, and then improve opportunities, to gratifie their own utmost and unreasonable ambition: for the Princes and People were in many places so effeminated, made so soft and easy, and unthinking by their methods, they very tamely and patiently gave way to their most unjust incroachments, till at last they were not able to help themselves, nor oppose the increasing greatness of that *See*. And when matters were brought to this pass, then several points were forced on the whole *Western Church*; the burthen of which, the Inhabitants of those parts had never before felt; and which those who first gave way to the Usurpations of that *See*, never dream't of. Now an universal Supremacy over the whole Church was challenged, and a power pretended, to make whatever pleas'd a Duty. In short, the Bishop of that *See* pretended an Infallibility, which must not be call'd in question; he assum'd a power to dispose of People's Sins and Souls as he thought fit, and perswaded them he could consecrate any thing they would buy, to be an effectual means to purge away their guilt. Nay, at last he claimed a power to dispose of Governments, appropriating to himself a

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Superiority in every Prince's Dominions; and both Princes and People were blinded to that degree, through the Ignorance, Superstitions, and Impurity which they had given way to, and the just infatuation which God suffered to crawl on and overpower them, that for a long time, very few, either of the Princes or People, did make any considerable attempts to extricate themselves out of that Bondage, or get rid of the Tyranny and Apostacy into which they were sunk.

But the time hastening on, when God would deliver his People out of of that wretched estate: The Head and principal Instruments of the *Romish State* were grown so secure and fearless of danger, they gave up themselves to their Lusts, and minded nothing but how to invent new ways to impoverish the people; by which means they occasioned the people to awake, and suggested to their minds the most powerful and justest prejudices against the way they were in, and that Church they did then adhere to.

For though there were many beams of light which shone up and down in the world, yet two things did principally dispose the people to cast off that Spiritual and Civil Yoke which had mightily gall'd both their Consciences and their Necks, and to inquire after the Truth and Purity of Religion.

The first, was the obvious, prodigious Ignorance, Sloth, and beastly Sensuality and Debauchery of the generality of those who pretended they had the keeping of the people's Souls and Consciences; the Wickedness, Tyranny, and Unsatiableness of the greatest part, by far, of the Clergy, was such as struck most violently on the outward senses of the People: So that they were forced to conclude, God would not intrust any extraordinary *Depositum* with such persons. A *German Bishop*, in the year 1519 (which was not long before the *Reformation*), complains (as in *Musaeus* I find him quoted) in this manner: "I am afraid the Doctrine of the Apostle, touching the Qualifications of a Bishop, is but very ill observed in these days, "or rather, that we are fallen into those Times which he noted, "when he said, *I know that after my Departure Ravenous Wolves will come among you, not sparing the Flock*. Where may one "see a good Man chosen to be a Bishop? One approved by "his Works and his Learning: And any one, who is not either "a Child, or Worldly, or ignorant in Spiritual things? They "have no love for any but Sinners; they despise the Poor, "they

"they keep about their persons Plimps, Debauchers of Women, Flatterers, Buffoons, Players, when they should have wife and holy Men. The Reveries of the Church are given, not to the Servants of God, but to those of the Devil, to Debauchers of Women, to Adulterers, Gamesters, Hunters, Flatterers, and such like Men. And hence it is, that the House of God is become Tributary to the Devil. *Matthew Paris*, I remember, speaking in his History, of the corruption and wickedness of the Clergy, saith, "It was risen to so infamous a height, the Devil sent them Letters of Thanks, because of the extraordinary service they did him, in sending Souls to Hell in greater Troops than ever came thither before. You may find large accounts of, and complaints against their notorious wickedness in the Writings of *Nic. de Clemang.* and others. Several of the *Papish* Writers do acknowledge, their Debauchery and Wickedness was such, as did necessitate the people to seek after a Reformation. "And truly (saith *Mezeray*) the extreme Ignorance of the Clergy, many of them scarce able to read; the scandalous Lives of the Pastors, most of them Concubinaires, Drunkards, and Userers; and their extreme negligence gave him (*viz. Luther*) a fair advantage to persuade the people, that the Religion they taught, was corrupt, since their Lives and Examples were so bad.

A second thing which very much awaken'd the Princes and People, and prepar'd them to cast off and renounce the *Romish* Trumpery, was the Pope's, Bishop's, and other Ecclesiastical Officers most enormous prostituting those very things wherein they pretended to place very much of their Religion, and by which they pretended to impart to the people the Merits of Jesus Christ, and of the Saints. For *Leo* the Tenth having a mind to raise great Sums of Money to satisfy his own profuse humour, and make large Provisions for his Kindred, sent abroad his Agents through the Empire, but especially in *Germany*, to sell the pardon of Sins publicly, under pretence to build the Church of *St. Peters* at *Rome*. The Sellers of these Indulgencies, did prostitute them at the strongest rate imaginable; for they would sell them for any thing wherewith they might satisfy their Lusts. They would play them away

Per iustitiam populi at Taverns; at a Game at Dice, they would stake a Man against so much Money, the Par-

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don of his sins, or a power to deliver Souls out of *Purgatory*.

And when this was complained of, and wrote against by *Luther*, the Pope sent his Bull to confirm these Indulgencies, asserting his power to give and divulge them in this manner: By the power of the Keys given to *St. Peter* and his Successors, the Bishops of *Rome*, had a right to pardon the Faithful all the guilt and punishment of their Actual Sins; to wit, the guilt, by means of the Sacrament of *Penance*; and the temporal Punishment by means of Indulgencies, whether in this life, or in *Purgatory*: and that by those Indulgencies, he could apply to the Living and the Dead, the superabundance of the Merits of Jesus Christ and the Saints, either by way of Absolution, or by way of Suffrage. So that the Living and the Dead participating of those Indulgencies, were delivered from the punishment that the Divine Justice would inflict on them for their Actual Sins.

But *Luther's* contending this point with the *Romish* Agents, put him and others on a more strict Inquiry into other Corruptions in that Church: by which means Light broke forth daily with more power, to the full satisfaction of very many, that there was an absolute necessity of a Reformation. And the Agents being not able to contest the matter fairly with *Luther*, *Eccius* and others being quite worsted and baffled in their arguings, *Sylvester Prierias* positively insisted on the Pope's authority, acknowledging the Scriptures did not warrant those Indulgencies, but that the Pope did, whose authority, he asserted, was above the Scriptures. And thus he brought that point on the stage, which upon examination, appearing to be a meer cheat and gross untruth, the people hastened to embrace the Sufficiency of the Scripture, and that the Holy Scriptures were the only Rule God had appointed Christians to guide themselves by in all matters of Religion, in opposition to the Pope's pretended authority.

This, of the Pope's authority, being the point, for which both Head and Members of that Church were mainly concerned, and which supports and keeps all the other corruptions in that Church,

*In alga, lufum, ufuque
fupplendos pofitum ex
tendendi quibus fuffo-
rum ex igne expiationis
profundebant. In Aug.
Thaum. lib. 1. p. 13.
vide Mezeraii. Ann.
1517.*

*Sleid. Com. lib. 1.
An. 1517. Quicumque
non innuitur deffime
Romane Ecclefie, ut Ro-
mani Pontificis, tamquam
regule fidei infallibili,
aqua etiam facta Scrip-
tura potius trahit et au-
thoritatem, et Hereticum.*

Church, in life, when the vanity and ungroundedness, the absurdity and wickedness of that claim came to be exposed and laid open to the World, the Interest of that Church did very much sink, and the authority of Scripture was much advanced amongst people. So that the *Pope*, notwithstanding all his Letters and Stratagems to destroy *Luther*, and hinder the spreading of that Light which was now broken forth, could not effect his design; but knowledge increased every day, and the authority of the Scripture was much insisted on, to the great damage of the *Pope* and his Adherents.

'Tis true, the *Pope* by his Letters and Nuncio's, did prevail

with the Emperour, and some of the Princes of Germany, to make an Edict, when they were assembled at Worms, which forbid *Luther* Fire and Water, and

the commerce of all the World; it extended also to all his Favourers and Followers, and Complices: but the more violent the *Pope* and and his people were against *Luther*, and the greater stir they kept with the Princes, to see the Edict of Worms strictly executed, the greater number of Friends God raised up for *Luther* and his Followers.

For the Princes assembled at *Nuremberg*, declared they could not put the *Pope's* Bull, nor the Edict of Worms in execution, without involving themselves in great dangers, and that the generality of the people were so sensible how matters stood, having their eyes opened by the writings of the *Lutherans*, that if they should execute those Sentences, the people would believe they were only made to overthrow the Truth of the Gospel, and to maintain and defend their evil abuses and impieties, &c. And having drawn up this their Answer in form of an Edict, they sent their grievances to the *Pope*, to the number of an hundred Articles, which they call'd, *Centum Gravamina*.

After this, another Assembly of the Princes publish'd another declaration in form of an Imperial Edict, which extremely provok'd the *Pope* and all his Creatures. Upon this the *Pope* complained to the Emperour by Letters; and to animate him the more, he perswaded him that that was a manifest breach of his Authority, and a form and design to withdraw themselves intirely from his Obedience: the Emperour is hereby prevailed with to concern himself in the matter; and accordingly, writes very peremptorily to the Princes, requiring them to execute the Edict

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and make void that of *Nuremberg*. And this brings me to the very Rise of the Name *Protestant*; an Account of which I will give you in the *englished* words of a Foreign Divine, who hath very faithfully collected his Relation out of the most celebrated and authentick Historians who have writ the Affairs of those Times. His Account is thus.

"In the Month of *April*, in the Year 1529, an Assembly of the Princes and other States of Germany was held at *Spire*; whether *Pope Clement* did not fail to send a Nuncio: the first thing they did there, M. Claudel, of the Reformation, part 3d. pag. 51. &c.

"*Strasbourg*, under pretence that it had abolished the use of the *Mass*, without waiting for the Imperial Dict. This violent procedure was quickly after followed by a Decree, that *Ferdinand* Arch-Duke of *Austria*, and some other Princes who took part with the Court of *Rome* made, and whom the Emperour had expressly chozen for his Deputy Commissioners. They ordained therefore in the first place, that those who till then had observed the Edict of *Worms*, that is to say, who not only had not received the Reformation, but who had persecuted it with all their might, should for the future do the like, and force their Subjects to do the same: And that as for those, in whose Countries those new Doctrines had been spread abroad, provided they could not extirpate them, without putting themselves into manifest danger of stirring up Troubles, it should be their part, at least, to hinder any thing more from being innovated, till the calling of a Council. Secondly, They ordained, that above all things, the Doctrine which opposed the *Substantial Presence*, should neither be propounded nor received by any in all the compass of Germany, and that the *Mass* should not be abrogated. In the Third place, they decreed, that they should not allow Preachers in any place to explain the Gospel otherwise than by the Interpretation of the *Fathers*. In fine, they ordained grievous penalties against the *Printers* and *Booksellers* who should print or vend, for the future, the Books that contained that new Doctrine.

"The other Princes and States of the Empire beholding this manifest Oppression, thought themselves bound to make an Act of *Protestation* to the contrary: They Remonstrated

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"therefore, that that new Decree contradicted that which had been passed in the preceding Assembly, where every one was to be free in respect of his Religion; that they did not pretend to hinder the other Princes and States from enjoying that Liberty; but that on the contrary, they pray'd God that He would give them the knowledge of His Truth: That they could not, with a good Conscience, approve of the Reason, for which they would allow them to retain the Evangelical Doctrine, to wit, least they should fall into new Troubles; for that would be to confess, that it would be good to renounce that Doctrine, if it could be done without Tumult; which would be a criminal and wicked Confession, and a tacit Denial of the Word of God. That as to the *Mafs*, those who had abolish'd it, and who had re-established in its place the lawful use of the *Supper* of our Lord, were led by the Institution of our Lord Jesus Christ. That as for the Doctrine that opposed the *Real Presence*, they did not believe, that they ought lightly to condemn those who held it, without hearing them; and that proceeding was against Equity, especially in a matter of so great consequence. In fine, that they could not consent to that Decree, offering the Reasons of their carriage to the Emperour and all the World. That they did appeal to a Free Council, and that in waiting for it, they would do nothing for which they should justly deserve any blame. — This *Act of Protestation* was made

unde Protestantium nomen quod ad omnes postea, qui eorum quæ perperum in religionem invicta sunt, emendationem amplecti se professi sunt, obitque ab Ecclesia Romana desecere, dimanavit. Thuan. Hist. lib. 1. p. 26.

Nomen per contemptum ab adversariis ob protestationem Spirensis impostum. D. Prideaux Lect. 9. de viibil. Eccles.

at *Spire*, the 19th. of *April*, 1529. And from thence came the Name of *Protestants*; which has been since given to all those who have embraced the *Reformation*.

This is the true Account of the first Rise of this Name *Protestant*; which was used by way of reproach by those who adhered to the *Romish* Corruptions, and asserted the *Pope's* Authority above the Scripture, towards them who renounced those Corruptions, and protested against the *Pope's* Supremacy, and for the Sufficiency and sole Authority of the Scripture.

And this Name hath ever since been applied to, and appropriated by them who have renounced *Popish* Corruptions, and especially, that great

Fundamental Article of the Supremacy, because of their contradiction to, and derogating from the Holy Scriptures.

The best Historians, both *Protestant* and *Popish*, do confirm the Truth of this Relation; and that all people have promiscuously past in all Countries under the Name of *Protestants*, who have renounced the *Pope's* Authority, and that Body or System of false Doctrines and superstitious Practices, which are maintained and justified in the *Romish Church*, because of their contradiction unto Scripture.

For the Name *Protestant* is a common Title to discriminate all those who renounce and forsake the *Romish* Communion, because of its contradiction to the Holy Scripture, from those who do own, and are of that Communion. But it was not designed to discriminate one sort of people renouncing and protesting against that Communion on the aforesaid Account, from others who agree in the same Point. And therefore in every Age and Nation, other Names have been made use of to discriminate *Protestants* one from another, according to the matter in difference betwixt them.

True *Protestantism* then consisteth more especially in two Points.

First, *Protesting* against, and renouncing *Popish* Corruptions, and especially all such *Infallibility*, *Supremacy*, and *Authority* as the Bishops of *Rome* have, for some Ages, laid a claim to. It is the renouncing the thing it self, which *Protestantism* chiefly respects; its reference to such a particular person, is only accidental, by reason of his audacious and arrogant challenging that Power. But *Protestantism* would be equally against the Claim, if that Bishop should lay it down, and any other, either in *France*, or in any other Countrey, should challenge it; or if it should be pretended to be lodged in any other Man, or Body of Men.

Secondly, *Protesting* for the Sufficiency and Authority of the Scripture: That the Holy Scripture is a safe and full Rule for the Instruction of us in all things needful to be known or done in order to Eternal Life; and that nothing ought to be admitted as an Article of Christian Faith; which cannot, by just consequence, be proved by this Rule, according as the *Church of England* expresseth her self. Article 6.

In these two things *Protestantism* doth consist; the denial and renouncing of the *Pope's* arrogated Supremacy, and all those

those Superstructions which have no foundation but that Authority; and the owning and adhering to the Scriptures, as the only compleat Rule of Religion: This is the great, fundamental, positive Principle in *Protestantism*. For *Protestantism* doth not take away an undue, boundless Power and Authority from the Pope, and confer it on another person. It ascribes indeed to the Supreme Power in every Nation, what belongs to the same, according to the constitution of the Government; protesting against all foreign and every unjust pretence and claim, to the prejudice of the rightful Owner. And it asserts the only right of the Scripture to be the Rule that every Supreme Power on Earth should observe in restoring and reforming Religion, as occasions are offered, by reason of the Decays or Corruptions which may have prevailed.

Chillingworth's
Safe way to Salvation.
p. 375.

"The Bible, I say, the Bible only is the Religion of *Protestants*, whatsoever else they Believe besides it, and the plain irrefragable, indubitable Consequences of it; well may they hold it as a matter of

"Opinion; but as matter of Faith and Religion, neither can they, with coherence to their own grounds, Believe it themselves, nor require the Belief of it of others, without most high and Schismatical Presumption.

And now, seeing *Protestantism* doth mainly, or rather, only consist in asserting the Holy Scriptures to be the Rule, the only Rule, by which all Christians are to govern and manage themselves in all matters of Religion. So that no Doctrine is to be owned as an Article of Faith, on any account, but what hath very plain warrant and sound evidence from the Scriptures; nor no instance of Religious Worship to be owed or submitted to, as necessary; nor any thing to be entertained as a part of Religion, but what the Scripture doth appoint and warrant. It may not be altogether useless, to inquire briefly, whether this Principle be really justifiable, or no? Or, whether those who are called *Protestants*, on this Account, be truly in the right, touching this matter? For, if we be right in this Point, then the great Fundamental opposite Point of our Adversaries must needs have a flaw in it, and cannot be solid and substantial; and consequently, all the particular Doctrines and Practices, which have their whole being and Dependence on that Authority, must necessarily expire, and give up the Ghost.

Now

Now much might be offered to evince, that *Protestants* have very good ground to rest assured, that they are not mistaken in this matter: but I will only offer these few considerations; which being well considered and improved, may suffice to satisfy any unprejudiced and impartial honest meaning person, that *Protestantism* is not a sumerlome precarious thing, but is really accompanied with the greatest evidence and certainty any Persuasion can justly pretend unto.

First, It is universally acknowledged, by all who profess themselves *Christians*, that the Holy Scriptures, viz. those Books contained in the Old and New Testament, as received by *Protestants*, are the Word of God, and were written at the appointment of God, for the constant Use and Benefit of his Church and People, by Persons Divinely Inspired for that purpose.

Secondly, Supposing (but not granting) that those Scriptures do not contain the whole Revelation God hath made of his Mind and Will, for the constant, perpetual, and obliging Use of his Church; yet it is most evident, that these Scriptures are a safe and most certain Rule in Matters of Religion, so far as they do extend. They are a certain Rule touching those matters of which they do treat, and so far as they do treat of them.

So that there can be no just pretence of a Divine Revelation for any Doctrines or Practices which are inconsistent with, or contradictory to what God hath declared in these Scriptures: Because the Divine Veracity and Truth, which is Essential to the Deity, cannot permit, that God should contradict himself. All that can be pretended, with reference to this matter, is, that God may make more Declarations of his Will; and either enlarge the Discoveries He hath made of his Will touching particulars already made known; or add Declarations of His Mind concerning Matters which He doth not at all discourse of in the Scriptures. But it is not consistent with the Natural Notions of a Deity, not with the Revelations God hath made many ways of Himself; that He should overthrow the Truth of a Former Revelation by a Later, or that Contradictions should be reconcileable in His Will.

For

For any Man to affirm that a Divine Revelation may contradict any thing taught in the Scriptures, whilst he professeth these Scriptures are pure Divine Revelations, is not only to involve himself in most obvious and horrid Absurdities, but to contract upon himself, to burthen and overwhelm himself with the guilt of the most plain and unnatural Blasphemy against God. If any thing that plainly contradicts the Scripture, can be a Divine Revelation, then a Man may be indispensibly obliged to Believe, and not to Believe the same thing; to do, and not to do the same work. And so Man will be brought under such Circumstances, that whether he Believe, or do not Believe; whether he Practice, or do not Practice, it will be the same thing, he will be equally guilty. But certainly, if our Adversaries can pretend to Revelations which do contradict the Scriptures, they cannot pretend to lay any Obligation on us to comply with them in those Matters which the Scriptures do contradict; for we have every jot as good Authority to Believe and Practice in direct contradiction to them, as they have to Believe and Act in express contradiction to us, though we should condescend to an impossible Supposition, *viz.* That a Divine Revelation may contradict the Scriptures. Besides, they have no need or occasion to trouble themselves to prevail with us to comply with them in their Points; for (supposing their Revelations to be as they pretend) whether we comply, or do not comply, the Case is just the same; for we are never the better if we do comply with them; nor is our guilt and offence one jot the more, if we do not comply. But if what they call Divine Revelations, be not really so; and they will, notwithstanding, Believe or Act, or both, in contradiction to the Scriptures, which are known, owned, and professed Divine Revelations; let them seriously consider what is like to be the fruit of their so doing. We have reason therefore to conclude, that all those Doctrines and Practices which are inconsistent with, and do contradict what is declared in the Holy Scripture, have not a Divine Original, but have their Rise from the fountain of Falshood and Untruth: And therefore we cannot be justly blamed, if we protest against and reject such Notions and Practices; for we certainly have a good Foundation and just Authority for every part of our Religion, which Scripture doth expressly and plainly warrant. And they must needs be at a great loss for just Authority, as to those Points which expressly contradict the Scrip-

Scripture, whatever may become of those Points amongst them, touching which, they may conceive the Scripture is silent.

But lastly, If the Holy Scriptures we are speaking of, do contain the whole and intire Revelation of the Mind and Will of God, which he hath designed for the constant and perpetual use of his Church and People, and do furnish People with full Instructions and Directions in all Matters of Religion, then *Protestants* have very good warrant to affirm and stedfastly adhere to this Point, *viz.* That the Holy Scriptures are the only Rule we are to govern our selves by in all Matters of Religion. And we are safe enough as to this part of our main Principle; and cannot, with any justice, be reproached or blamed by our Adversaries on this Account, till they can produce very good and substantial evidence for some other Divine Revelation really distinct from those we are discoursing of. But this is a task so hard for them to undertake, so impossible for them to perform, that there is not one understanding person in that Communion (I am perswaded) who dares adventure to ingage in it. For it will not serve the turn to talk honourably of Tradition in general, nor to make a noise about Apostolical Traditions, without mentioning particular Traditions, and proving them to be Divine Revelations, and that they are truly Apostolical, and were by Divine Appointment set apart for the perpetual use of the Christian Church. The Council of *Trent* speaks loud of Apostolical Traditions, and advances them to the same degree with the Holy Scriptures, and appears so resolv'd for these Traditions, that she makes them necessary to compleat the Scripture, in order unto its being a perfect Rule: but alas, her courage cool'd in a little time, for she dared only to talk extravagantly, and in excessive terms of Tradition in General; she dared not to name particular Traditions, which she would own and undertake to prove truly Apostolical, and of Divine and constantly binding Authority to the Church. And since she thought it not convenient to descend to particulars, I am of opinion, particular persons in that Communion will not care to meddle in the matter, but rather chuse to refer it to another Council, when they can get one: because, if they should undertake it, it must only be for our sakes; and those of that Communion cannot but know, that nothing less will satisfy such cautious, reasonable people as *Protestants* are, in a matter of

of this nature, than such evidence, as is very substantial and proportionate to the thing to be proved. And could they produce ever so good evidence for any particular they will call a Divine Revelation, or Apostolical Tradition, it would be of no use to those of their own Church, who prefer particular humane Testimony, called by another Name, before all sort of proper and suitable evidence. And after all their pains, though they could produce satisfactory evidence (which I affirm to be utterly impossible in this case) for some Tradition which would enforce some Point the Scriptures do not enforce yet this would not do them any service, however it would weaken our Principle, as touching the Perfection of that Body of Divine Revelations we have: For notwithstanding, we stand, in obedience to a Divine Revelation, though strongly proved and evidenced, concur and joyn with them in some Point we did not embrace before; yet the difference betwixt them and us in that matter, would be as great as before; there would still remain a formal difference betwixt us touching this very particular; because, though we should Believe or Practice the same thing, yet the formal Reason of Believing or Doing it, would be totally different.

So that if any would attempt to produce substantial evidence for any Revelation distinct from the Scriptures, their labour will be wholly useless, with reference to their Church, unless they can produce a Revelation relating to their Church, like that Law the flattering Courtiers of an *Eastern* Prince told him they could find, when they were at a loss for a particular Law, to warrant some particular Practice the Prince was inclined unto; though they knew of no Law relating to what was propos'd, yet there was a Law, that the Prince might Command and do what he pleased. Such a Revelation our Adversaries must produce, (Indeed, I am apprehensive, they Act in that Communion, as if they had such a Revelation; but all the mischief is, they cannot produce valid proof for it) or else they must be at the trouble of providing distinct Revelations for the several Points in dispute, and distinct Evidence, unless they can make a shift to crowd three or four of their Notions into a single Tradition, and so make shorter work of it.

In short, the *Protestants* do affirm, That Divine Revelation is the only Rule of Christian Religion: That the Holy Scriptures are confessedly Divine Revelations: That these Holy Scrip

Scriptures do contain all those Divine Revelations God hath appointed to be of perpetual standing, obliging Use to his Church and People. We acknowledge, that were it possible for our Adversaries to produce solid proof, that there is any Divine Revelation distinct from what these Holy Scriptures do contain, which God hath appointed to be of constant, perpetual, binding Use to his Church, they might thereby invalidate our Principle, which doth affirm, that the Holy Scriptures are the Only Rule by which Christians are to govern themselves in all Matters of Religion: But yet we affirm, their doing this, would not really advantage their Cause; because the same Formal difference would remain betwixt them and us after, as before; for though we should be obliged, on their exhibiting such proof for some particular Revelation, which should warrant and oblige to own and use some Doctrine or Practice at present in dispute betwixt us; yet the agreement which would then seem to be betwixt them and us, in that particular, would only be material, and not formal; because we should then own the Doctrine or Practice, what is enjoined, purely because taught and commanded by a Divine Revelation, thoroughly evidenced: And they would own the Doctrine or Practice, the Duty enjoined, purely because taught and commanded by a meer Humane Authority; which they are pleased to name Infallible. And it will not be to any purpose, for them to undertake a more quick dispatch in this matter, by talking of an Infallible Judge, for he cannot be Judge and Rule too: There must be Divine Revelation, which must be the Rule for their Infallible Judge to exercise and employ his Infallible Judgment about. And seeing all their attempts to prove their Infallible Judge by Scripture, have been very unfortunate, and without success. I may take it for granted, when once they have agreed together, and found out their Infallible Judge, their best proof that that Person, or Body of Men (which ever they shall agree upon) is a Judge, and an Infallible Judge in Matters of Religion, must be some new Revelation, or some old Tradition never hitherto known to be a Divine Revelation; for we must have better proof than any that has yet been offered on the behalf of any of their Traditions, before we can entertain them as Divine Revelations. And when they have well proved that Tradition, and its Divine Authority, which shall fix and settle their Infallible Judge, they must still be at the trouble and pains to produce very substantial proof for every other Tradition they will make a part of the Christian Rule.

For the Authority of their Infallible Judge will not do here, because his Infallibility does not reach to make, nor declare a Rule, but is purely concerned about the true sense and meaning of an acknowledged Rule, when Controversies do arise about the importance of any Expressions contained in that Rule.

But besides all this, *Protestants* have such evidence, as doth create certain assurance, that the Holy Scriptures are fully Perfect, to instruct and direct Believers in all matters of Religion, and do contain all those Divine Revelations God hath appointed to be of necessary and perpetual Use unto his Church : greater evidence cannot be desired, than the express Witness, Testimony, and Declaration of the unerring Spirit of the Faithful and True God. And this we have most plainly, to the unavoidable and full Conviction of every honest, piously disposed, ingenious, and unprejudiced Person, who really owns and believes the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God : And this, you heard before, is the professed Belief of all who profess themselves *Christians*. And if such kind of evidence will not serve peoples turns, I must acknowledge, they are of a temper I do not much care to deal with ; for I must confess, I am no great admirer of booted blunderbus Apostles ; nor do I think he makes any real Profelites, who only dragoon's Men into a Perswasion : I never lik'd murdering Men for Religion ; nor persecuting Men, because their Consciences would not stretch to every body's phancy. I think, whilst the Scriptures are acknowledged, on all sides, to be Divine Revelations, the greatest and best evidence we can have, in matters of Religion, is plain and express Scripture. And if in all our Disputes with our Adversaries, we did strictly keep within this compass, we should guard and maintain our owe Cause the better, and wound our Adversaries Cause the more fatally : not but that I am very sensible, we have Antiquity, the Fathers, the Primitive Writers, and the most General Councils on our side, either expressly, or by way of silence ; thereby certifying us, that no such Points were known, or in question in those days.

But alas ! by having ordinary recourse to the Fathers, &c. we mightily gratifie our Adversaries ; for hereby they get out of the immediate reach of the Sword of the Spirit : And all the Testimonies of Antiquity taken together, in their own strength, will not do the thousandth part of that execution against a Heresy

resy, as one plain and express Scripture will. Besides, how often do we see, that when the greatly Read and Learned, on both sides, do fall together by the Ears over the Fathers, they lengthen the Dispute beyond measure ; and not only bewilder the Hearer or Reader, but even themselves too ; that by the time they are got half through the Dispute, they have well nigh forgot what it was they began to dispute about.

And having slipt into this digression, I may even adventure to hint one digression more, relating to the common way of managing Controversies with our Adversaries, the *Romanists*. It may be, if it be well inquired into, it may appear, that we do not ordinarily proceed in our Controversial Discourses with them, in that free and ingenious manner we ought, but do too much limit and straighten our selves. According to that little measure of apprehension I have, it seems to me most expedient and most proper for us, in opposing our Adversaries, to maintain *Protestantism*, or the *Protestant Doctrines*, both really and professedly as such ; and not to pinnion our selves, by pretending to maintain them, as Taught or Owned by particular Communion. The Cause is a common Cause ; and the Arguments we can truly maintain it with, are common Arguments ; one Party is no more interested in them than another ; nor do the Matters in dispute amongst our selves, concern the Controversies betwixt us and our Common Adversaries. Why should we so affect and hug our selves in our private Notions, and particular Differences, as to please our selves with, or at least, receive and keep up the unreasonable Remembrance of them. Indeed, I do acknowledge the candor of our Adversaries, in that they have not improved the advantage they might have taken, to have made some Tragical Appearances, by falling upon us, with reference to this very matter, of undertaking to maintain *Protestant Doctrines*, merely as owned by a particular Party : for what doth this properly import, but that we relinquish the Common Principle, and undertake, only to maintain our Doctrines, not by the Scripture, as the General and Only Rule of *Christian* Religion, but by the Scripture as limited and bounded by those discriminating Terms and Instances, whereby we are distinguished from all others, who take the Scripture to be the Only Rule in all Matters of Religion. Now, will not this, if insisted on,

on, make our task the harder, and the more confound and perplex our Controversies ? But would it not seem odd for a Remonstrant, or a Contra-Remonstrant to defend *Christianity*, or the particular Doctrines of *Christianity*, against *Jews* or *Heathens*, purely as a Remonstrant, or a Contra-Remonstrant ? For what have their particular differences to do in matters wherein they all agreed, and in maintaining of that, for which both sides are equally concerned ?

The main of the Controversy betwixt us and those of the *Romish* Communion, is either, whether the Holy Scriptures be the Only Rule in all Matters of Religion ? Or, whether those particular Doctrines wherein they and we do differ, have warrant from the Scriptures ? And what need we, intreating on these points, to interest any discriminating notions amongst our selves ; *As far as we do agree, let us walk by the same Rule.* Besides, by concerning our selves for *Protestantism*, and *Protestant Doctrines* (even in opposition to our Adversaries) in common, as fixing the Scriptures to be the Only Rule, and that our particular Doctrine have plain warrant from the Scripture, and those we oppose, are either contrary to the Scriptures, or have no warrant at all from thence, we are excused from any obligation to trouble our selves with defending any unwary, or less proper expressions, which may have slipped from particular Parties, or particular Persons, in declaring their sense of particular Doctrines ; for whether they express themselves properly, or no ; or whether their opinion were right, or no, is not at all material to the Controversy betwixt those of the *Church of Rome* and us. For if any Parties, or single Persons, have declared their sense and opinions concerning any Doctrine, or matter of Practice, either that their opinion doth accord with Scripture, or it doth not : if it do, it is the *Protestant Doctrine* ; if it do not, it is not a *Protestant Doctrine* ; and so it doth not at all affect us ; since we own, that persons professing themselves *Protestants*, may mistake, as well as, we do declare our assurance, that those who have been named *Infallible*, in another Communion, have erred most grievously. But this we affirm that so far as any do keep strictly and closely to the Holy Scriptures, they cannot mistake. And *Protestants* have no real concern to vindicate any Party, or Person, any further than they do keep unto the Scripture.

But now to return from these digressions, unto what was said before, *viz.* That *Protestants* have such evidence, as doth create certain

certain assurance, that the Holy Scriptures are fully perfect ; to instruct and direct Believers in all matters of Religion, and do contain all those Divine Revelations God hath appointed to be of necessary and perpetual use unto his Church. I need not relate the whole evidence that might be produced on this occasion. I will therefore content my self with these two particulars, relating to this matter, which certainly must sway powerfully with them who are under an influence which is truly Religious.

The first, is this :

1. That the Holy Spirit of God hath expressly declared, that the Holy Scriptures are compleat and perfect to all the ends and purposes of Divine Revelations. Hear how large and particular the Holy Spirit of God is, in declaring the Fullness and Perfection of the Scriptures. *2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17. And that from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness ; that the Man of God may be Perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all Good Works.*

2. The same Holy Spirit hath solemnly devoted to the most dreadful Curse of Almighty God, whomsoever shall be so arrogant and presumptuous, as to offer any other Doctrine besides what the Holy Scriptures do teach, as a Divine Revelation. *Gal. 1. 8. But though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* Now if people will pretend to produce other Divine Revelations, which God hath appointed to be of perpetual use to his Church ; either those must invalidate the Holy Scriptures ; or else these Holy Scriptures must invalidate them ; they cannot consist well together. If we will own and stick to the Holy Scriptures, we must reject whatever additional Discoveries shall be produced ; because, the Spirit hath, in these Scriptures, excluded them.

What hath been discoursed concerning the evidence *Protestants* have for their great and main Principle, may justly prompt to take notice of two things.

1. That they who would hinder and discourage people from reading and studying the Holy Scriptures, do give them just occasion to suspect, that they have none of the honestest and most

most commendable designs to manage. We are very certain, the Holy Prophets of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, were Persons beloved of God, and Persons who were greatly concerned for Peoples Spiritual Welfare; and we are as certain, that these were very much, and in good earnest, in pressing, exciting, and perswading the common sort of People to read and study the Scriptures; they command them in the Name of God, to read and learn the Scriptures, and those Revelations of the Mind of God, which were communicated unto them; read *Deut.* 31. 11, 12, 13. *Deut.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. *John* 5. 39. *Col.* 3. 16. Nay, does not the design and end for which God hath made his Will known, and caus'd it to be committed to Writing, manifest and prove our Duty evidently enough? For what end hath God given the Holy Scriptures unto his Church and People? Are we not assured that the Scriptures were written for our Learning, for our Instruction, for our Admonition? &c. And must we not read them then? How will they answer these ends, if we must not consult them? Were not the Scriptures written for our Learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope? Read and consider *Rom.* 15. 4. Have we not then too much ground to suspect, that those who would take, or keep our Bibles from us, are Enemies to our Faith, Patience, Comfort, Hope, and Happiness? Is not the Word of God that Sword of the Spirit, with which we are to defend our selves, and worst our Spiritual Enemies? *Ephes.* 6. 17. And now what reason have we to take them for our Friends, who would lay us open, and expose us Naked to the Assaults of Sathan and his Instruments?

The Holy Penmen of the Scriptures did, by the direction of the Blessed Spirit, commend People for applying themselves to the Holy Scriptures, and endeavouring to improve in the knowledge of them. See *Psal.* 1. 2. *Aff.* 17. 11. *Aff.* 18. 24. *2 Tim.* 3. 15. And it is certain, that the People of God (of every rank and condition) under the Old Testament Dispensation, were obliged by Especial Appointment from God, to take care to read, and labour after a continual Increase in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Now, can we imagine, that God having given us a larger Discovery of his Mind, doth dispenſe with our neglect to search the Scriptures.

Can

Can those who are against the Lay-Peoples reading of the Scripture, find any Command of Christ, requiring them not to read the Scripture? Can they produce any Condemnation or Censure from the Prophets, from Christ, or from his Apostles, against those who shall read the Word of God? Or can they make it appear, that any of these did ever commend People for their neglecting to read the Scripture? If they cannot do any of all this, let their Pretences and Self-vindications touching this matter, be never so plausible, we may rest assured, there is nothing solid and substantial in what they say; for there cannot be any Reason against God. The more subtle and cunning their Pretences are, the worse Men they manifest themselves to be; because they abuse those Abilities which should have been applied another way, and might, had they been used aright, have been very serviceable to promote the Interest of Truth and Holiness.

The most plausible Pretence they do produce for their prohibiting People the common use of the Scripture, is, That the ordinary sort of People would be very apt to abuse and wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction, should they be permitted to have free recourse unto them. But allowing, that People may wrest the Scripture, and make some other use of it than they ought, this is not an Inconvenience which will make null, and discharge Men from God's Command of reading and searching the Scripture. You may, with as much reason, oblige Men to forbear the use of wholesome Food, Meat and Drink, and starve themselves to death, because some, by their Intemperance and Excess, do abuse wholesome Food, and make it an occasion of dangerous Distempers and Diseases, yea, and Death it self. You may as lawfully deprive People of their Corporal, as of their Spiritual Food.

Besides, this very particular hath been foreseen, and taken notice of, by the Pen-men of the Holy Scripture, if we interpret *2 Pet.* 3. 16. according to the usual acceptation of that place, by those who do alledge it for their purpose, as to this matter. And yet there is not one word there, to oblige People, on that account, to desist from the reading of the Scriptures. The People may, and ought to be warned to take heed how they read the Scriptures, and that they avoid Errours, and pervert not the Word of God. But the Scriptures are not therefore to be detained from them: God hath not thought fit to provide

such

such a Remedy against peoples abusing his Word, as this is, of keeping it intirely from them. Yea, this very Apostle doth, as it were, in the next verses, perswade them to the due and right Study, and Improvement of the Scriptures, that they may avoid the Errours others do fall into, by abusing them, and may *increase in the knowledge of Christ*.

It is undeniably evident, that this same Apostle doth, in this same Epistle, commend peoples reading of the Scriptures, and attending unto them. *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, wherunto ye do well, that ye take heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn, and the Day-Star arise in your Hearts.* 2 Pet. 1. 19.

And, however it is common, to attribute the Rise of Errours to the common sort of peoples having the free use of the Scriptures; yet, upon due examination, it will be found, that the worst and most fatal Errours have sprung from, and been advanced by them, who pretending to more Knowledge and Learning, and Abilities than the rest of Mankind, have presumed to appropriate to themselves the intire Custody or Interpretation of the Scriptures.

Nay, it is truly observed, by one who appears to have consulted Antiquity with much care and diligence,

*Catholick Bal-
lance.* pag. 19.

That "The Laity so well understood their Faith, that many times, they, by their sagacity, discerned the sly Insinuations of Error, in the Sermons of their Unsound and Heretical Bishops; and so occasioned them to be condemned by Synodical Sentences: and through the radicated sense of Faith, would never be brought to any of the Alterations made by any corrupt Councils; nor, would ever rest under their Provocations, till the Primitive Faith recovered, and vacated all those Synodical Prevarications; as may be seen in all the *Arian History*; and particularly, the relation given, of the vulgar Sagacity and Zeal, to detect and repress that Heresy in *St. Hieron* against the *Luciferians*.

If this Notion, of keeping the Scriptures from the people, or of obliging the People to understand the Scriptures no otherwise than those would interpret them, who were arrogant enough to claim, and assume to themselves this privilege, had intirely prevail'd, when our Blessed Saviour was on Earth, God only knows, how much our Saviour's Reputation might have

have suffered, even in succeeding Generations. For, as these presumptuous Persons did pretend, that the Key of the Scripture did hang only at their Girdle, & they refused to acknowledge Christ was the *Messiah*, the Son of God; and they both accused him as an Impostor, a Deceiver, an Ill Man; and charged and censured the People as ignorant Persons, who did not understand the Law; little better than *Hereticks*, a cursed Generation; and all this was, because they did listen unto Christ, follow Him, and Believe in Him; that is, did undertake to judge of Matters by the Scripture; and to determine this was the Saviour, the *Messiah*, &c. prophesied of, and promised in the Scriptures. The Chief Priests, the Scribes, the Pharisees, they were all against Christ, and would fain have perswaded the People to have taken their Interpretation of the Scriptures, and to have pinned their Faith on their Sleeves, and not undertake to judge for themselves in so high and mysterious a Point as this, concerning the *Messiah*, was. They would have perswaded them, that this *Jesus* was a very Cheat, and that all the things he did, which won their admiration, were wrought by the Intimacy he had with, and the Power he borrowed from the Prince of the Devils; and that the *Messiah* must be quite of another Make from this same *Jesus*.

Now, what work would have been in the World, if none must have read and understood the Scriptures in any other sense but what the Topping-Men, and Chief Leaders of the Jewish Church, had assigned? What contempt do these Monopolizers of Knowledge express against the People, who would not submit to their Determinations? How angry were they, when any dared to declare how they respected and admired Christ? Then came the Officers to the Chief Priests and Pharisees, and they said unto them, *Why have ye not brought him?* The Officers answered, *never Man spake like this Man.* Then answered them the Pharisees, *Are ye also deceived?* Have any of the Rulers or Pharisees believed on him? But this People who knoweth not the Law, are Cursed. John 7. 45. to the 50th.

If People mean fairly, and honestly, why do they desire to have Folks bred up in Ignorance? Indeed, if the ordinary sort of People be well vers'd in the Holy Scriptures, it will not be easie to impose upon them. Why cannot Men, that would be Teachers now a days, be as open and plain as the Prophets, and as Christ, and as his Apostles were? These came not to

vent any counterfeit false *Wares*, and therefore they were willing the People should examine and try what they taught them: They were for the People's reading and searching of the Scriptures, and judging of the Doctrines which were taught them by those Holy Scriptures, which had been delivered unto them. They came to deliver People out of Darkness, not to keep them in, or lead them unto Darkness. And those who are their true Successors and Followers, will do the like. If Men have no Notions to scatter about, and perswade People to swallow and submit to, but what are sound, and true, and good, and which are authorized by Jesus Christ, they will have no occasion to be ashamed or afraid, that People should examine them by the Scripture. None flee from the Light, but those whose Doctrines or Practices will not bear the Light. Christ's Doctrines did accord very well with those Divine Revelations those *Jews* had amongst them: But the Unscriptural Traditions they had got amongst them, and our Saviour's Doctrines, could not stand together. *To the Law, and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* Isaiah 8. 20.

Secondly, Those who profess themselves *Protestants*, ought to take care, that they be well fixed and settled in the *Protestant* Religion.

The Apostles often require their Followers and Disciples, and those they write unto, to *Stand fast in the Faith*: 1 Cor. 16. 13. And to *Contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints*: Jude 3. And to *Serve together for the Faith of the Gospel*: Phil. 1. 27. Now, by these and the like Expressions, which you meet with in the Apostolick Writing, they plainly, *first*, warn them of the danger there is, of Peoples Apostatizing from the True Faith and Religion of Jesus Christ, after that they have made a Profession of the same. And *secondly*, excite and stir those up, who make a Profession of the True Faith, to take care that their Minds and Hearts may be thoroughly fixed and settled in the Faith, lest they should yield and waver, and decline, when Storms and Tryals shall arise, and their constancy shall be assaulted.

And, if there be but too much ground to fear, that many who make a Profession of the Truth, will Apostatize, and forsake it, when they shall be called to bear witness to it, in some Instances which are ungrateful to Flesh and Blood. It highly concerns all

all, who at present profess True Christianity, to look well to it, that they be so established and confirmed in what they profess, that if a day of Tryal should come, they may not loose their Crown, destroy their Souls, or betray the Truth.

First, Those who do profess the True Religion, may afterwards Apostatize from, and relinquish it. And there is too great occasion to fear, that many, however forward they appear in Profession, will do so, should they be tried in any difficult and beloved Instances: I do not mean, that People who have long habituated themselves to profess the *Christian* Religion, will easily be brought to an open and avowed renouncing of the Name of *Christianity*; as though none could be justly charged with Apostacy from the Truth, but those who can vye with *Julian* for impudence, in contemning and trampling under foot the very Name and Profession of the Son of God. The estate of those who proceed so far, is beyond measure dreadful. *Heb. 6.*

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But there are two things, which the Scriptures more especially insist on, as imported by People's Apostatizing from the True Faith, and which, People are generally too prone unto; and both which are very displeasing unto, and greatly provoking of God.

1. Departing from the Purity and Simplicity of the Faith of the Gospel, espousing and imbracing, together with those Doctrines, and Practices which Christ hath authorized in his Holy Scriptures, other Opinions and Practices, which are destructive of the Truth and power of Religion. *Christianity* is actually impaired and injured by evil mixtures, as by open professed opposition. The Apostacy the Apostles spake of, which was to accompany, or rather, constitute that great Antichristian State, they foretel, would have such a vast, and large, and durable Empire in the Christian World, seems plainly to be of this kind. The great Fundamental Doctrines of *Christianity* should be retained in outward Profession, but yet other Doctrines should be introduced, and be so vehemently imposed, and insisted on, that thereby the main Essential of Religion should be slighted, oppressed, and become in a great measure useless. And way has been made for these Innovations, by *first*, forging some gross Impostures, and counterfeiting some strange things, to which they have given the Name of *Miracles*.

rites, and so ordinary, ignorant People have been prevailed with to entertain no better than Diabolical Delusions as Divine Instructions and Commands : very agreeable to what the Apostle foretells of Antichrist's coming, *After the working of Satan with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders* : 2 Thes. 2. 9.

2. Altering the nature and use of many things which were introduced by the pious Antients, without any Divine Authority, and purely by the conduct of vain Zeal, and a devout Intention. Had no further progress been made in those Instances, than those Antients made, little prejudices would thence have happened to Religion. But God is so jealous of his own Honour, that usually, when People manifest they have an Opinion that God will not carelessly enough provide for his own Cause, and therefore they will usurp and fence, and provide more effectually for it, He blasts all those Devices, and suffers such Humane Inventions to be occasions of more than ordinary trouble, and sometimes, to be prosecuted so far, as to make a formal and mortal Opposition to the Vitals of Religion.

3. Depressing the Offices and Devotional Duties of Religion with unreasonable heaps of outward Formalities, and Ritual Observations ; that so the Senses might be superfluously carst, and by accomodating the Matters of Religion too much to the Rules of Carnal Policy. By this means, Inward Serioussness, and the Spirituality of Religion, have been dispensed with, and Peoples Minds have been rendred lax and vain, airy and garish. And having been thus injured for some time to these meer External, which they have taken upon trust, they have at last been so case, as to content themselves with an Implicite Faith, and have rather chose to swallow any thing that should be offered them, whole, than put themselves to the trouble to enquire into its Nature, Rise, and Grounds.

4. Finding out ways to reconcile what they stile Religion, to Men's Carnal Lusts, and Natural Tempers and Constitutions ; devising easier ways (as they pretend) to Heaven, than any of the Saints in former Ages, were acquainted with : devising new ways to satisfy for Sin, and undertaking to save Men's Souls after they are dead in Sins.

Hence there is something Men call Religion, that must certainly please the Careless, and (as some tell us) as certainly Save

Save them. If you are melancholly, and inclined to strictness and Corporal Mortifications, they will humour you in that ; they can provide you Pennances and Securities, which shall sufficiently vex and macerate your Flesh. If you are soft and tender if you would have a Jovial Religion, and would allow your selves in wantonness and excess, &c. and yet not miscarry at last, they can fit you with Indulgencies and Pardons, and will not question to send you safely to Heaven, by vertue of the Merits and Righteousness of some of their Antient Friends, who never had a Being in the World ; or, of others, who tho they might have a Being here on Earth, in all probability, never got to Heaven themselves : I am sure, they never had Righteousness enough of their own to carry them to Heaven, however it is grown so bulky since they left it behind them, and has crept into the Church's Treasury. But the Apostle acquaints us, that *Antichrist will come with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish* : 2 Thes. 2. 10.

Secondly, Declining from their Love to, and Zeal for the Faith, growing cold and indifferent concerning the Faith ; when Peoples have not that affection and concern for the Faith, with which they seemed at first to entertain and welcome it. See Rev. 2. 4, 5.

People are too prone thus to Apostatize from the True Faith, after that they have made a Profession of it : and if Matters be well considered, there is not much ground to wonder it should be so : For,

1. People do too ordinarily make a Profession of the Faith, upon unsuitable Motives and Principles : not because they understand it, and have their Consciences convinced of its truth and excellency ; but merely because it is the fashion and custom of the People where they live, to make such a Profession ; or, it is a Profession that has got into repute ; or, upon some other such mean and sickle Account. Men that have no sound Principles, will ever be for that Profession which is uppermost, and is attended with most Pomp and Pleasure, &c. Christ had Followers in abundance, whilst he fed them with Loaves ; but how did they fall off, and sink away, when they failed of their Expectations. Joh. 6. 26.

2. Multitudes content themselves with a meer notional knowledge in Religion, and take no due care to digest Truth, and turn the Principles of Religion into solid Nourishment. Now the

the Doctrines of Religion, if they do not sink down into our Hearts, if they have not a powerful efficacy on our Affections, if they do not put us invincibly upon such a Course of Life, as bears some proportion with their nature and tendency, they have no fast hold on us, they will soon evaporate, we shall easily part with them. *Luke 6. 49.* Let the Food we eat, be never so good and wholesome for the kind, if we do not digest it, if our Stomacks do not turn it into good Chyle and Nutriment, it will soon become nauseous, and the least provocation will make us vomit it up again.

3. God doth often, in just Judgment, leave those to be hurried away by an evil Spirit of Delusion and Impiety, who having long enjoyed the means for their instruction and settlement in the True Faith, have made no careful improvement of the same, for those ends. God ordinarily suffers such to be led away by *Sathan* and his lying emissaries, into Opinions diametrically opposite to the plainest Truths, as well as to those vile affections which prompt to all uncleanness, and practices which are inconvenient, even according to the dictates of natural Light. Such are a ready and self-prepared prey to him, whose coming is after the workings of *Sathan*, &c. *2 Thes. 2. 9, 10, 11, 12.*

4. Over-loading Ecclesiastical Offices with Worldly Revenues, Temporal Power and Dignities, hath contributed very much to the prejudice of *Christianity*: Too true did that voice prove, *This day is poison poured into the Church.* These things are powerful baits, and strong temptations to ambitious, covetous, domineering Persons. Those who have such Offices so dressed up and beautified, to confer and bestow, need not doubt, but they shall find Advocates enough, for their own particular Opinions and Ways, though never so Erroneous. And when Errors and Superstitions are back'd with Power, Greatness, Wealth, &c. Oh, what multitudes will they draw after them! Besides, when those who have not a mighty concern for the Interests of real Religion, are too much advanc'd in Ecclesiastical Affairs, and rais'd above themselves, it too usually falls out, that an arbitrary Imperiousness starts up, and prevails, and then things of no great moment, and for which Christ and his Apostles thought not fit to engage their Authority, or lay any Stress of Religion on, get into their heads, and must needs be made

made terms of *Christian Communion*, that they may be sure their Authority is acknowledged. What Contests and Divisions have been rais'd and created by this means? What Heats and Animosities have been this way occasioned? Hereby Differences have been carried to such heights, that at last Religion it self is even lost in the Quarrels commenc'd about its Vestments and Trappings. How have People's zeal or fury about things, called Indifferent, extirpated or quenched all serious and due concernment for the true Interests of Religion! 'Tis to be feared, that hence there is occasioned an Indifferency in the minds of multitudes, touching the great Substantials of Religion, which doth surpass the Indifferency of the things themselves, for which we have so desperately contended. The love of Worldly Grandure carried *Demas* away from the Faith, *2 Tim. 4. 10.* And over much concernedness for little Extra-Religious Matters, gave the Apostle ground to suspect, that those who were so affected, would not be so honest, firm, and faithful to the Faith of the Gospel, as good *Christians* ought to be: Observe how he expostulates with them, and lays down the grounds of his fears touching them. *Gal. 4. 9, 10, 11, 12.*

5. God permits Afflictions, Persecutions, and Sufferings to be brought on them who profess his Truth, not only to try the Graces of the Faithful, and to make their Graces appear more illustrious by their eminent exercise; but that Hypocrites and meer Formalists, who have no real love for his Truths, nor give any hearty assent unto them, may be discovered, and have their disguises taken away. In times of peace and quiet, and whilst the true Religion is on the thriving hand in the World, many pretend to it, who too much resemble *Erasmus's* Good Christian, who appeared a very zealous Professor, he would always have a New Testament hanging at his Girdle, on one side; but then he must have a Bottle of good Sack hanging on the other side.

As long as the True Faith hath outward Honours, Preferment, Carnal Pleasures, and Ease accompanying it, it will not want Followers and Attendants: but when Storms and Persecutions do arise, and it is separated from these external Allurements, they will soon shake hands with Religion, and court whatsoever shall be dress'd up in its former Robes. Such as espouse the True Religion, not for its native Excellency, but for its gorgeous Attire, and great Dowry in this World, will in all probability when

when Persecutions arise, part with their Faith rather than their Pleasures, Wealth, and Ease; they will sooner throw away their Bibles rather than their Bottles. *1 Joh. 2. 19. Mat. 13. 20; 21.*

Now, if there be such danger of people's Apostatizing from the True Faith, after they have made a profession of it, it must certainly very importantly concern all who profess the Protestant Religion, that is, *True Christianity*, as taught and delivered in the Holy Scriptures, and as purged and reformed by the guidance and direction of this Divine Rule, from all those Errors and Corruptions which have, either through people's heedlessness, crept into the profession of *Christianity*, or, through design, have been slyly ushered into it, or, by imperiousness, have been forced upon it: I say, it very highly concerns them to take care, that their Minds and Hearts be so fixed and settled in the Faith of the Gospel, that they may never be removed from their Constancy, that *they may not be as Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the flight of Men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* *Eph. 4. 14.*

* It should therefore be our care to get our Minds furnished with clear distinct Notions of those Truths in which the Scriptures do instruct people: It is not enough, that we can talk over, in a general way, the Doctrines of Religion; we ought to labour for an explicit knowledge of Divine Revelations; so that we may be able to prove and confirm every part of our Profession by express and clear Scriptures; *1 Pet. 3. 15. The Ignorant Man will be always wavering.* Yea, we should strive to get the Truths we profess and understand, very strongly indured unto our Hearts, so as to prefer them above all Worldly and Carnal Interests; and to have our Affections, yea, our whole Souls brought under their Power and Influence, their Government and Sovereignty: our Souls should so cleave unto them, they should be so precious and dear unto us, that neither Frowns nor Smiles, Promises nor Threats, may make any unhappy impression on us; but the more blustering any Storms may be, which can arise, the deeper root we may take, and grow the more firm and stable. *Phil. 1. 27; 28.* For,

1. We must expect to meet with Trials and Sufferings for the Faith of the Gospel, which will overwhelm and ruin us, if we be not well provided against them. Our Passage to Glo-

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ry, is through many Tribulations. We have many and various Enemies, who will mischief us, and obstruct us all they can, who will do their utmost to prevail with us, both by fair and foul means, to make shipwreck both of Faith and a good Conscience: We are not only exposed to the malice, rage, and spite of absurd and unreasonable Men, but to the craft and fury too of those infernal Fiends, who prompt and excite their carnal and earthly Tools and Instruments, to vent and vomit forth their rancour and spleen against the True Faith and its Professors. See *Eph. 6. 12, 13. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Rev. 2. 10.* If you be not well fixed in the Truth, how can you expect to hold out, when temptations and sufferings shall come? When you shall be in danger of losing Estate, Liberty, all that is dear to you in the World, yea, Life it self, for your Religion? Did not the House built upon the Sand fall, when the Rain descended, and the Winds blew, and beat upon it? *Mat. 7. 26, 27.*

2. Apostacy from the True Faith is a very hainous provoking sin: is not this to offer God the utmost affront we can, and in effect, to say all manner of evil of him? Do we not hereby charge him with being the greatest Impostor that ever was? Is not this to throw the foulest dirt that is possible upon Religion; yea, openly to avow, that Satan and his drudgery are much better, more ligible than Christ and his most Holy Faith? That God is not to be trusted, and that his Religion is not what he represents it? O what abominable, what innumerable, what monstrous wickednesses are bred in the womb of Apostacy! And what direful consequences and fruits may those expect, who thus affront, and incense the Almighty God against themselves! He will not have a gracious regard for such: He will cast off, and punish severely, all those that cast him off, and deal treacherously with Him. *The Just shall live by Faith, but if any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him.* *Heb. 10. 38.* The Lord Jesus Christ will reject them, and be ashamed of them, when he shall appear in all his Glory. *Whoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels.* *Mark 8. 38.* Though you set no value on Christ's Love at present; and care for no more, but that you may have the Countenance of great Persons, and enjoy the Pleasures and Wealth of the World; yet remember, that it will not be long, before ye shall have other apprehensions.

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lections of things than now you have : It will not be long, before you shall perceive all these things you prefer before the Faith of the Gospel, to be very empty, and void of all satisfaction, and full of torment and horrore : when Christ shall appear in Glory, with his Holy Angels, all these things will fail you : and how you will howl and roar, and complain then ? What tears will you then shed ? How will you curse your Apostacy, and all that helpt it forward ? And now, when your Case is thus helpless, thus dreadful, and all your Comforters are gone, the Lord Jesus and his Mercy will fail you too ; he will send you to them, whose favour you prefer'd before his, who will tremble and quake as much as you ; and to your Wealth, which will then disappear ; and to your beloved Pleasures, which will then be bitterer than Gall and Wormwood : you must only expect to behold his frowns, and to feel the terrible discoveries of his insupportable displeasure : you can expect no favour at his Hands. See *Prov.* 1. 24. to the end. 2 *Thes.* 1. 7, 8, 9. Nay, you have no good ground to hope you shall prosper in any of those designs you intend to drive forward by, or under your Apostacy. God doth very often notably blast such projects ; He causeth some remarkable and very fatal Curse to accompany those who relinquish his Cause and Truth. What was *Judas* the better for his thirty pieces of Silver ? What a sorry Plaster was this for a wounded Conscience ? What a poor comfort to a justly despairing Soul ? What a fearful end have they ordinarily come to, who have forsaken Christ and the Gospel for Preferment, Wealth, or any Carnal Interests ?

3. The more we are confirmed in the Faith, the greater measure of inward Comfort we may confidently look for, if we should be called to suffer for the Truth. God will not leave such comfortless, they shall have experience of his gracious, refreshing Presence and Supports. The Disciples, when publickly disgraced and whipt, *they went away rejoicing, that they were counted worthy to suffer for the Name of Christ.* See *Acts* 5. 41. 2 *Cor.* 1. 3, 4, 5.

4. You will hereby be in a capacity of doing others eminent service, by your Instruction, and Counsel, and Example. It is a great mercy not to cumber the World, not to live uselessly and unprofitably, to do real good Services to people in our Generation : nay, more, you will hereby be in a capacity of doing much to retrieve the Credit and Honour of Religion ; which

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has indeed been horribly betrayed, and prostituted by Hypocrites, and wicked pretenders to it.

5. The Promise of God is only to those who stand fast, who do persevere and overcome. A Profession, be it never so good and Orthodox for the matter of it, will turn to no good and comfortable account to particular Persons, unless they faithfully adhere to, and persist therein. *To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory, Honour, Immortality, and Eternal Life.* Rom. 2. 7. *To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.* Rev. 2. 7. Rev. 2. 5. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.* Rev. 21. 7.

These, and considerations of the like nature, which will easily occur unto you, should make some impression on you. Have you had your Bibles so long, and means of Instruction, so much above all others, who are of the contrary Perswasion ; and what, will you now throw away your Bibles, as being imperfect ? Will you hood-wink your selves, or be content to be led blindfold, by Guides that either cannot, or will not see ? Are you weary of the glorious Light of the Gospel ? What sort of people are they in St. Paul's Judgment, who dislike the glorious Light of the Gospel ? 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. Can you now at last be contented with the poor Glow-worm light of simple Tradition ; or, an uncertain wavering of *Ignis fatuus*, which certainly leads all who foolishly resign up themselves to its conduct, out of the true way into very hazardous Inconveniences ? Quit you like Men, yea, quit you like Christians ; labour and strive to get your Minds and Hearts justly fixed in the Religion you profess. Be not so soft and easie, be not so foolish and inconsiderable, be not so unreasonable, so distracted, so irreligious, as to suffer your selves to be so frightened out of your Religion, or flattered and colloqued, cheated, and childishly allured out of it ; nor yet to be so jeared and laugh't, and lampooned out of it ; and then you'll be pritty safe : for their Arguments and Reasonings (if you are wise) will never do you hurt.

The Religion you profess, contains all in it that is necessary, yea, that can be really useful to any Man, in order unto his having a safe and sure conduct to Heaven ; and, why should any Mandefire to go further ? None of the Apostles, none of the ancient Martyrs, dared either to die for, or teach any other Doctrines than

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than what your Religion doth comprize. And what ! will it not content you to keep pace with them ? Must you needs exceed and outstrip them ? Take heed, the more ambitious, proud, and presumptuous you are, the less safe you are. Lucifer and his Comrades had the most dreadful and unhappiest fall that ever Creatures had ; and it may be, to be wife above, or (if you like the Phrase better) to be Religious beyond the Scripture, may in the end, prove to have a great Affinity with that they were guilty of. And if so, the punishment of that fault, must bear some proportion with the other. I would cherish as much charity, with reference to those who manifest any pious Sentiments, in the Persuasion contrary to ours, as is possible. But yet I must needs say, that no solid proof hath ever yet been produced, that any Persons ever yet suffered death comfortably for any of their peculiar and proper Doctrines taken abstractedly from those which we justly profess, and was accepted with God for so doing. But we have Instances enough, of those who have joyfully laid down their Lives for the Doctrines we profess, abstractedly from all those wherein they differ from us ; that is, those which they have added to the Scriptures, and the suffering, and bearing witness to the Truths we own and profess, have been of great account with God. Should the worst you can imagine follow on your firm adhering to the Faith you profess, viz. That you shall be persecuted and suffer for it ; yet this should not startle nor discompose you. That is but a sorry Religion, that is not worth suffering for. There has been more Blood cheerfully parted with, more Tortures joyfully endured for the Religion you profess, than for any, it may be, for all other Causes in the World. If you are called to suffer on this Account, your Cause is so good, you need not be afraid of any Enemies terrors, you have no occasion to be troubled. 1 Pet. 3. 14. The Comfort is unexpressible, which you may warrantably expect. The Holy Spirit is promised to be a Comforter, more especially, to those who are persecuted, and who suffer for this Religion. Joh. 16. 7. What glorious Rewards are there for you in Heaven ? The more like you are to Christ in his Sufferings, the more you shall resemble him in Glory. Rom. 8. 17. Mat. 5. 11, 12. Alas ! consider matters well, though the worst should come to the worst. Shall you loose your Estates, your Wealth, your Houses, your Friends, your Relations, yea, your Lives ? And what then ! What are these to your Souls ! What are these to Eternal Glo-

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ry ! These are poor, mean, uncertain, perishing things at best, these may be taken away from you on other Accounts ; you may have all these, and yet no Comfort. But you may be exercised, (will you say) with cruel Usages, with Tortures impossible, according to Humane Judgment, to be born with any patience. Be it so, make the worst you can of it, they cannot be answerable, for vehemence and horror, to the Torments in Hell ; they cannot lie in the Balance with the Glory and Joy of Heaven. Rom. 8. 18. Be they never so great, one smile from Christ will render you insensible of the pain. How many, upon the Racks, and in Flames, for this Religion, have publicly declared and manifested they felt no pain ? And have you such numerous examples and presidents, take heart then, and go on as they did, joyfully in the strength of you God. How many have ventured all, and sustained all, both in former Ages, and in this present Age, in a neighbouring Countrey, with astonishing Joy, for this self same Religion ? But Oh ! what will you loose, and what must you suffer, if you wickedly depart from your God, and renounce his Truth ? Would you be in Judas his despair, or sustain the horror Spira was filled with, for Worldly Favour and Preferment ? Would you be willing, for ease and pleasure here, to be the object of God's heaviest displeasure for ever ? To be shut out of Heaven, to be continually followed with God's Curse ? To be a perpetual Companion of Devils, and the worst Sinners ? To lie roaring and howling, to all Eternity, in unquenchable flames ? In a word, consider how the Faith you profess, is the Faith which God Almighty hath taught and appointed, which the Lord Jesus hath born witness unto, and sealed with his Blood, which the Apostles preached to the World, and suffered for ; the Faith which has been justified and confirmed by multitudes of most real and undeniable Miracles ; a Faith that is pure and peaceable, and tends most intirely to propagate and increase all that is truly excellent and praise-worthy amongst Men ; a Faith which God hath taken care of in all Ages of the Christian World, and which assures its sincere Professors of things incomprehensibly great and glorious hereafter, and fills them with unspeakable peace and comfort at present, amidst all the Suffering they can be exposed to, on its account ; a Faith God hath wonderfully freed from the Corruptions which were formerly mixed with it, in these Nations ; and for which, He hath often and even miraculously appeared, in discovering and blasting

blasting the projects, the designs, and the attempts of its most subtle and unreconcilable Enemies : a Faith your Ancestors, after mature consideration, priz'd above all their worldly Interests, and Lives : a Faith, they took a great deal of care and pains to have transmitted to you pure and undefiled : a Faith, which brought with it multitudes of outward Blessings ; and which occasioned these Nations to be eas'd of a Yoke, which all the Inhabitants, who had ingenious sense, complain'd often of, and groan'd under : a Faith you cannot part with, but in all probability, you will again involve your selves in Calamities and Miseries, like to those out of which your Predecessors strove with all their might to extricate themselves. Have you an ambition now, to expose your selves and your Posterity to all the mischief and evil, which people of the adverse persuasion, have been known industrious and unwearied to bring upon those they look upon as Hereticks ? Are you resolv'd to pull down with your own hands, upon your selves, all the sad and direful Plagues which are reserv'd to be inflicted, in the next World, on them who perfidiously betray the Faith of the Gospel, and wickedly Apostatize from the True Religion ? If not, then take care, and look well to your selves, and see that you be fixed and confirm'd in the *Protestant Religion*. And therefore,

1. Be sure you be built upon the true Foundation. Take heed you profess not the True Faith, merely because it is owned by any Society of some particular extrinsecal denomination : any particular Church may fall. There is a Body of Men now in the World, who assume to themselves a very glorious Title ; and yet, when a just enquiry is made, and the largest allowances Charity can prompt to, are yielded them, that Society can only pass for a very corrupt part of the *Christian Church* : and yet the ancient Inhabitants of that place where the Head of this Society hath fixed his See, were a people, in *St. Paul's* time, so hearty in, and true to the Doctrines of Christ, their Faith was spoken of throughout all the World. *Rom. 1. 8*. Where are any tracts and footsteps now, of those Churches you read of in the *Revelations* ? And yet God never forsaketh any, till they first forsake him. There has been, I fear there is still, altogether a fault amongst us, that we are immoderately concerned for the credit and outward grandure of particular Parties ; and Christians are respected, not for their being Christians, but for their espousing some distinguishing Notions and Characters of Man's devising.

I am perswaded, God will utterly overthrow, at least, mightily abase Men's affections to, and zeal for all Party-making Notions amongst Christians, before he will raise his Church to that prosperous, flourishing State prophesied of, and promised in the Scriptures. There must be more Love, and Charity, and Unanimity amongst Christians. Christianity will endure to the End of the World : but as for all the Modes and Fashions of Man's devising, wherewith any do dress up the Profession of Christianity, these may all fall to the Earth, as the Inventers of them have fall'n, or will fall. *Mat. 16. 18. Gal. 6. 15*. The True Foundation you should be built upon, is that of the *Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner-Stone*. *Eph. 2. 20*. Therefore,

2. Embrace nothing as an Article of Faith, or part of Religion, but what the Holy Scriptures are express, or very clear concerning. You have in these Scriptures all that is necessary to any Man's Salvation. *2 Tim. 3. 16. 17. Job. 20. 13*. Believe no Man, nor no Society of Men in these Cases, further than the Scriptures do warrant what they teach. *Act. 17. 11. 1 Jai. 8. 20*.

3. Be not extremely hot and zealous about any thing, but what the purity of Faith, and power of Godliness are really concerned in. Good Men and Orthodox Christians may have different apprehensions about Matters of small moment, without much prejudice to their own Souls, or the common Faith, provided these Differences be managed without uncharitableness and unchristian violence : But too much heat and violence about things, diverts from the weighty matters of God's Laws, and Religion soon sensibly decays. *Phil. 3. 16. Gal. 6. 16. Tit. 3. 9*.

4. Expect and prepare for Tryals. Christ hath dealt plainly and openly with us : *In the World ye shall have Troubles*. See *Mat. 16. 24*. Learn to resign up your selves, and live in expectation of Sufferings. Read *1 Pet. 4. 12, 13*.

5. Be earnest in Prayer, that your Hearts and Souls may have an inward, real, spiritual, affectionate sense of the Truth and Importance of the Doctrines of Christianity. *1 Cor. 2. 12, 13, 14*.
6. Study

6. Study the Holy Scriptures diligently, and make them your daily delight. *Psal. 1. 2. Psal. 119. 97, 98.*

7. Make a good Improvement of the plain, faithful Ministry of the Word, whil'st you can enjoy it : you know not what Times may come. *2 Tim. 4. 3, 4.*

8. Take heed of Self-confidence, and depend wholly on thy Saviour.

9. Learn to be expert in using every part of the Christian Armour. *Eph. 6. 13. &c.*

10. Watch your selves carefully, and your Enemies too. *2 Pet. 3. 17.*

11. Take a due care that your Faith may effectually influence you to all Holiness of Life and Conversation. That Man is in a great preparation to renounce his Faith, that hath prostituted his Conscience, and is regardless how he lives. *1 Tim. 1. 19.*

Read, consider, and improve what is offered unto you, and the God of all Grace, who hath called us to his Eternal Glory, by Christ Jesus, after that we have suffered a while, make you Perfect, &c. *1 Pet. 5. 10.*

F I N I S.