

*Sam Ruggles*

# OBSERVATIONS

ON SOME.

## FATAL MISTAKES,

a Book lately published, and intitled,

The DOCTRINE OF GRACE ; or, the OFFICE and OPERATIONS of the HOLY SPIRIT vindicated from the Insults of Infidelity, and the Abuses of Fanaticism. By Dr. *William Warburton*, Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

In a LETTER to a Friend.

By George Whitefield, A. M.

late of *Pembroke College, Oxford*, and Chaplain to the Countess of *Huntingdon*.

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*Truth is never more grossly abused, nor its advocates more dishonoured, than when they employ the foolish arts of sophistry, buffoonery, and scurrility, in its defence.* Bishop of Gloucester's preface.

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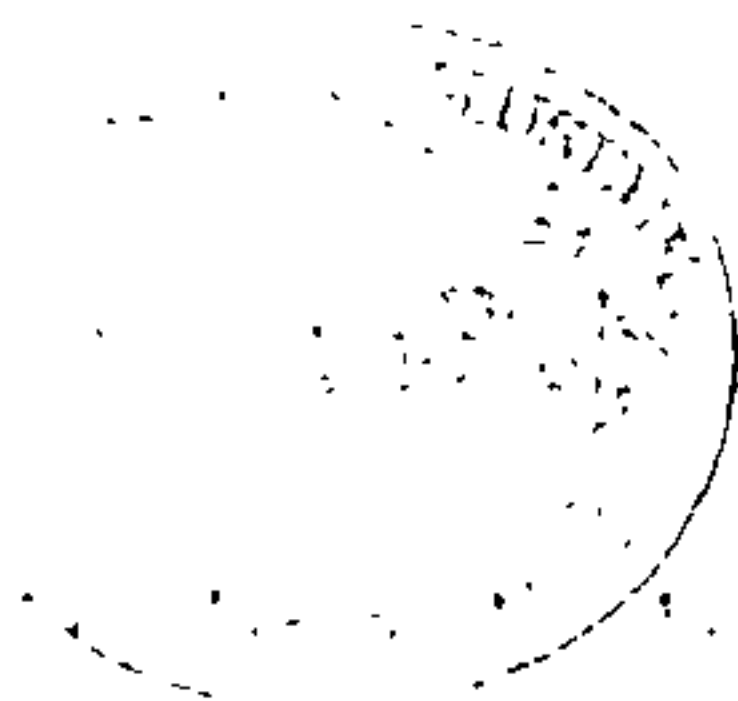
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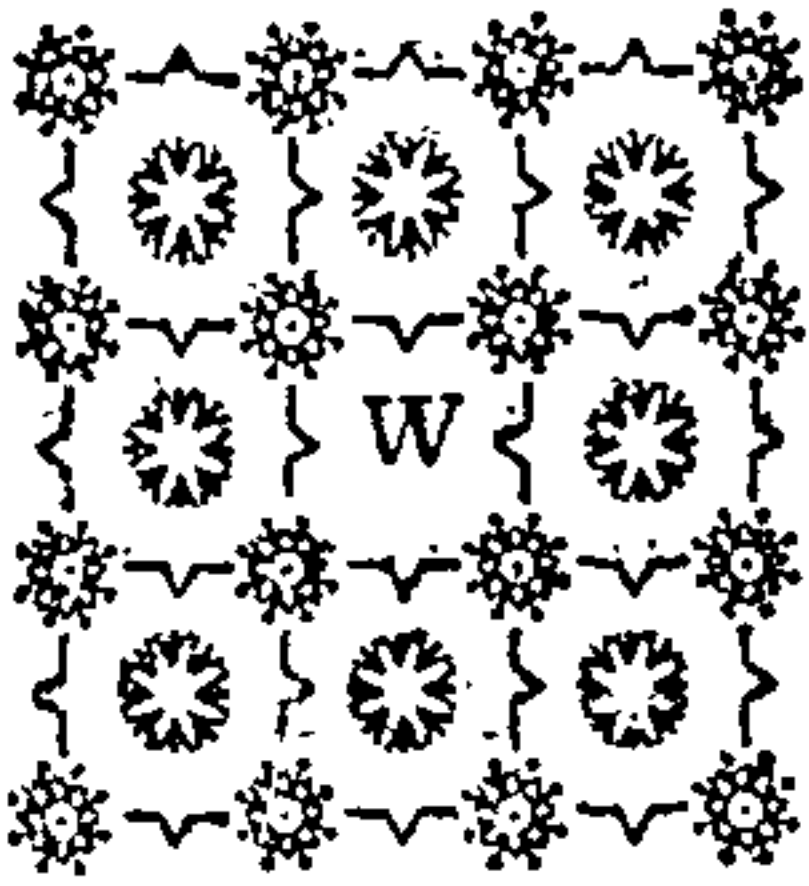
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# Observations on some FATAL MISTAKES, &c.

MY DEAR FRIEND,


 WHEN the great St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, had a mind to lay a solid foundation for the grand distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, I need not inform you, that, like a wise master-builder, he takes care to dig deep into the corruption of human nature ; and, after having given us a lively portraiture of the universal depravity of the Gentile world, proceeds, in a most masterly manner, to bring down the proud thoughts and high imaginations of the self-righteous and formal Pharisees, by proving, to a demonstration, that the Jewish professors, notwithstanding all their peculiar advantages of external revelation, circumcision, near affinity to Abraham, and such like, were all equally included under sin, were all equally guilty before God, had all equally fallen short of his glory, consequently were all upon an equal level with the rest of mankind, and stood as much in need of the free grace of God in Christ Jesus, and the sanctifying operations of his Holy Spirit, as the most savage Barbarian or disputing Greek. This was acting like the forerunner or harbinger of our blessed Lord : for when he saw many of the Sadducees and Pharisees (the infidels and professors of that age) coming to his baptism, disregarding as it were, the former, in a very pungent, and, what some would term, a very unpolite manner, he thus addresseth himself to the latter : “ O

A 2

“ generation

“ generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from  
 “ the wrath to come ? And think not to say within your-  
 “ selves, we have Abraham for our father : for I say un-  
 “ to you, God is able of these stones to raise up children  
 “ unto Abraham.” But why speak I of acting like the  
 forerunner ? I should rather have said, this was imitating  
 our common Lord himself, who, in his glorious and di-  
 vine sermon, (when, to use the words of the seraphic Her-  
 vey, a mount was his pulpit, and the heavens were his  
 sounding-board), employs himself chiefly in detecting the  
 false glosses and corrupt interpretations of the then masters  
 of Israel, withal adding this cutting assertion, *viz.* “ Un-  
 “ less your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the  
 “ scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the  
 “ kingdom of heaven.”

What a pity is it, my dear friend, that our modern de-  
 fenders of Christianity, in their elaborate and undoubtedly  
 well-meant treatises, have not been more studious to copy  
 after such bright and unerring examples ! Many of these  
 I know you have read ; and am persuaded, out of your  
 usual candor, will do them so much justice as to acknow-  
 ledge, that, in respect to the out-works of religion, such  
 as clearing up the prophecies of the Old, and vindicating  
 the miracles of the New Testament, against the attacks of  
 Infidels and Freethinkers, they have shewn themselves,  
 as far as bare human learning, added to external revela-  
 tion, can carry them, to be masters of strong reasoning,  
 nervous language, and conclusive arguments. But then,  
 as I have often heard you lament, one thing they seem to  
 lack, *viz.* a deeper and more experimental knowledge of  
 themselves and Jesus Christ. Hence it is, that when they  
 come to touch upon the internals and vitals of Christiani-  
 ty, they are quite grappled, and write so unguardedly of  
 the all-powerful influences of the Holy Ghost, as to sink  
 us into a state of downright formality ; which, if the a-  
 postle



postle Paul may be our judge, we had need as much to be cautioned against, as fanaticism, superstition, or infidelity itself : For in his second epistle to Timothy, after giving us a dreadful account of the abounding of wicked men in the last perilous times, such as lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; he brings up the rear in this awful manner, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,—from such, says he, turn away ;—for, to use the words of our Lord, publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of God before them.

Sorry am I to send you word, that a writer of this unhappy stamp now lies upon my table ; a writer, who, although he intitles his book, *The Offices and Operations of the Holy Ghost vindicated from the Insults of Infidelity and Abuses of Fanaticism*, yet in his great zeal against the latter, and to the no small encouragement of the former, as far as perverted reason and disguised sophistry could carry him, hath, in effect, robbed the church of Christ of its promised Comforter, and thereby left us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, without any supernatural influence or divine operations whatsoever.—Often have I heard you observe, that there never was an age in which the stewards of the mysteries of Christ were more loudly called upon to vindicate the offices and operations of the Holy Spirit than that wherein we live. And for my own part, I cannot help thinking, that the most accomplished and duly qualified person in the universe, could he write or speak so extensively, that the whole world might hear or read him, could not possibly express his love to mankind, in general, and the church of God, which

which he hath purchased with his own blood, in particular, in a more necessary, commendable, and useful way, than by declaring, upon the house-top, that the Holy Ghost, like its almighty purchaser, is the same to-day as he was yesterday ; that he is now, as well as formerly, in the use of all instituted means, appointed to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment ; to lead them into all truth, by spiritually opening their understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures ; and to renew a clean heart and right spirit within them here, in order that they may be thereby prepared for the full enjoyment of a triune and ever-blessed God hereafter. This, you will judge, my dear friend, is what any one might have reasonably expected to have met with in a book bearing such a promising title. But, alas ! how was I disappointed ! and how will you be equally surprised, when I tell you, that, upon perusing the book itself, I found that the author, instead of vindicating or asserting, rather denies and ridicules the standing and unalterable operations of the Holy Ghost. For, having ingeniously taken a great deal of learned pains against the insinuations of Dr. Middleton, to prove that there once was a Holy Ghost ; that he did once actually descend upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost ; and further, that he did once inspire the sacred writers to settle the canon of Scripture ; he then, in order to tear up superstition, and, what he calls, fanaticism, by the roots, takes infinitely greater pains, (as well he might, being a most arduous task indeed,) to shew, that what true believers, in all ages, have always looked upon to be the standing and ordinary operations of the Spirit, viz. “ Such as manifest themselves  
“ in grace and knowledge, and which administer aid in  
“ spiritual distresses, are to be accounted and called miraculous, as much as those which extended outwards, in  
“ the gifts of healing, and the relief of other corporeal  
“ infirmities ;



“ infirmities ; and these miraculous powers being now,  
 “ upon the perfect establishment of Christianity, *totally*  
 “ *withdrawn*, it consequently must be superstitious and  
 “ fanatical to look for, or pretend to be possessed of, any  
 “ of those operations which manifest themselves in grace  
 “ and knowledge, and which administer aid in spiritual  
 “ distresses.” Pages 75. 82. 83. octavo edition. Strange  
 assertions these, you will say, for a vindicator of the offi-  
 ces and operations of the Holy Ghost, against the insults  
 of infidelity and the abuses of fanaticism ! Alas ! what  
 could a *Middleton* say more ? Nay, I could almost add,  
 where hath he expressly said so much ? But if it be su-  
 perstition to look for, if it be fanaticism to seek after, and  
 not rest till we are actually and experimentally possessed  
 of, the supernatural influences of the Blessed Spirit, ma-  
 nifesting themselves in grace and divine knowledge, and  
 affording aid in spiritual distresses ; then may you and I,  
 my dear friend, become more and more superstitious and  
 fanatical every day : for I am persuaded, that without  
 such divine manifestations as exceed the powers of huma-  
 nity, were we to be signed with the sign of the cross, in  
 baptism, a thousand times over, we could never success-  
 fully fight under its banner against sin, the world, and  
 the devil, and consequently not so much as truly com-  
 mence, much less continue to be, Christ’s faithful servants  
 and soldiers, even to the end of our lives.

Surely, was the apostle *Paul* to rise from the dead,  
 and read over, or hear of, such strange positions, his  
 spirit, as once at *Athens*, would again be stirred in him,  
 to see a writer thus attempting to erect an altar for the  
 worship of an unknown God. I say an unknown God.  
 For how is it possible, in the very nature of the thing, for  
 us, who are by nature carnal and sold under sin, ever to  
 worship God, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth, with-  
 out

out some inward manifestations of grace and spiritual knowledge, super-added to the light of external revelation, to enable us so to do ? For, to apply what this apostle observes upon a like occasion, he is not a real Christian who is only one outwardly ; but he alone is a true Christian, who is one inwardly, whose baptism is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not merely of the water, whose praise is not of man, but of God. And yet (would you think it ? ) this writer is so unwary as to attempt to press this very apostle, that true assertor of the doctrine of grace, that genuine irrefragable vindicator of the offices and operations of the Holy Spirit, into his mistaken service. Never, I believe, were the saint and the scholar, the gentleman and the Christian, more sweetly blended together than in the character and writings of this favourite of heaven. How often, my dear friend, in our more retired moments, when conversing together concerning the lively oracles of God, have you called upon me to take notice of this truly great man's pertinent and powerful preaching before Felix the governor, as well as his inexpressibly polite and persuasive address to King Agrippa ? And how have you again and again read over to me, and made remarks upon, those striking images, and those divine characteristics, which this accomplished master of human and divine rhetoric lays before us in the 13th chapter of his 1st epistle to the Corinthians, of that most excellent grace of charity or love of God ? A grace so absolutely necessary to the Christian life, that without it, to use the inimitable language of this inspired writer, *Though we had a miraculous faith so as to remove mountains, nay though we should give all our goods to feed the poor, and even our bodies to be burnt, it would profit us nothing.* — A grace, that never faileth, but a sacred something that we shall eternally remain possessed of, and increasing in, even when faith shall end in the vision, and hope in the  
endless



endless fruition of the ever-blessed God. Oh, my dear friend, how frequently have our hearts burnt within us, under the glowing warmth of such an animating prospect? And yet, incredible as it may seem to you, I assure you, that this very chapter is singled out by our hapless author, to prove that supernatural manifestations of grace and knowledge of spiritual aids in spiritual distresses, were the miraculous gifts of the primitive church, and were totally withdrawn on its perfect establishment. Surely a more pertinent one could not be selected out of the whole New Testament, to prove directly the contrary. For let any man impartially examine the glorious inseparable properties and concomitants of this divine grace and gift of charity, recorded in this chapter, and then make the least doubt whether any person living can possibly be possessed of this most excellent gift, without those very supernatural manifestations of grace and knowledge, and those divine influences of the Holy Spirit exceeding the powers of humanity, which this unhappy writer would fain persuade us are now abated or totally withdrawn. *Charity* (says our apostle) *suffereth long, and is kind—Charity envieth not—Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up—seeketh not her own—is not easily provoked—thinketh no evil—rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth—beareth all things—hopeth all things—endureth all things.* Now, can human reason, with all its heights; can calm philosophy, with all its depths; or moral suasion, with all its insinuating arts; so much as pretend to kindle, much less to maintain and blow up into a settled habitual flame of holy fire, such a spark as this in the human heart? Sooner might one attempt to extinguish the most rapid and devouring flames, by reading a lecture upon the benefit of cold water, or reach out one's presumptuous hand to create a new heaven and a new earth, than to dream of extinguishing those innate fiery passions of envy, selfish-

ness, or malice, which this charity or love of God is here said to militate against ; or to work or form the soul into any of those divine tempers here spoken of, as the genuine effects and fruits of the love of God. No, my dear friend, these are flowers not to be gathered in nature's garden. They are exotics ; planted originally in heaven, and in the great work of the new birth, transplanted by the Holy Ghost, not only into the hearts of the first apostles or primitive Christians, but into the hearts of all true believers, even to the end of the world. For doubtless of all such St. Paul speaks, when he says, *Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* And hence, doubtless, it is, that we were all in general lately directed, in one of the collects of our church, to pray to that Lord “ who hath taught us, that all our  
“ doings without charity are nothing worth, that he  
“ would send the Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts  
“ that most excellent gift of charity.” So that, according to our reformers, supernatural influence and manifestations of grace and knowledge are so far from being totally withdrawn, that they, in the end of this very collect, teach us to confess, that without them, or, which is the same, without the love of God poured into the heart by the Holy Ghost, “ whosoever liveth is counted dead before him.” But, if we will believe our author, charity signifies little more than the outward establishment of the Christian church, and consequently that the apostle means no more in this chapter than to shew us, “ that prophecies, mysteries, knowledge,” (*i. e.* according to this writer, all supernatural knowledge,) “ were to cease when  
“ Christianity arrived to a perfect establishment ” Page 82.—Nay, scorning to tread in the steps of Whitby, Hammond, Burkit, and every consistent spiritual expositor



sitor of holy writ, our new commentator, out of his paradoxical genius, labours to prove, that when the great apostle asserts, that charity never fails, and therefore hath the preference over faith and hope, he means nothing less than to assert its eternal duration and that consequently his true meaning hath hitherto escaped every unwary reader but himself. Pages 75, 6, 7. Conscious, no doubt, of this singularity, and justly aware of its needing some apology, he very properly adds, page 82. that such an uncommon interpretation “ instructs the unwary reader  
 “ with what caution and application he should come to  
 “ the study of that profound reasoning with which all St. Paul’s epistles abound.” And may I not, at least with as great propriety, subjoin, that this may also instruct every unwary reader with what caution he should come to the study of that profound reasoning with which this treatise abounds ? so very profound, that I believe it exceeds the power of humanity to fathom its depths, so far as to draw out of it any true, consistent interpretation of the apostle’s reasoning on this chapter at all.

I might here add, my dear friend, some other specimens of our author’s manner of explaining Scripture by his human reason : for instance, “ keeping ourselves unspotted from the world,” he says, page 157. signifies only *our using the means of grace*. And again, when the apostle informs us, Ephes. v. 9. that the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, he tells us, that truth refers to *Christian doctrine*, goodness to *Christian practice*, and by righteousness is meant “ the conduct of  
 “ the whole to particulars, and consists in that equal  
 “ gentleness of government, where church-authority is  
 “ made to coincide with the private rights of conscience ;



“ and this refers to *Christian discipline*\*;” with several such like instances, which even the most unwary reader without much study or application, may meet with, scattered up and down this author’s performance: but this would be too great a digression: And indeed I should not have dwelt so long even upon this extraordinary interpretation of the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, had not this writer himself called it this *decisive passage*, and given it as his opinion, that this is the only express declaration recorded in Scripture, p. 76. to prove, that all supernatural knowledge or divine influence was to cease, when Christianity was perfectly established, or the world arrived at a perfect Christian state. But every day’s experience, nay, this author’s very book, proving beyond all doubt, that Christianity is not as yet thus perfectly established, we may, at least as yet, according to his own principles, expect divine manifestations of grace and knowledge, and spiritual aids under spiritual distresses, without justly incurring the imputation either of superstition or fanaticism.

But to proceed——However profound and unintelligible our author’s comments may be, yet, when he comes to shew the reasonableness and fitness of this thing, viz. an abatement or total withdrawing of divine influence in these last days, (and wo to the Christian world if he succeeds in his unhallowed attempt), he speaks intelligibly enough:—For thus writes our author.—“ On the Spirit’s  
 “ first descent upon the apostles, he found their minds  
 “ rude and uninformed, strangers to all celestial know-  
 “ ledge, prejudiced in favour of a carnal law, and utterly  
 “ averse to the dictates of the everlasting gospel. The  
 “ minds

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\* How much more pertinent is Mr. Clark’s interpretation?—According to him, goodness is an inclination to do good to others truth is freedom from hypocrisy and dissimulation, righteousness is just dealing. Eph. v. 9.

“ minds of these he illuminated, and, by degrees, led  
 “ into all truths necessary for the professors of the faith to  
 “ know, or for the propagators of it to teach.”—True.  
 —“ Secondly, the nature and genius of the gospel were  
 “ so averse to all the religious institutions of the world,  
 “ that the whole strength of human prejudices was set in  
 “ opposition to it.—To overcome the obstinacy and  
 “ violence of those prejudices, nothing less than the  
 “ power of the Holy One was sufficient.”—Good—  
 “ And, thirdly and lastly, There was a time when the  
 “ powers of this world were combined together for its  
 “ destruction. At such a period nothing but superior aid  
 “ from above, could support humanity in sustaining so  
 “ great a conflict as that which the holy martyrs encoun-  
 “ tered with joy and rapture, the horrors of death and  
 “ torment.”—Excellent.—But what follows.—Accor-  
 ding to our author,

> *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.*

“ But now,” adds he, (and a dreadful *but* it is), the pro-  
 “ fession of Christianity is attended with ease and honor;”  
 and we are now, it seems, so far from being “ rude and  
 “ uninformed, and utterly averse to the dictates of the  
 “ everlasting gospel, that whatever there may be of pre-  
 “ judice, it draws another way.—Consequently, a rule  
 “ of faith being now established, the conviction which  
 “ the weight of human testimony, and the conclusions  
 “ of human reason afford us of its truth, are abundant-  
 “ ly sufficient to support us in our religious perseverance;  
 “ and therefore it must certainly be a great mark of fa-  
 “ naticism to expect such divine communications, as tho’  
 “ no such rule of faith was established; and also as high-  
 “ ly presumptuous or fanatical to imagine that rule to be  
 “ so obscure as to need the further assistance of the Holy  
 “ Spirit



“ Spirit to explain his own meaning.” Pages 85. 86. 87. 88. This, you will say, my dear friend, is going pretty far. And, indeed, supposing matters to be as this writer represents them to be, I do not see what need we have almost of any established rule at all, at least in respect to practice, since corrupt nature is abundantly sufficient of itself to help us to persevere in a religion attended with ease and honor. And I verily believe, that the Deists throw aside this rule of faith entirely, not barely on account of a deficiency in argument to support its authenticity, but because they daily see so many who profess to hold this established self-denying rule of faith with their lips, persevering all their lives long in nothing else but an endless and insatiable pursuit after worldly ease and honor. But what a total ignorance of human nature, and of the true unalterable genius of the everlasting gospel, doth our author’s arguing discover? For supposing, my dear friend, that this or any other writer should undertake to prove that the ancient Greeks and Romans were born with sickly, disordered and crazy bodies, but that we, in modern days, being made of a firmer mould, and being bless’d with the establish’d rules of Galen and Hippocrates, need now no further assistance from any present physician, either to explain or apply those rules to our present ails and corporeal distresses, though we could not, without the help of some linguist superior to ourselves, so much as understand the language in which those authors wrote :— Supposing, I say, any one was to take it into his head to write in this manner : Would he not be justly deemed a dreaming enthusiast or real fanatic? And yet this would be just as rational as to insinuate, with our author, that we, who are born in these last days, have less depravity in our natures, less enmity to, and less prejudice against the Lord Jesus Christ, and less need of the divine teachings of the Blessed Spirit to help us to understand the true  
spiritual



spiritual meaning of the Holy Scriptures, than those who were born in the first ages of the gospel. For as it was formerly, so it is now, the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit. And why ? Because they can only be spiritually discerned. But when is it that we must believe this author ? For, page 73. he talks of some of the “ first Christians, who were in the happy circumstance “ of being found innocent, when they were led into the “ practice of all virtue by the Holy Spirit.” And what occasion for that, if found innocent ? But how innocent did the Holy Spirit find them ? Doubtless just as innocent as it finds us, viz. conceived and born in sin ; having in our flesh, i. e. our depraved nature, no good thing ; bringing into the world with us a corruption which renders us liable to God’s wrath and eternal damnation ; with a carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and a heart, the thoughts and imaginations of which are declared to be only evil, and that continually ; and whose native and habitual language, though born and educated under a Christian dispensation, is identically the same as that of the Jews, viz. *We will not have the Lord Jesus to reign over us.* This, and this alone, my dear friend, is all the innocence that every man, naturally engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, whether born in the antediluvian, patriarchal, Mosaic, apostolic, or present age, can boast of. And if this be matter of fact, (and who that knows himself can deny it ?), it is so far from being superstitious or fanatical to assert the absolute necessity of a divine influence, or a power superior to that of humanity, that it is a most irrefragable argument for its continuance without the least abatement or withdrawing whatsoever. Since daily experience proves, that, without such a power our understandings cannot be enlightened, our wills subdued, our prejudices and enmity overcome, our affections turned into a proper channel, or, in short, any one individual

vidual of the apostate fallen race of Adam be saved. And if so, what becomes of our author's arguments to shew the fitness of an abatement or total withdrawing of divine influence in these gospel-days ? Might he not, with as great consistency, have undertaken to shew the fitness of an abatement or total withdrawing of the irradiating light and genial warmth of the natural sun ? For, as the earth, on which we tread, stands as much in need now of the abiding influence of the genial rays of that great luminary in order to produce, keep up, and complete the vegetative life in grass, fruits, plants, and flowers, as it did in any preceding age of the world ; so our earthly hearts do now, and always will, stand in as much need of the quickening, enlivening, transforming influences of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that glorious Sun of righteousness, as the hearts of the first apostles ; if not to make us preachers, yet to make us Christians, viz. by beginning, carrying on, and completing that holiness in the heart and life of every believer in every age, without which no man living shall see the Lord. And the Scriptures are so far from encouraging us to plead for a diminution of divine influence in these last days of the gospel, because an external rule of faith is thereby established, that, on the contrary, we are encouraged by this very established rule to expect, hope, long, and pray for larger and more extensive showers of divine influence than any former age hath ever yet experienced. For, are we not therein taught to pray, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God, and to wait for a glorious epocha, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas ? Do not all the saints on earth, and all the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, nay, all the angels and archangels about the throne of the most high God, night and day, join in this united cry, Lord Jesus, thus let thy kingdom come !

But



But by this time, my dear friend, I imagine you would be glad to know against whom these *bruta fulmina*; this unscriptural artillery, is levelled—Our author shall inform you.—All modern pretenders to divine influence in general; and you may be assured the poor Methodists (those scourges and eye-sores of formal, self-righteous, letter-learned professors) in particular.—To expose, and set these off in a ridiculous light, (a method that Julian, after all his various tortures, found most effectual) this writer runs from Dan to Beersheba; gives us quotation upon quotation out of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journals; and to use his own simile upon another occasion, by a kind of Egyptian husbandry, draws together whole droves of obscene animals, of his own formation, who rush in furiously, and then trample the Journals, and this sect, already every where spoken against, under their feet.—In reading this part of his work, I could not help thinking of the Papists dressing John Huss in a cap of painted devils, before they delivered him up to the secular arm.—For our author calls the Rev. Mr. John Wesley—paltry mimic—spiritual empiric—spiritual martialist—meek apostle—new adventurer.—The Methodists, according to him, are—modern apostles—the saints—new missionaries—illuminated doctors—this sect of fanatics.—Methodism itself is modern faintship:—Mr. Law begat it, and Count Zinzendorf rocked the cradle—and the devil himself is man-midwife to their new birth.—And yet this is the man, my dear friend, who in his preface to this very book lays it down as an invariable maxim, “That truth is never so grossly injured, or its advocates so dishonoured, as when they employ the foolish arts of sophistry, buffoonery, and personal abuse in its defence.” By thy own pen shalt thou be tried, thou hapless, mistaken advocate of the Christian cause.—Nay, not content with dressing up this meek apostle, this

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spiritual



spiritual empiric, these new missionaries, in bear-skins, in order to throw them out to be baited by an ill natured world, he proceeds to rake up the very ashes of the dead; and, like the witch of Endor, as far as in him lies, attempts to bring up and disquiet the ghosts of one of the most venerable sets of men that ever lived upon the earth; I mean the good Old Puritans.—“For these,” says our author, “who now go under the name of *Methodists*, in “the days of our forefathers, under the firm reign of “Queen Elisabeth, were called *Precisians*;—but then, “as a precious metal which had undergone its trial in the “fire and left all its dross, the sect, with great propriety, “changed its name,” (a very likely thing to give themselves a nickname, indeed,) “from *Precisian* to *Puritan*. —Then “in the weak and distracted times of Charles “I. it ventured to throw off the mask, and under the “new name of *Independent*, “became the chief agent of all “the dreadful disorders which terminated that unhappy “reign.—So that, according to this author’s heraldic, genealogical fiction, “Methodism is the younger daughter to Independency, and now a Methodist is an apostolic Independent;” (God grant he may always deserve such a glorious appellation;) “but an independent was “then a Mahometan Methodist.” Pag. 142. 143. 144. —What!—an Independent a Mahometan Methodist? —What!—the learned Dr. Owen, the great Dr. Goodwin, the amiable Mr. How, and those glorious worthies who first planted the New-England churches, Mahometan Methodists? Would to God, that not only this writer, but all who now profess to preach Christ in this land, were not only almost, but altogether such Mahometan Methodists, in respect to the doctrine of divine influence, as they were! For I will venture to affirm, that if it had not been for such Mahometan Methodists, and their successors, the free-grace Dissenters, we should, some years ago, have

have been in danger of sinking into Mahometan Methodism indeed ; I mean, into a Christianity destitute of any divine influence manifesting itself in grace and knowledge, and void of any spiritual aid in spiritual distresses. — But from such a Christianity, good Lord deliver this happy land. — The design our author had in view in drawing such a parallel, is easily seen through. — Doubtless to expose the present Methodists to the jealousy of the civil government. For, says he, p. 142. “ We see Methodism at present under a well established government, “ where it ~~is~~ obliged to wear a less audacious look. — “ To know its true character, we should see it in all its “ fortunes.” — And doth this writer then, in order to gratify a sinful curiosity of seeing Methodism in all its fortunes, desire to have the pleasure of seeing the weak and distracted times of Charles I. brought back again ? Or dares he insinuate, that because, as he immediately adds, ‘ our country hath been productive of every strange thing,’ that we are in the least danger now of any such distracting turn, since we have a King upon the throne, who, in his first most gracious speech to both houses of Parliament declared, he would preserve the Act of Toleration inviolable ? And that being the case, blessed be God, we are in no danger of any return of such weak and distracted times, either from the apostolic Independents, Mahometan Methodists, or any religious sect or party whatsoever. My dear friend, “ if this is not gibbeting up names, with un- “ regenerate malice, to everlasting infamy,” I know not what is. But it happens in this, as in similar cases, whilst men are thus busy in gibbeting up the names of others, they unwittingly, like Haman, when preparing a gallows for that apostolic Independent, that Mahometan Methodist, Mordecai, all the while are only erecting a gibbet for their own.



But, methinks, I see you now begin to be impatient to know, (and indeed I have neither inclination nor leisure at present to pursue our author any further), who this can be that takes such gigantic strides?—I assure you a perfect Goliath in the retinue of human learning—Will you guess?—Perhaps Dr. T——r of Norwich.—No—he is dead.—Certainly not a churchman?—Yes; a member, a minister, a dignitary, a bishop of the church of England;—and, to keep you no longer in suspense, it is no less a man than Dr. Warburton, the author of *The divine legation of Moses*, and now William Lord Bishop of Gloucester.—I know you are ready to say, *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon*. But, my dear friend, what can be done?—His Lordship hath published it himself; nay, his book hath just now gone through a second impression; and that you may see and judge for yourself, whether I have wronged his Lordship or not, (as it is not very weighty), I have sent you the book itself.—Upon the perusal, I am persuaded you will at least be thus far of my opinion, that however *deus et tutamen* is always the motto engraven upon a bishop's mitre, it is not always most certain, though his Lordship, p. 202. says it is, that they are written in every prelate's breast. And how can this prelate in particular be said to be the *ornament* or *safeguard* of the church of England, when his principles are as directly contrary to the offices of that church over which he is, by divine permission, made overseer, as light is contrary to darkness? You know, my dear friend, what our ministers are taught to say when they baptize: “I beseech  
 “you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord  
 “Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous goodness he will  
 “grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have.” But what says his Lordship?—All influence exceeding the *power of humanity* is miraculous,  
 and



and therefore to abate or be totally withdrawn, now the church is perfectly established. What say they when they catechise? “ My good child, know this, that thou art  
 “ not able to do these things of thy self, nor to walk in  
 “ the commands of God, and to serve him, without *his*  
 “ *special grace.*”——But what says his Lordship?——  
 A rule of faith being now established, the conviction which the weight of human testimony, and the conclusions of human reason afford, are abundantly sufficient to support us in our religious perseverance.—What says his Lordship himself, when he confirms children thus catechised? “ Strength-  
 “ en them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy  
 “ Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy  
 “ manifold gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and un-  
 “ derstanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength.”  
 ——But what says his Lordship, when he speaks his own sentiments?——All aids in spiritual distresses, as well as those which administered help in corporeal diseases, are now abated, or totally withdrawn.—What says his Lordship when he ordains? “ Dost thou trust that thou art inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost?——“ Receive thou the Holy Ghost.”

*Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
 And lighten with celestial fire:  
 Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
 Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.  
 Thy blessed unction from above,  
 Is comfort, life, and power of love:  
 Enable with perpetual light,  
 The dulness of our blinded sight.*

What says his Lordship when pronouncing the blessing?  
 “ The peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
 “ keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love  
 “ of God.”——But what says his Lordship when retired to  
 his

his study?—All supernatural influence, manifesting itself in grace and knowledge, is miraculous, and therefore to cease under a perfect establishment.—What says?—But I check myself;—for the time would fail me was I to urge all those quotations that might be produced out of the Articles, Homilies, and Public Offices, to confront and invalidate the whole tenor and foundation of his Lordship's performance. But how it is consistent with that wisdom which is from above, (and by which his Lordship attempts to arraign, try, and condemn the Rev. Mr. John Wesley), to subscribe to, and make use of, public offices in the church, and then as publicly deny and contradict them in the press, I leave to his Lordship's more calm and deliberate consideration. Sure I am, if weighed in the same balance, his Lordship would be found as equally wanting at least. And indeed during the whole trial, I could scarcely refrain breaking out into the language of the eunuch of Queen Candace to Philip the evangelist, *Speaketh the prophet this of himself, or of some other man?*—I hope, my dear friend, you know me better than to suspect I thus retort upon his Lordship, in order to throw dust in your eyes to prevent your seeing what his Lordship may justly except against in the conduct of the Methodists in general, or in the Journals of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley in particular. Whatever that indefatigable labourer may think of his, you know I have long since publicly acknowledged, that there were, and doubtless, though now sent forth in a more correct attire, there are yet, many exceptionable passages in my Journals. And I hope it will be one of the constant employments of my declining years, to humble myself daily before the most high God, for the innumerable mixtures of corruption which have blended themselves with my feeble, but, I trust, sincere endeavours, whether from the press or pulpit, to promote the Redeemer's glory,



ry, and the eternal welfare of precious and immortal souls. And I assure you, that if his Lordship had contented himself with pointing out, or even ridiculing any such blemishes or imprudences, or yet still more important mistakes, in my own, or any of the Methodists conduct or performances, I should have stood entirely silent. But when I observed his Lordship, through almost his whole book, not only wantonly throwing about the arrows and fire-brands of scurrility and buffoonery, and personal abuse, but, at the same time, on account of some unguarded expressions and indiscretions of a particular set of honest, though fallible men, taking occasion to wound, vilify, and totally deny the all-powerful, standing operations of the Blessed Spirit, by which alone his Lordship or any other man living can be sanctified and sealed to the day of eternal redemption, I must own that I was constrained to vent myself to you, as a dear and intimate friend, in the manner I have done. Make what use of it you please. Perhaps hereafter I may trouble you with some further remarks. At present, you know, I am on the road to Scotland, in order to embark for America. And therefore I would now only observe to you further, that the unguarded unwary method made use of by his Lordship to stop, will rather serve to increase and establish what he is pleased to term a sect of fanatics. The more judicious Bishop Burnet, as I heard an acute advocate once observe, in the general assembly of the church of Scotland, prescribed a much better (and indeed the only effectual and truly apostolic) way to stop the progress of the Puritan ministers, when complained against to his Lordship, by some of his clergy, for breaking into and preaching in their parochial charges : *Out-live, out-labour, out-preach them*, said his Lordship. And that the Reverend Mr. John Wesley himself (that famed leader of the Methodists) and every Methodist preacher in *England* may be thus outed  
and



and entirely annihilated, is, and shall be, the hearty prayer of one, who, though less than the least of them all, begs leave to subscribe himself, in great haste, but greater love and esteem,

Yours, most affectionately,

in a never-failing Emmanuel,

G. W.

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