

A  
VISION  
OF

Vnchangeable free mercy,  
in sending the means of grace to  
undeserved sinners :

WHEREIN

Gods uncontrollable eternall purpose, in send-  
ing, and continuing the Gospel unto this Na-  
tion, in the middelt of oppositions and contin-  
gencies, is discovered : his distinguishing  
mercy, in this great work, exalted, al-  
serted, against opposers, repiners :

IN A SERMON PREACHED  
before the Honourable House  
of COMMONS, *April. 29.* being the  
day of Publike Humiliation.

Whereunto is annexed, A short defensative about Church-  
Government, (with a Countrey Essay for the pra-  
ctice of Church-Government there) Toleration  
and Petitions about these things.

By *John Owen*, Minister of the Gospel at *Coggeshall in Essex.*

LONDON,

Printed by *G. M.* for *Philemon Stephens* at the Signe  
of the Gilded Lion in *Pauls Church-yard.* 1646.



Die Mercurii 29. April, 1646.

Ordered by the Commons assembled in Parliament, That M. Jenner and Sir Peter Wentworth do from this House give thanks to M. Naïton and M. Owen for the great pains they took in the Sermons they preached this day, at the intreaty of this House, (it being a day of publike Humiliation) at *Margarets Westminster*. And to desire them to Print their Sermons: And it is Ordered that none shall presume to Print their Sermons, without license under their handwriting.

*H. Elsynge, Cler. Parl. D. Com.*

I do appoint *Philemon Stephens*, and none else, to Print my Sermon.

*John Owen.*

# AMPLISSIMO SENATUI

*Inclutissimo populi Anglicani conventui*

(ob)

*Prisca Anglo-Britannorum jura  
strenue & fideliter asserta:*

*Libertatem Patriam ( nefarijs quorundam mo-  
litionibus pæne pessundatam) recuperatam:*

*Justitiam fortiter, ἰσως ἐπιεικῶς ἀπερροπητέως ad-  
ministratam,*

*Ἀρχὴν in Ecclesiasticis Ἀρίστην τυραννικὴν dissolutam,  
Ritus Pontificios, novitios, Antichristianos  
abolitos,*

*Privilegia plebis Christianæ postliminio re-  
stituta,*

Potissimum

*Protectionem Dei O. M. his omnibus alijsque innumeris con-  
silio, Bello, Domi, foras gratiose potitam,)*

*Toto orbe jure meritiſſimo Celebratissimo,  
Toti huic Insula æternâ memoriâ recolendo,  
Viris illustribus Clarissimis, selectissimis ex Ordine Com-  
muni in suprema curia Parliam. congregatis,*

*Concionem hanc sacram, humilem illam quidem, ipsorum  
tamen voto jussuque prius coram ipsis habitam, nunc  
luce donatam,*

DDC.

*Jannes Owen.*

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A

**SERMON PREACHED**  
Before the Honourable House  
of Commons, on the day of their  
publike Fast, *April 29, 1646.*

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ACTS, chap. 16. ver. 11.

*And a vision appeared to Paul in the night, there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and helpe us.*

**T**HE Kingdom of Jesus Christ is frequently in the Scripture compared to *growing things*; *small* in the beginning and first appearance, but *increasing* by degrees unto glory and perfection. The *shapelesse stone* cut out without *hands*, having neither *form*, nor desirable beauty given unto it, becomes a *great mountain*, filling the whole earth, *Dan. 2. 35.* The *small vine* brought out of *Egypt*, quickly covers the *hills* with her shadow, her *boughs* reach unto the sea, and her *branches* unto the rivers, *Psal. 80. 8.* The tender *plant* becomes as the *Cedars* of God; and the *grain* of mustard-seed to be a *tree* for the fowls of the air, to make their nests in the *branches* thereof: *Mountains* are made *plains* before it, every *valley* is filled, and the *crooked paths* made *straights*, that it may have a *passage* to its appointed period;

*Ecclesia sicut  
luna defectum  
habet, & ortum  
frequenter; sed  
defectibus suis  
crevit, &c. hec  
est vera luna,  
quæ de fratria  
sui luce perpetua,  
luna enim sibi  
immortalitatis  
& gratia natura  
Amb.  
Hex. 16. 4.  
cap. 8.  
Psal. 8. 13.  
Ira 54. 11.  
Zech. 1. 7.  
Ira 53. 3, 4, 5.*

B

1 Job. 3. 13.  
Rev. 1. 10.  
2 Cor. 4. 4.  
Isa. 53. 2.  
Heb. 7. 15.

Cant. 2. 2.  
Mat. 10. 16.  
Psal 74. 19.

period; and all this, not only, not supported by outward advantages, but in direct opposition to the combined power of this whole creation, as fallen, and in subjection to the god of this world, the head thereof. As Christ was a tender plant, seemingly easie to be broken, and a root out of a dry ground, not easily flourishing, yet liveth for ever: Is his people and Kingdom, though as a lily among thorns, as sheep among wolves, as a turtle dove among a multitude of devourers, yet stands unshaken, at least unshivered.

The main ground and foundation of all this, is laid out, ver. 6, 7, 8, 9, of this Chapter, containing a rich discovery, how all things here below, especially such as concern the Gospel and Church of Christ, are carried along, thorow innumerable varieties, and a world of contingencies, according to the regular motions and goings forth of a free, eternall, unchangeable decree: as all inferior orbs, notwithstanding the excentricks and irregularities of their own inhabitants, are orderly carried about by the first mover.

Et ipso tempore quo ad omnes gentes predicatio evangelij mittebatur, quaedam loca apostolis adire prohibebatur ab eo, qui vult omnes homines salvos fieri. 1. Cor. 9. Ep. ad Rufin. Δις δ' ἰσραὴλ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

In the 6. verse, the planters of the Gospel are forbid to preach the word in *Asia*, (that part of it peculiarly so called,) and ver. 7. assaying to go with the same message into *Bithynia*, they are crossed by the spirit, in their attempts: but in my text, are called to a place, on which their thoughts were not at all fixed: which calling, and which forbidding, were both subservient to his free determination, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, Ephel. 1. 11.

And no doubt but in the dispensation of the Gospel, thorowout the world, unto this day, there is the like conformity to be found, to the patern of Gods eternall decrees: though to the messengers not made known aforehand by revelation, but discovered in the effects, by the mighty working of providence.

Amongst other Nations, this is the day of Englands visitation, the day-spring from on high, having visited this people, and the Sunne of righteousness arising upon us, with healing in his wings, a man of England hath prevailed

Mal. 4. 2.

vailed for assistance, and the free grace of God, hath wrought us helpe by the Gospel.

Now in this day three things are to be done, to keep up our spirits unto this duty, of bringing down our souls by humiliation.

1. To take us off the pride of our own performances, endeavours, or any adherent worth of our own, not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord; be it known unto you, be ye ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel, (O house of England,) Ezek. 36. 32.

2. To root out that atheistical corruption, which depresses the thoughts of men, not permitting them in the highest products of providence, to look above contingencies, and secondary causes, though God hath wrought all our works for us, Isa. 26. 12. and known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world, Acts 15. 18.

3. To shew that the bulke of this people are as yet in the wilderness, far from their resting place, like sheep upon the mountains, as once Israel, Jer. 50. 6. as yet wanting helpe by the Gospel.

The two first of these will be cleared, by discovering, how that all revolutions here below, especially every thing that concerns the dispensation of the Gospel and Kingdoms of the Lord Jesus, are carried along, according to the eternally-fixed purpose of God, free in it self, taking neither rise, growth, cause nor occasion, from any thing amongst the sons of men.

The third, by laying open the helpelesse condition of Gospel-wanting souls, with some particular application, to all which any text directly leads me.

The words in generall, are the relation of a message from Heaven, unto Paul, to direct him in the publishing of the Gospel, as to the place, and persons wherein, and to whom he was to preach: and in them you have these four things:

1. The manner of it, it was by vision, a vision appeared.
2. The time of it, in the night.
3. The bringer of it, a man of Macedonia.
4. The matter of it, helpe for the Macedonians, interpreted,

1. A quo.  
2. A quem.

Modo.  
Tempus.  
Instrumentum.  
Materia.

preted, *ver. 10.* to be by preaching of the Gospel.

A little clearing of the words will make way for observations.

1. For the manner of the delivery of this message, it was by *vision*: of all the wayes that God used of old, to reveal himself unto any in extraordinary manner, which were *undry and various*, Heb. 1.1. there was no one so frequent, as this of *vision*: wherein *this* did properly consist, and where by distinguished from other wayes, of the discovery of the secrets of the Lord, I shall not now discuss: in generall, *visions* are revelations of the *minde* of the Lord, concerning some *hidden things present or future*, and not otherwise to be known: and they were of two sorts;

1. Revelations merely by *word*, or some other more inter-nal species, without any outward sensible appearance, which, for the most part, was the Lords way of proceeding with the Prophets; which transient light or discovery of things before unknown, they called a *vision*.

2. Revelations, accompanied with some sensible apparitions, and that either:

1. Of things, as usually among the Prophets, *rods and pots, wheels and trees, lamps, axes, vessels, rams, goats and the like*, were presented unto them.

2. Of persons, and those according to the variety of them, of three sorts;

First, Of the second person of the Trinity; and *this* either

1. In respect of some glorious beams of his deity, as to *Isaiah*, chap. 6. 1. with *Job*, 12. 41. to *Daniel*, chap. 10. *ver. 5, 6.* as afterwards to *Iohn*, Rev. 1. 13, 14, 15. to which you may adde the apparitions of the glory of God, not immediately designing the second person, as *Ezek*, 1.

2. With reference to his humanity to be assumed, as to *Abraham*, Gen. 18. 1, 2. to *Iosua*, chap. 5. 13, 14, 15, &c.

Second, Of Angels, as unto *Peter*, Acts 12. 7. to the woman, Mat. 28. 2. to *Iohn*, Rev. 22. 8, &c.

Third, Of Men, as in my text.

Now the severall advancements of all these wayes in dignity and preeminence, according as they clearly make out, intellectuall

Ifa. 1. 1.  
Amos 1. 1.  
Nub. 1. 1.  
Obad. 1.

Jer. 1. 11.  
Jer. 1. 13.  
Ez. k. 1. 5, 6, 7.  
Zech. 1. 8.  
& 3. 9, 10. &c.  
Dan. 7. 8, 9.

Zech. 2. 1.

intellectuall *verity*, or according to the honour and exaltation of that whereof apparition is made, is too fruitlesse a speculation for this daies exercise.

Our *vision* is of the later sort, accompanied with a sensible appearance, and is called *œqua*; there be two words in the new Testament signifying *vision*, *œqua* and *ὄρασις*, coming from different *verbes*, but both signifying to see: some distinguish them, and say, that *ὄρασις* is a vision, *καὶ ὄρασις*, an appearance to a man awake; *œqua καὶ ὄρασις*, an appearance to a man asleep: called sometimes a dream, *Iob* 33. 15. like that which was made to *Ioseph*, Mat. 2. 19. but this distinction will not hold: our Saviour calling that *vision*, which his Disciples had at his transfiguration, when doubtlesse they were waking, *œqua*, Mat. 17. 9. so that I conceive *Paul* had this *vision* waking; & the night, is specified, as the time thereof, not to intimate his being asleep, but rather his watchfulness, seeking counsell of God in the night which way he should apply himself, in the preaching, of the Gospel: and such I conceive was that of later daies, whereby God revealed to *Zuinglius* a strong confirmation of the doctrine of the Lords Supper, from *Exod. 12. 11.* against the factours for that monstrous figment of Transubstantiation.

2. For the second or time of this *vision*, I need say no more, than what before I intimated.

3. The bringer of the message, *ἀνὴρ τῆς οἰκίας Μακεδονίας* ἐστίν, he was a man of *Macedonia* in a vision: the Lord made an appearance unto him, as of a man of *Macedonia*; discovering even to his bodily eyes a man, and to his minde, that he was to be conceived as a man of *Macedonia*: this was, say some, an Angel, the Tutelar Angel of the place, say the Popish expositors, or the genius of the place, according to the phrase of the Heathens, of whom they learned their dæmonologic, perhaps him, or his Antagonist, that not long before appeared to *Brutus* all *Philippi*: but these are pleasing dreams: us it may suffice, that it was the appearance of a man, the minde of *Paul* being enlightened to apprehend him as a man of *Macedonia*: and that with infallible assurance, such as usually accompanieth

B 3

divine

Vid. Aquin. 2.  
2. q. 174. Art.  
34. S. ot. in  
dij. text.

A Lapide, Sancti in locum, &c.  
Mede. Apoll. of later times.  
Huc. rech. in vit. Bruti.  
Calvin. in locum; Dicebat se d. servere. (nescio qui sapore, quon verbi explicare non poterat) quid intercesset inter Deum revelationem, &c. Aug.

divine revelations, in them to whom they are made, as Jer. 23. 28. for upon it, Luke affirmeth, ver. 10. they assuredly concluded, that the Lord called them into Macedonia.

4. The message it self is a discovery of the want of the Macedonians, and the assistance they required, which the Lord was willing should be imparted unto them: their want is not expressed, but included in the assistance desired, and the person unto whom for it they were directed. Had it been to help them in their estates, they should scarcely have been sent to Paul, who I believe, might for the most-part say with Peter, Silver and Gold have I none. Or had it been with a complain, that they, who from a province of Greece, in a corner of Europe, had on a sudden been exalted into the Empire of the Eastern World, were now enslaved to the Roman power and oppression, they might better have gon to the Parthians, then the only state in the world, formidable to the Romans: Paul, though a military man, yet fought not with Neroe's Legions, the then visible Devil of the upper world, but with Legions of Hell, of whom the earth was now to be cleared; It must be a soul-want, if he be entrusted with the supplying of it. And such this was, help from death, hell, Satan, from the jaws of that devouring Lion: of this the Lord makes them here to speak, what every one in that condition ought to speak, help for the Lords sake, it was a call to preach the Gospel.

The words being opened, we must remember what was said before of their connexion with the verses foregoing; wherein the Preachers of the Gospel, are expressly hindered from above, from going to other places, and called hither. Whereof no reason is assigned, but only the will of him that did employ them: and that no other can be rendred, I am further convinced, by considering the empty conjectures of attempters.

God fore-saw that they would oppose the Gospel, saies our Beda: so say I might he of all nations in the world, had not he determined to send his effectual grace for the removal

Act 3. 6.

I Iuzarch. de defect. oracu. Εβελος κλεται με παυς μαρτυρον ανωσαν τον δε δμου σωληπτον κη εδου πιδαν α υβρις in ιδου. Respon. Apoll. apud Eulch. Niceph.

--- a nullo duro corde resistitur, quia cor ipsum erudit. Aug. Ezek 36 26. Deat. 30. 6.

removal of that opposition: besides, he grants the means of grace to despisers, Matth. 11. 21.

They were not prepared for the Gospel, saies Oecumenius: as well say I as the Corinthians, whose preparations you may see, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. or any other nation, as we shall afterwards declare; yet to this foolish conjecture adhere the Papists and Arminians. God would have those places left for to be converted by John, saies Sedulius, yet the Church at Ephesus the chief City of those parts was planted by Paul, saies Ignatius, and Irenaeus.

He fore-saw a famine to come upon those places, saies Origen; from which he would deliver his own, and therefore it seems, left them to the power of the Devil.

More such fancies might we recount, of men, unwilling to submit to the will of God; but upon that as the sole discriminating cause of these things we rest, and draw these three observations.

1. The rule whereby all things are dispensed here below, especially in the making out of the means of grace, is the determinate will and counsell of God: stay not in Asia, go not into Bithynia, but come to Macedonia, even so, O Father, for so, &c.

2. The sending of the Gospel to any nation, place or persons rather then others, as the means of life and salvation, is of the meer free grace and good pleasure of God. Stay not in Asia, &c.

3. No men in the world want help, like them that want the Gospel. Come and help us.

Begin we with the first of these, the rule whereby, &c. or all events and effects, especially concerning the propagation of the Gospel, and the Church of Christ, are in their greatest variety, regulated by the eternal purpose and counsell of God: all things below in their events, are but the max, whereon the eternall seal of his purpose, hath left its own impression, and they every way answer unto it. It is not in my minde to extend this to the generality of things in the world, nor to shew how the creature, can by no means deviate from that eternall rule of providence whereby it is guided

Lapide. Sanctius, in loc. Rom Script. Synd ar. 1. υμεις μιν ουν εις ταυτουτοι, δε παρ δευτων σωχηω θιγτες Παυλω το χειροδεο. Ignat. Epist. ad Ep. Irac lib. 3. cap. 3. Qui causam que sit voluntati diuine, aliquid majus coquerit, Aug. Voluntas Dei nullo modo causam habet. Aquin. p. q. 114 a 5.

Quia nullo modo adest, si sic avaritia κη οτι κη διαμειν. Theophrast. apud Picum, de prov. Providentia est ratio ordinis rerum ad finem. Th. p. q. 22. q. 1. c.



earth. 4. But yet *once more* this light, by Satan and his agents, persecutors and seducers, is almost extinguished, as was foretold, 2 *Thef.* 2. remaining but in few places, and burning dim where it was, the Kingdom of the beast being full of darkness, Revel. 16. 10. yet God again raiseth up reformers, and by them kindles a light, we hope, never to be put out. But alas, what a *spot* of ground doth this shine on, in comparison of the former vast extents and bounds of the Christian world. Now is all this variety, think you, to be ascribed unto chance, as the Philosopher thought the world was made by a casual concurrence of atoms? or hath the Idol free-will, with the new goddess contingency, ruled in these dispensations? truly neither the one nor the other, no more then the fly raised the dust, by sitting on the chariot wheel; but all these things have come to passe, according to a certain unerring rule, given them by Gods determinate purpose and counsell. Secondly, presupposing this variety in the outward means, how is it that thereupon, one is taken, another left? the promise is made known to Cain and Abel; one the first murderer, the other the first Martyr; Jacob and Esau, had the same outward advantages, but the one becomes Israel, the other Edom, the one inherits the promises, the other fels his right for a messe of pottage: at the preaching of our Saviour, some believed, some blasphemed; some said he was a good man, others said, nay, but he deceiveth the people: have we not the word in its power this day, and do we not see the like various effects, some continuing in impenitency, others in sincerity closing with Jesus Christ? Now what shall we say to these things? What guides these wheels? Who thus steers his word for the good of souls? Why this also, as I said before, is from some peculiarly distinguishing purpose of the will of God.

To open the third thing proposed, I shall shew, first, that all this variety is according to Gods determinate purpose, and answereth thereunto; Secondly, the particular purposes from whence this variety proceedeth,

1. Ephes. 1. 11. He worketh all things according to the Counsell

Ioh. 7. 12.

Counsell of his own will: as man may be said to erect a fabric, according to the counsell of his will, when he frameth it before in his minde, and maketh all things in evens, answer his preconceived platforms; all things, (especially *ta waiia*, all those things, of which the Apostle there treateth, Gospel-things) have their futuration, and manner of being, from his eternall purpose: whence also is the idea in the minde of God, of all things with their circumstances, that shall be: that is the first mover, continuing it self immoveable: giving to every thing a regular motion, according to the impression which from that it doth receive: for known unto him are all his works: from the beginning of the World, Act. 15. 18.

If any attendants of actions, might free and exempt them, from the regular dependance we insitt upon, they must be either contingency or sin; but yet for both these, we have, besides generall rules, clear particular instances: what seems more contingent and casual, then the unadvised slaying of a man, with the fall of the head of an axe from the helve, as a man was cutting wood by the way side? Deut. 19. 5. yet God assumes this as his own work, Exod. 23. 13. the same may be said of free agents, and their actions: and for the other, see Act. 4. 27, 28. in the crucifying of the Sonne of Gods love, all things came to passe according as his counsell had before determined that it should be done. Now how in the one of these liberty is not abridged, the nature of things not changed in the other, sinne is not countenanced, belongs not to this discourse: the counsell of the Lord then standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart are unto all generations, Psal. 33. 12. his counsell standeth, and he will do all his pleasure, Isa. 46. 10. for he is the Lord, and he changeth not, Mal. 3. 6. with him is neither variableness nor shadow of turning, James 1. 17. all things that are, come to passe in that unchangeable method, which he hath laid them down from all eternity.

2. Let us look peculiarly upon the purposes according to which the dispensations of the Gospel, both in sending, and withholding it do proceed.

Fiscat. in loc.  
Παύλα δὲ λέγει,  
τὰ θυκτὸν ἡμῶν,  
τὰ ἴδ' ἐφ' ἡ-  
μῶν, τὴν ἀεὶ  
νοτα, ἀνὰ τὴν  
ἡμετέραν αὐτῶν  
ἐστὶν Δαμαλ-  
κῶν (sati imple.  
Mat. 10. 29.  
Iob 14. 5.  
Prov. 16. 33.  
Prov. 21. 1. 10.  
& 19. 21.  
Nihil fit, nisi  
omnipotens fi-  
eri velit, vel  
ipse sciendo,  
vel sciendo ut  
fiat. Aug.  
Gen. chap 4. 5.  
4. 5, 6, 7.  
1 King. 22. 19,  
20, 21.  
2 Kin. 5. 18, 19.  
Psal. 76. 10.  
Eccles. 7. 26.  
Iia. 6. 9, 10, 11,  
&c.  
Deum non o-  
peratur in ma-  
lu, quod ei dis-  
plicet, sed opera-  
tur per eos quod  
ei placeat recipi-  
entur vero, non  
pro eo quod  
Deus bene usum  
est ipsorum o-  
peribus malis,  
sed pro eo,  
quod ipsi ma-  
le abusi sunt  
Dei operibus  
bonis; Fulgent.  
ad Monum.

C 2

1. For

1. For the *not sending* of the means of grace unto any people, whereby they bear not the joyfull sound of the Gospel, but have in all ages followed dumb Idols, as many doe unto this day. In this chapter of which we treat, the Gospel is forbidden to be preached in *Asia* and *Bithynia*, which restraint the Lord by his providence, as yet continues to many parts of the world: now the purpose from whence this proceedeth, and whereby it is regulated, you have *Rom. 9. 22.* What if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of his wrath fitted to destruction, compared with *Matth 11. 25, 26.* thou hast hid these things from the prudent and wise, even to, O Father, for so it seemed good before thee: and with *Acts 14. 16.* he suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways: now Gods *not sending* the truth, hath the same designe and aim with his sending, the efficacy of error, viz. that they all may be damned, who have it not: there being no other name under Heaven, whereby they may be saved, but only that which is *not* revealed unto them: God in the mean time, being no more the cause of their sins, for which they incurre damnation, then the sun is the cause of cold and darknes, which follow the absence thereof: or he is the cause of a mans imprisonment for debt, who will not pay his debt for him, though he be no way obliged to do so: so then the *not sending* of the Gospel to any people, is an act regulated by that eternall purpose of God, whereby he determineth to advance the glory of his justice, by permitting some men to sin, to continue in their sin, and for sin to send them to their own place; as a Kings *not sending* a pardon to condemned malefactors, is an issue of his purpose, that they shall die for their faults. When you see the Gospel strangely, and thorow wonderfull varieties, and unexpected providences, carried away from a people, know, that the spirit which moves in those wheels, is that purpose of God which we have recounted.

2. To some people, to some Nations, the Gospel is sent, God calls them to repentance and acknowledgement of the truth, as in my text, *Macedonia*: and *England* the day wherein

2 Thel 2.

Acts 4.

Liberatur pars  
hominum, parte  
perente; sed  
cur horum mi-  
serius sit Deum,  
1. Quoniam non mi-  
serius, que sci-  
entia compre-  
hendere potest?  
later discretio-  
nis ratio, sed  
non later ipsa  
discretio. Pro Sp.  
de Vocat. Gen.

wherein we breath. Now there is in this a two-fold aim: 1. Peculiar towards some in their conversion; 2. Generall towards all for conviction, and therefore it is acted according to a two-fold purpose, which carries it along, and is fulfilled thereby.

First, His purpose of saving some in and by *Iesus Christ*, effectually to bring them unto himself, for the praise of his glorious grace: upon whomsoever the seal of the Lord is stamped, that God knows them and ownes them as his, to them he will cause his Gospel to be revealed. *Acts 18. 10.* Paul is commanded to abide at *Corinth*, and to preach there, because God had much people in that City: though the devil had them in present possession, yet they were Gods in his eternall counsel. And such as these they were, for whose sake the man of *Macedonia* is sent on his message. Have you never seen the Gospel hover about a Nation, now and then about to settle, and anon scared and upon wing again, yet working thorow difficulties, making plains of mountains, and filling valleys, overthrowing armies, putting aliens to flight, and at length taking firm root like the Cedars of God? truly if you have not, you are strangers to the place wherein you live. Now what is all this, but the working of the purpose of God to attain its proposed end, of gathering his Saints to himself. In effectually working of grace also, for conversion and salvation, whence do you thinke it takes its rule and determination, in respect of particular objects, that it should be directed to *Iohn*, not *Indus*; *Simon Peter*, not *Simon Magus*? Why only from this discriminating counsell of God from eternity, to bring the one, and not the other to himself by *Christ*, *Acts 2. 47.* the Lord added to the Church such, as should be saved. The purpose of saving is, the rule of adding to the Church of believers. And *Acts 13. 48.* as many believed as were ordained to eternall life. Their pre-ordaining to life eternall, gives them right to faith and belief. The purpose of Gods selection is the rule of dispensing saving grace.

Secondly, His purpose of leaving some inexorable, in their sins, for the further manifestation of his glorious justice, is

Rom. 8. 28, 29.  
Ephel. 1. 4.  
2 Tim 2. 19.

Ephel. 2. 11.  
Non ob aliud  
dicit, non vos  
me elegisti,  
sed ego vos e-  
legi, nisi quia  
non elegerunt  
eum, ut eligeret  
eos; sed ut eli-  
geret eum, ele-  
git eos. Non  
quia prescivit  
eos credituros,  
sed quia factu-  
rus ipse fuerit  
credentes. Ele-  
cti sunt itaq;  
ante mundi  
constitutionem,  
ea predestina-  
tione, qua De-  
us ipse sua ju-  
tura facta pre-  
vidit. electi  
sunt autem de  
mundo ex voca-  
tione, qua Deus  
id quod prede-  
stiti autem imple-  
vit. Augul. de  
bon. persever.  
cap. 16. 17.  
Mat. 11. 21.  
Act. 13. 46.

Luk. 2. 34.  
1 Pet. 1. 7.  
Ezek. 1. 5.  
Math. 2. 15.  
Rom. 9. 23.

the rule of *dispensing* the word unto them: Did you never see the *Gospel* sent or continued to an *unthankfull* people, bringing forth no *fruits* meet for it? wherefore it is so sent, see *Isa. 6. 9. 10.* which *prophecies* you have fulfilled, *Ioh. 12. 41. 42.* in men described, *Jude 4.* and *1 Pet. 2. 8.* But here we must *strike* sail, the *waves* swell, and it is no *easy* task to *sail* in this *gulf*, the *righteousnesse* of God is a great mountain, (*easy to be seen*) but his *judgements* like the great deep, (*who can search into the bottom thereof?*) *Psal. 36. 6.* And so I *hope* I have discovered, how all things here below, concerning the *promulgation* of the *Gospel*, are, in their greatest *variety*, straightly *regulated* by the eternall *purposes* and counsel of God. The *Uses* of it follow.

Use I.

To discover whence it is, that the worke of *reforming* the worship of God, and *settling* the almost departing *Gospel*, hath so powerfully been *carried* along in this Nation: that a beautifull *fabrick* is seen to *arise* in the midst of all *oppositions*, with the confusion of *axes* and *hammers* *sounding* about it: though the *builders* have been forced *ofttimes*, not only with *one* hand, but with *both* to hold the *weapons* of warre: that although the *wheels* of our chariots have been *knocked* off, and they driven *heavily*, yet the regular *motions* of the superiour wheels of *providence*, have carried on the *designe*, towards the *resting* place aimed at; that the *ship* hath been *directed* to the *port*, though the *storm* had quite *pnsted* the pilots and mariners; even from *hence*, that all this great *variety*, was but to *worke* out one certain *pre-appointed* end, proceeding in the *tracks* and paths, which were *traced* out for it from eternity; which though they have *seemed* to us a maze or *labyrinth*, such a world of *contingencies* and various *chances* hath the *worke* pailed thorow; yet *indeed* all the *passages* thereof have been *regular* and straight, answering the *platforms* laid down for the *whole* in the counsel of God. *Daniel*, chap. 9. makes his supplication for the *restauration* of *Ierusalem*, ver. 23. an *Angel* is sent to tell him, that at the *beginning* of his supplication the *commandment* came forth, *viz.* that it should be *accomplished*; it was before *determined*, and is now set on *worke*: but yet

What

what *mountains* of opposition, what *hinderances* lay in the way? *Cyrus* must come to the crown, by the *death* or slaughter of *Darius*; his *heart* be moved to send some to the worke; in a *short* time *Cyrus* is cut off; now *difficulties* arise from the following *Kings*: what their *flattering* counsellours, what the *malignant* Nations about them *conspired*, the books of *Nehemiah* and *Ezra* sufficiently declare. Whence, ver. 25. the *Angel* tells *Daniel*, that from the *commandment*, to *restore* and build *Ierusalem*, unto *Messia* the Prince, shall be 7 weeks, and 62 weeks, the *street* shall be *built* again, and the *Wall* in *trouble* some times: that is, it shall be 7 weeks to the finishing of *Ierusalem*, and thence to *Messia* the Prince, 62 weeks; 7 weeks, that is, 49 years, for so much it was\*, from the *decree* of *Cyrus*, to the finishing of the wall by *Nehemiah*: of which time the *Temple*, as the *Jews* affirmed, was all but 3 yeers in building, *Ioh. 2. 20.* during which *space*, how often did the *hearts* of the people of God *saint* in their troubles, as though they should never have seen an *end*, and therefore *ever* and *anon* were ready to give over, as *Hag. 1. 3.* but yet ye see the *decree* was *fixed*, and all those *varieties*, did but *orderly* worke in an exact *method*, for the glorious *accomplishment* of it.

*niel*: most concluding, that they are terminated in the death of Christ, happening about the middle of the last week: but about their originall or rise there is no small debate, of the four decrees made by the Persian Kings about the building of *Ierusalem*, viz. 1. By *Cyrus*, 2 *Chiron. 3. 6.* 2. By *Darius* *Ezek. 6. 3.* 3. By *Artaxerxes*, *Ez. 4. 7.* of the same to *Nehemiah*, chap. 2. following the account of their reign set down in profane stories, the last only holds exactly. *Tertullian* ad *Iude.* begins it from *Darius*, when this vision appeared to *Daniel*, whom it seems he conceived to be *Darius* by *lapses*, that followed the *Magi*, and not *Medus*, that was before *Cyrus*: and so with a singular kinde of *Chronologie* makes up his account. *Vid. Euseb. demon. Evan lib. 8. cap. 1.* *Funck Com. in Chron. Beroald. chron. lib. 3. cap. 7. 8.* *Montacu. Appar.*

*Englands* troubles, have not yet endured above half the odd yeers of those reformers task, yet, good God, how short breathed are men! what *fainting* is there? what *repining*, what *grudging* against the waies of the Lord? But let me tell you, that as the *water* in the *stream* will not go higher than the head of the fountain, no more will the *worke* in hand,

Zech. 4. 7.  
Scil. de E.  
mend. Temp.

\* I follow in this the vulgar or common account, otherwise there is no part of Scripture chronologie to contend about, as these weeks of *Da-*

hand, be carried *one Step* higher, or beyond the *aim* of its *fountain*, the counsel of God, from whence it hath its *rise*: and yet as a *river* will break thorow all *oppositions*, and swell to the *height* of mountains, to go to the *sea*, from whence it came; so will the *stream* of the Gospel, when it comes out from God, *break down* all mountains of *opposition*, and not be *hindred* from resting in its *appointed* place. It were an *ease* thing to *recall* their mindes, to some *trembling* periods of time, when there was trembling in our *Armies*, and trembling in our *Counsels*, trembling to be *ashamed*, to be *repented* of, trembling in the *City* and in the *Country*, and men were almost at their *wits end* for the *sorrows* and fears of those dayes: and yet we see how the *unchangeable purpose* of God, hath wrought *strongly* thorow all these *straits*, from *one end* to *another*, that *nothing* might fall to the *ground*, of what he had *determined*. If a man in those daies had gone about to *perswade* us, that all our *pressures* were good *omens*, that they all wrought together for our *good*, we could have been ready to *cry* with the woman, who when she had *recounted* her griefs to the *Physicians* and he still replied, they were *good* signes, *in uoi d'jabon d'ant' d'uet*, good signes have undone me, these good signes will be our *ruin*; yet behold (we hope) the contrary. Our *day* hath been like that mentioned, *Zech. 14. 6. 7.* a day whose *light* is neither *clear* nor *dark*, a day known only to the *Lord*, seeming to us to be neither *day* nor *night*: but God knew all this while that it was a *day*, he *sa*w how it all wrought for the *appointed* end: and in the *evening*, in the close, it will be *light*, so light as to be to us *discernable*. In the mean time, we are like *unskilfull* men, going to the house of some curious *Artist*, so long as he is *about* his worke, *despise* it as confused; but when it is finished, *admire* it as excellent: Whilest the *passages* of providence are on us, all is *confusion*, but when the *fabrick* is reared, *glorious*.

Use 2.

Learn to look upon the *wisdom* of God, in *carrying* all things, thorow this wonderfull *variety*, exactly to answer his own eternall *purpose*: offering to many *mountains* to lie in the way of reforming his *Churches*, and setting the Gospel,

Gospel, that his *spirit* may have the *glory*, and his *people* the *comfort* in their removal. It is an high and Noble *contemplation*, to consider the *purposes* of God, so far as by the *event* revealed, and to see what *impressions* his wisdom and power do leave upon things accomplished here below, to read in them a *temporary* history of his eternall counsels. Some men may deem it strange, that his determinate *will*, which gives *rule* to these things, and could in a *word* have reached its own *appointment*, should *carry* his people so *many* journies in the *wildernesse*, and keep us thus long in so low estate. I say, not to *speak* of his own *glory*, which hath *sparkled* forth of this *sinny* opposition, there be divers *things*, things of *light*, for our good, which he hath *brought* forth out of all that *darkenesse*, wherewith we have been overclouded: take a few instances.

1. If there had been no *difficulties*, there had been no *deliverances*: and did we never finde our hearts to be *enlarged* towards God upon such *advantages*, as to say, *Well*, this daies *temper* of spirit, was cheaply purchased by yesterdaies *anguish* and fear? that was but a being sick at sea.

2. Had there been no *tempests* and storms, we had not made out for *shelter*: did ye never run to a tree for *shelter* in a storm, and finde *fruit* which ye expected not? did ye never go to God for *safeguard* in these times, driven by outward *storms*, and there finde unexpected *fruit*, the peaceable fruit of *righteousnesse*, that made you say, Happy tempest, which cast me into such an harbour? It was a *storm* that occasioned the discovery of the *golden mines* of *India*: hath not a *storm* driven some to the discovery of the *richer* mines of the love of God in *Christ*?

Prov. 18. 10.

Heb. 12. 11.

Pet Mart. de  
Relig. Jud. de-  
cad. 1. 1. b. 1.

3. Had not *Esa*u come against *him*, with 400 men, *Jacob* had not been called *Israel*; he had not been *pur* to it, to try his strength with God, and so to *prevail*. Who would not purchase with the greatest *distresse* that heavenly *comfort*, which is in the *return* of prayers? the strength of Gods *Jacobs* in this Kingdom, had not been *known*, if the *Esa*us had not come against them. Some say, this war hath made a discovery of *Englands* strength, what it is *able* to do. I thinke

D

10

to also, not what *Armies* it can raise against *men*, but with what *Armies* of prayers and tears it is able to deal with *God*. Had not the *brethren* strove in the wombe, *Rebekah* had not asked, Why am *I thus*? nor received that answer, The *elder* shall serve the younger: had not two *sorts* of people struggled in the wombe of this Kingdom, we had not *struggled*, nor received such gracious answers. Thus do all the *various* motions of the lower *wheels*, serve for our good, and exactly answer the impression they receive from the *master* spring, the eternall purpose of *God*. Of this hitherto.

Observ. 2.  
Qui liberatur,  
gratiam dili-  
gat, qui non li-  
beratur, debi-  
tina aprofcar.  
Aug. de bon.  
persu. cap. 8.

The sending of the Gospel to any one Nation, rather than another, as the means of life and salvation, is of the meer free grace and good pleasure of *God*.

Now before I come to make out the absolute independency and freedom of this distinguishing mercy, I shall premise three things.

First, That the not sending of the Gospel to any person or people, is of *Gods* meer good pleasure, and not of any peculiar distinguishing demerit in that person or people. No man or Nation doth majorem ponere obicem, lay more or greater obstacles against the Gospel then another. There is nothing imaginable to lay a block in the passage thereof, but only sin: Now these sins, are, or may be, of two sorts; either first, against the Gospel it self, which may possibly hinder the receiving of the Gospel, but not the sending of it, which it presuppoeth. Secondly, against the Covenant they are under, and the light they are guided by, before the beams of the Gospel shine upon them: now in these, generally all are equal, all having sinned and come short of the glory of *God*: And in particular sins against the Law and light of nature, no Nation have gone farther then they which were soonest enlightened with the word, as afterwards will appear: so that the sole cause of this, is the good pleasure of *God*, as our Saviour affirmeth, *Mat. 11. 25, 26.*

Secondly, That sins against the Covenant of works, which men are under, before the Gospel comes unto them, cannot have any generall demerit, that the means of life and salvation by free grace should not be impaired to them. It is true,

I.  
Ex nequitione  
in ipso vitæ ex-  
itu gratia in-  
venit quos a-  
coipet, cum  
multi qui mi-  
nus nocentes  
videantur, doni  
hujus alieni  
sunt.  
Prol. de voc.  
Gen. lib. 1. cap.  
17.  
1 Cor. 13. 25, 26.

2.  
Ab. 14. 16, 17.  
Co. 17. 30, 31.

all Nations have deserved to be turned into *hell*, and a people that have had the *truth*, and detained it in *ungodlinesse*, deserve to be deprived of it. The first, by vertue of the sanction of the first broken Covenant: the other, by sinning against that, which they had of the second; but that men in a fallen condition, and not able to rise, should hereby deserve not to be helped up, needeth some distinction to clear it.

There is then a two-fold demerit and indignity: one meerly negative, or a not deserving to have good done unto us: The other positive, deserving that good should not be done unto us. The first of these, is found in all the world, in respect of the dispensation of the Gospel: If the Lord should bestow it only on those who do not, nor deserve it, he must for ever keep it closed up in the eternall treasure of his his own bosom. The second is found directly in none, in respect of that peculiar way which is discovered in the Gospel, because they had not sinned against it: which rightly considered, gives no small lustre to the freedom of grace.

Thirdly, That there is a right in the Gospel, and a fitnessse in that gracious dispensation, to be made known to all people in the world; that no singular portion of the earth should be any longer an holy land, or any mountain of the world lift up its head above its fellows. And this right hath a double foundation.

First, The infinite value and worth of the blood of Christ, giving fulnesse and fitnessse to the promises founded thereon, to be propounded to all man-kinds, for through his blood, remission of sins is preached to whosoever beleeveth on him, *Acts 10. 43. to every creature, Mat. 16. 15.* God would have a price of that infinite value for sin, laid down, as might justly give advantage, to proclaim a pardon indefinitely to all that will come in, and accept of it, there being in it no defect at all, (though intentionally only a ransom for some) but that by it, the world might know that he had done whatsoever the father commanded him. *Jo. 14. 31.*

Secondly, In that oeconomy and dispensation of the grace of the new Covenant, breaking forth in the later daies, whereby all externall distinction, of places and persons, people

Rom. 8. 22.  
Joel 2. 28.  
Joh. 17. 32.  
Rom. 1. 5  
Rom. 10. 26.

Rom. 8. 13.

Eph. 2. 14, 15.  
Mat. 28. 19.

and Nations being removed, Jesus Christ taketh *all Nations* to be his inheritance, dispensing to *all men* the grace of the Gospel, bringing salvation, as seemeth best to him: *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* for being lifted up, he drew all unto him, having redeemed us with his blood, out of every kindred and tongue, people and Nation, *Apoc. 5. 9.* And on these two grounds it is, that the Gospel hath in it self a right and fitness, to be preached to all, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

These things being premised, I come to the proof of the assertion.

*Deut. 7. 7, 8.* Moses is very carefull in sundry places to get this to take an impression upon their spirits, that it was meer free grace that exalted them into that condition and dignity wherein they stood, by their approach unto God, in the enjoyment of his Ordinances: in this most clearly rendring the cause of Gods love in chusing them, mentioned, *ver. 7.* to be only his love, *ver. 8.* his love towards them is the cause of his love, his free love eternally determining, of his free love actually conferring those distinguishing mercies upon them: it was not for their righteousness, for they were a stiffnecked people, *Deut. 6. 6.*

*Mat. 11. 25, 26.* Our Saviour laying both these things together, the hiding of the mysteries of salvation from some, and revealing them to others, renders the same reason and supreme cause of both, of which no account can be rendered, only the good pleasure of God. I thank thee father: and if any will proceed higher, and say, Where is the justice of this, that men equally obnoxious, should be thus unequally accepted? we say with Paul, that he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, and who art thou, O man, that disputest against God? *si tu es homo, & ego homo, audiamus dicentem, O homo, Tu quis:* to lend a pardon to some that are condemned, suffering the rest to suffer, hath no injustice. If this will not satisfy, let us say with the same Apostle, *1 Cor. 11. 33.* O the depth of the, &c.

Yea so far is it from truth, that God should dispense, and grant his word and means of grace, by any other rule, or upon any

Angl.  
Si hoc voluntarium meritum voluntarium acribere, ut malot neglexisse gratia bonos eligisse videatur.

any other motive than his own will and good pleasure, that we finde in the Scripture the direct contrary to what we would suppose, even, mercy shewed to the more unworthy, and the more worthy passed by, reckoning worthinesse and unworthinesse by lesse or greater sin, with lesse or more endeavours. Christ preaches to Chorazin and Bethsaida which would not repent, and at the same time denies the word to Tyre and Zidon, which would have gotten on sackcloth and ashes, when the other continued delicate despisers, *Mat. 11. 21.* Ezekiel is sent to them that would not hear him, passing by them that would have hearkened, *chap. 3. 5.* which is most clear, *Rom. 9. 30, 31.* the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel which followed after the Law of righteousness, have not attained so it. If in the dispensation of the Gospel, the Lord had had any respect to the desert of people, Corinth that famous place of sinning, had not so soon enjoyed it, the people whereof, for worship, were led away with dumb Idols, *2 Cor. 12. 2.* and for their lives, ye have them drawn to the life, *1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11.* Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with man-kinde, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, & such like, which is to be repeated, *1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11.* some of you were fornicators, some idolaters, but ye are sanctified: seem not these to the eye of flesh goodly qualifications—for the Gospel of Jesus Christ? had these men been dealt withall, according as they had disposed themselves, not fitter fuel for hell could the justice of God require: but yet ye see, to these the Gospel comes, which the first, a light shines to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

If God send or grant the Gospel, which is the means of grace, upon any other ground, but his meer good pleasure; then it must be an act of remunerative justice: Now there is no such justice in God towards the creature; but what is founded upon some preceding Covenant, or with promise of God to the creature, which is the only foundation of all relation between God and man, but only those that attend

resistit vobis innumerabilem causam populorum, quibus per tot secula, celestis doctrinae annuntiatione non corrumpavit, nec meliores iuste corum posteror possunas accere, quibus scriptum est, Gentium populus qui sedebat in tenebris lucem vidit magnam, *Prot. de voc. gen. lib. 1. cap. 5.*

Reason 2.  
Si de debito queratur respectu creature, in Deum cadere non potest, nisi ex alia suppositione ipsi



it was a proverbial speech amongst all, *England was our good Ass* (a beast of burthen) for (Antichrist whom they called) the Pope: Nothing but the good pleasure of God and Christ freely coming to *refuse us*, Mal. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. caused this distinction.

Obfer. 3.

Though men can do nothing towards the *procurring* of the Gospel, yet men may do much for the *expulsion* of the Gospel: if the *husbandmen* prove idle or self-seekers, the *vineyard* will be let to others; and if the people love darkness more than light, the *candlestick* will be removed; let *England* beware. Now this men may do, either upon the first entrance of the Gospel, or after some continuance of it: the Gospel spreading it self over the earth, findes entertainment, like that of mens seeking plantations amongst barbarous Nations, sometimes kept out with hideous outcries, at the shore, sometimes suffered to enter with admiration, and a little after violently assaulted.

In the first way, how do we finde the *Jews*, putting far from them the word of life, and rejecting the counsel of God at its first entrance, calling for night at the rising of the Sun? hence, *Acts 13. 41.* Paul concludes his Sermon to them, with, *Hear ye despisers, wonder and perish*: and *ver. 46.* it was necessary the word should be preached to them, but seeing they judged themselves unworthy, they were forsaken: and *ver. 51.* they shake off the dust of their feet against them, a common symbol in those daies, of the highest indignation and deepest curse: The like stubbornness we finde in them, *Acts 28.* whereupon the Apostle wholly turned himself to the *Gentiles*, *ver. 28.* How many Nations of *Europe*, at the beginning of the reformation, rejected the Gospel of God, and procured Christ, with the *Gadarens*, to depart as soon as he was entered, will be found at the last day, written with the blood of the *Martyrs* of Jesus, that suffered amongst them?

2.

Secondly, After some continuance; so the Church of *Laodicea*, having for a while enjoyed the word, fell into such a tepid condition, so little moved with that fire that Christ came to send upon the earth, *Rev. 3. 15, 16.* that the Lord was

was even sick and weary with bearing them. The Church of *Rome*, famous at the first, yet quickly, by the advantage of outward supportments and glorious phantasies, became head of that fatal rebellion against Jesus Christ, which spread it self over most of the Churches in the world; God hereupon, sending upon them the efficacy of error to believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 Thes. 2. suffering them to detain the empty names of Church and Gospel, which because they usurpe, only for their advantage here, to appear glorious, the Lord will use for the advancing of his justice hereafter, to shew them inexcusable. O Lord, how was *England* of late by thy mercy delivered from this snare? a Captain being chosen for the return of this people into *Egypt*: oh how hath thy grace fought against our backsliding? And let none seek to extenuate this mercy, by Catalogues of errors still amongst us, there is more danger of an apostasy against Christ, and rebellion against the truth, in one *Babylonish* Error, owned by men, pretending to power and jurisdiction over others, then in five hundred, scattered amongst inconsiderable disunited Individuals: I would to God, we could all speak, and think the same things, that we were all of one minde, even in the most minutulous differences that are now amongst us; But yet the truth is, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ never shakes amongst a people, untill men pretending to act, with a combined mixed power, of *Heaven* and *Earth*, unto which all sheaves must bow or be threshed, doe by vertue of this trust, set up and impose things or opinions deviating from the rule, as it was in the papacy, errors owned by mixed associations.

*Civill* and *Ecclesiasticall* are for the most part incurable, be they never to absurd and foolish: of which the Lutheran *ubiquities* and *consubstantiation* are a tremendous example: these things being presupposed.

Let no flesh glory in themselves, but let every mouth be stopped, for we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Who hath made the possessors of the Gospel to differ from others? Or what have they that they have not received?

E

Νῦν δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ ἡμέρα  
ἡ σωτηρίας ἡμῶν  
ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἐπιπέρας  
τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπέσει  
ὁ κύριος ὡς πυρρὴ  
ἡλιος, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα  
καὶ ἡ φλόξ.

Revel. 13. 17.

Ute 1.

received? 1 Cor. 4. 7. why are these things hidden from the great and wise of the world, and revealed to babes and children, but because, O Father, so it pleased thee? Mat. 11. 26. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, Rom. 9. Ah Lord, if the glory and pomp of the world might prevail with thee to lend thy Gospel, it would supply the room of the cursed Alchoran, and spread it self in the Palaces of that strong Lion of the East, who sets his Throne upon the necks of Kings; But alas, Jesus Christ is not there. If wisdom, learning, pretended gravity, counterfeit holinesse, reall policy were of any value in thine eies, to procure the word of life, it would be as free and glorious at Rome as ever; But alas, Antichrist hath his Throne there, Jesus Christ is not there. If will-worship and humilities, neglect of the body, macerations, superstitions, beads, and vainly repeated prayers, had any efficacy before the Lord, the Gospel perhaps might be in the cells of some Recluses and Monks; But alas, Jesus Christ is not there. If moral vertues, to an amazement, exact civill honesty and justice, that soul of humane society, could have prevailed ought, the heathen worthies in the daies of old, had had the promises; But alas, Iesum Christ was farre away. Now if all these be passed by, to whom is the report of the Lord made known? to whom is his arms revealed? Why! to an handful of poor sinners amongst the Nations formerly counted fierce and barbarous. And what shall we say to these things? O habebis, O the depth, &c.

Let England consider with fear and trembling the dispensation that it is now under, I say, with fear and trembling: for this Day is the Lords day, wherein he will purge us or burne us, according as we shall be found silver or drosse: it is our Day, wherein we must mend or end: let us look to the rock from whence we were hewed, and the hole of the pit from whence we were digged; was not our Father an Amorite, and our Mother an Hittite? are we not the posterity of Idolatrous Progenitors? of those who worshipped them who by nature were no gods? How often also hath this Land forfeited the Gospel? God having taken

Britanorum  
inaccessa Rom  
mani loca,  
Christo vero  
subdita.  
Tertul.  
Use 2.

Britanniam in  
Christianam  
consentire reli  
gionem, Ori  
gen. Hom. 4. in  
hact.

it twice away, who is not forward to seize upon the forfeiture. In the very morning of the Gospel, the Sun of righteousness shone upon this Land, and they say the first Potentate on the Earth, that owned it, was in Britain: but as it was here soon professed, so it was here soon abused. That part of this Isle which is called England, being the first place, I read of, which was totally bereaved of the Gospel; the blood of the then Pagan Saxons fattening the land with the blood of the Christian inhabitants; and in the close wholly subverting the worship of God. Long it was not ere this cloud was blown over, and those men who had been instruments to root out others, submitted their own necks to the yoke of the Lord, and under exceeding variety in civill affairs, enjoyed the word of grace: untill by insensible degrees, like summer unto winter, or light unto darknes, it gave place to Antichristian superstition, and left the land in little lesse then a Paganish darknes, drinking deep of the cup of abominations, mingled for it by the Roman harlot; And is there mercy yet in God to recover a Twice-lost over backsliding people? might not the Lord have said unto us, What shall I do unto thee, oh Island? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? but his heart is turned within him, his repentings are kindled together: the dry bones shall live, and the fleece shall be wet, though all the earth be dry. God will again water his garden, once more purge his vineyard, once more of his own accord he will take England upon liking, though he had twice deservedly turned it out of his service; So that coming as a refiners fire, and as fullers soap to purify the sons of Levi, to purge them as Gold and Silver, to offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness, to reform his Churches, England, as soon as any, hath the benefit and comfort thereof: Nay, the Reformation of England shall be more glorious then of any Nation in the world, being carried on, neither by might nor power, but onely by the spirit of the Lord of Hosts. But is this the utmost period of Englands sinning, and Gods shewing mercy, in continuing and restoring of the Gospel? No truly: we again in our daies have made

Niceph. lib. 2.  
cap. 40.  
Epist. Eleuth.  
ad Lucium, an.  
162. apud Bar.  
Anno 469. the  
Saxons entred.

forfeiture of the purity of his worship, by an almost *universal* treacherous apostasy: from which the free grace, and good pleasure of God hath made a great *progresse* again towards a recovery.

There are *two* sorts of men, that I finde exceedingly ready to *extenuate* and lessen the *superstition* and popish tyranny of the former daies, into which we were falling.

First, Such as were industriously *instrumentall* in it, whose *suffrages* had been loud, for the choice of a *Captain* to returne into *Egypt*: Men tainted with the *errors*, and loaded with the *preferments* of the times: with all those who blindly *adhere* to that faction of men, who as yet covertly drive on that designe. To such as *these*, all was nothing, and to *them* it is no mercy to be delivered. And the truth is, It is a favour to the *lambe* and not the *wolfe*, to have him taken out of his mouth: but *these* men have intercell by *those* things which have no *ears*, against which there is no contending.

Secondly, Such as are disturbed in their *opticks*, or have gotten false *glasses*, representing all things unto them in dubious colours: which way soever they *look*, they can see nothing but *errors, errors* of all sizes, sorts, sects, and sexes.

Errors and *Hereses*, from the beginning to the end, which hath deceived some men *not of the worst*, and made them *think*, that all before was *nothing*, in comparison of the present *confession*. A great signe they *felt* it not, or were not troubled at it; as if men should come into a *field*, and seeing some *red weeds* and *cockle* among the *corne*, should instantly affirm, there is no *corne* there, but all *weeds*, and that it were much *better* the *hedges* were down, and the whole *field* laid open to the *boar* of the forest; but the *Harvest* will one day shew the truth of these things. But that these *apprehensions* may not too much prevail, to the *vilifying* and extenuating of *Gods mercy*, in restoring to us the *purity* and liberty of the Gospel: give me leave in a few words, to set out the *danger* of that *Apostasy*, from which the *good pleasure* of God hath given us a *deliverance*. I shall instance onely in a few things: *observe* then that.

First,

First, The *Darling* errors of late years, were all of them *stones* of the old *Babel*, closing and coupling with that tremendous *structure*: which the *man of sin* had erected to de-throne *Jesus Christ*: came out of the belly of that *Trojan* horte, that *fatall engine*, which was framed to betray the *City* of God. They were popish errors, such as whereof that *Apostasy* did consist, which onely is to be looked upon, as the *great adverse state* to the Kingdom of the Lord Christ. For a man to be *disorderly* in a *Civill* state, yea often times through *turbulency* to break the peace, is nothing to an *underhand combination* with some formidable enemy, for the utter subversion of it. Heedles and *heedles errors* may breed disturbance enough, in *scattered individualls*, unto the people of God: but *such* as tend to a peace and *association*, *cum Ecclesia malignantium*, tending to a total subversion of the *sacred state*, are far more dangerous. Now such were the *Innovations* of the late *Hierarchists*; In worship, their paintings, crossings, crucifixes, bowings, cringings, Altars, Tapers, Waters, Organs, Anthems, Letany, Rails, Images, Copes, vestments; what were they, but *Roman vernish*, an *Italian* dresse for our devotion, to draw on *conformity* with that enemy of the Lord Jesus; In doctrine, the *Divinity* of Episcopacy, *auricular* confession, free-will, predestination on faith, yea works fore-seen, *limbus patrum*, justification by works falling from grace, authority of a *Church*, which *none knew what it was*, *Canonical* obedience, holiness of Churches, and the like innumerable, what were they but helps to *sancta Clara*, to make all our *articles* of Religion speak good *Roman-Catholike*? how did their *old father* of *Rome* refresh his spirit, to see such *Charlots* as those *provi-ded*, to bring *England* again unto him? this closing with *Popery*, was the *sting* in the errors of those daies, which caused *pinning*, if not *death* in the *Episcopall* pot.

Secondly, They were *such* as raked up the *ashes* of the ancient worthies, whose spirits God stirred up to *reform* his Church, and rendred them *contemptible* before all, especially those of *England*, the most whereof died in giving their *wit-ness* against the blinde figure of the *real presence*, and

E. 3.

that.

See Canterburian self-con-  
viction,  
See Ld dec.  
Coll. &c.

2.

Coal from the  
Altar.

Muricitar si  
nominis edum  
est quis nomi-  
rum reatus?  
que a curatio  
vocalorum?  
nisi aut barba-  
rum sonat ali-  
qua vox nomi-  
nis, aut male-  
dicium aut im-  
pedium.  
Tertul. Apol.  
ad Gen. cap. 3.

Altare Christi-  
anum.  
Ant. Iohanna  
Lincoln. Case  
of Greg.

that abominable *blasphemy* of the cursed *masse*; in especial, how did *England*, heretofore termed *Asse*, turn *Ape* to the Pope, having set up a *stage*, and furnished it with *all things necessary* for an unbloody sacrifice, ready to set up the abomination of *desolation*, and close with the god *Maozim*, who hath all their peculiar devotion at *Rome*?

3. Thirdly, They were in the *management* of men which had divers dangerous and pernicious *qualifications*; as

First, A false repute of *learning*, I say, a *false* repute for the greater part, especially of the *greatest*; and yet taking advantages of vulgar esteem, they bare out as though they had engrossed a *monopoly* of it: though I presume the world was never *deceived* by more empty *pretenders*; especially in respect of any *solid knowledge* in Divinity or antiquity: but yet their great *preferments*, had got them a great repute of great *deservings*, enough to *blinde* the eyes of poor *mortals* adoring them at a distance, and to periwade them, that all was not only *Law*, but Gospel too, which they *broached*: and this rendred the *infection* dangerous.

2.

Sapientior sit  
Sacerote; do-  
stior Augulli-  
no, &c.  
Clavintanus si  
modo dicere  
clam vel pro-  
palan, mox  
Tartarus, Mos-  
cis, Afru, Tur-  
cisq, facientia  
bus et jacbia  
execrator,  
&c.

Secondly, A great *hatred* of *godlinesse* in the power thereof, or any thing beyond a *form*, in whomsoever it was *found*; yea how many *odious appellations* were invented for bare *profession*, to render it contemptible?

Especially in the exercise of their *jurisdiction*, thundring their *censures* against all *appearance* of zeal, and closing with all profane impieties; for were a man a *drunkard*, a *swearer*, a Sabbath-breaker, an unclean person, so he were no *Puritan*, and had money, *pates atri janna Ditis*, the Episcopall heaven was open for them all. Now this was a dangerous and *destructive* qualification, which I beleeeve is not *professedly* found in any party amongst us.

3.

Thirdly, Which was worst of all, they had *centred* in their bosoms an *unfathomable* depth of power *Civil* and *Ecclesiasticall*, to stampe their *apostaticall* errors with *authority*, giving them not only the *countenance* of greatnesse, but the *strength* of power, violently *urging* obedience; and to me, the *sword* of error, never *cuts dangerous*, but when it is managed with such an *hand*. This I am sure, that errors in such

such, are not *recoverable* without the utmost danger of the *Civil* state.

Let now, I beseech you, *these* and the *like* things be considered especially the *strong combination* that was thorough-out the *Papall* world for the *seducing* of this poor Nation: that I say nothing, how this *viall* was poured out upon the very *throne*, and then, let us all be *ashamed* and confounded in our selves, that we should so *undervalue* and sleight the *free mercy* of God, in breaking such a snare, and setting the Gospel at liberty in *England*. My intent was, having before asserted this reparation of *Jerusalem*, to the *good pleasure* of God, to have stirred you up to *thankfulnessse* unto him, and *self-humiliation* in consideration of our great undeserving of such mercy; but alas; as far as I can see, it will scarce *pass* for a mercy: and unless every mans *perswasion* may be a *Josephs sheaf*, the goodnesse of God shall scarce be acknowledged; but yet let all the *world* know, and let the house of *England* know this day, that we lie *unthankfully* under as full a dispensation of mercy and grace, as ever Nation in the world enjoyed, and that without a lively *acknowledgement* thereof, with our own *unworthinesse* of it, we shall one day know what it is (being taught with briars and thorns) to *undervalue* the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Good Lord! what would *helplesse Macedonians* give for one enjoyment? O that *Wales*, O that *Ireland*, O that *France*. Where shall I stop? I would *offend* none, but give me leave to say, O that *every*, I had almost said, O that *any* part of the world, had such *helpes* and means of grace, as these parts of *England* have, which will scarce *acknowledge* any mercy in it: the Lord break the *pride* of our spirits, before it break the *staff* of our bread, and the *helpe* of our salvation. O that the *bread* of Heaven, and the *blood* of Christ might be accounted good *nourishment*, though every one hath not the *sauce* he desireth. I am periwaded, that if every *Abislon* in the Land, that would be a judge for the ending of our differences, were *enthroned* (he spoke the peoples good, though he intended his own power) the *case* would not be much *better* then it is. Well, the Lord make *England*, make this *honourable*.

Romes Master-  
piece.  
Royall favour-  
ite.

rable audience, make us all to know these three things.

1. First, That we have received such a blessing, in letting at liberty the truths of the Gospel, as is the crown of all other mercies, yea, without which they were not valuable, yea were to be despised: for successe without the Gospel, is nothing but a prosperous conspiracy against Jesus Christ.
2. Secondly, That this mercy is of mercy, this love of free love, and the grace that appeareth, of the eternall hidden free grace of God. He hath ihewed his love unto us because he loved us, and for no other reason in the world, this people being guilty of bloud and murder, of foul and body, adultery, and idolatry, and oppression, with a long catalogue of sins and iniquities.
3. Thirdly, That the height of rebellion against God, is the despising of spirituall Gospel-mercies; should Mordecai have troden the robes under his feet, that were brought him from the King, would it not have been severely revenged? Doth the King of Heaven lay open the treasures of his wisdom, knowledge and goodnesse for us, and we despise them? What shall I say, I had almost said, hell punishes no greater sin: the Lord lay it not to our charge: O that we might be solemnly humbled for it this day, before it be too late.

Use. 2.

To discover unto us the freedom of that effectuall grace, which is dispensed towards the elect, under and with the preaching of the word: for if the sending of the outward means be of free undeserved love, surely the working of the spirit under that dispensation, for the saving of souls, is no lesse free: for, who hath made us differ from others, and what have we that we have not received? O that God should say unto us in our bloud, live; that he should say unto us in our blood, live; that he should breath upon us when we were as dry bones, dead in trespasses and sins; let us remember, I beseech you, the frame of our hearts, and the temper of our spirits, in the daies wherein we knew not God, and his goodnesse, but went on in a swift course of rebellion; Can none of you look back upon any particular daies or nights, and say, Ah Lord, that thou shouldst be to patient and so full of

forbearance,

Non libertate  
gratiam, sed  
gratia liberta-  
tem consequi-  
mur. Aug. de  
Correp. &  
G. il. cap. 8.  
Ezek 36. 26.  
Acts 16. 14.  
P. II. 1. 29. &  
213.

forbearance, as not to send me to hell at such an instant; but oh Lord, that thou shouldst go further, and blot out mine iniquities for thine own sake, when I made thee serve with my sins; Lord, what shall I say it is? It is the free grace of my God: what expression transcendeth that, I know not.

Of Caution: England received the Gospel of meer mercy, let it take heed, lest it lose it by justice; the placer of the candlestick, can remove it; the truth is, it will not be removed unless it be abused, and wo to them, from whom mercies are taken for being abused; from whom the Gospel is removed for being despised; it had been better for the husbandman never to have had the vineyard, then to be slain for their ill using of it; there is nothing left to do them good, who are forsaken for forsaking the Gospel.

The glory of God was of late by many degrees departing from the Temple in our Land. That was gon to the threshold, yea to the mount: if now at the returne thereof, it finde again cause to depart, it will not go by steps, but all at once; This Island, or at least the greatest part thereof, as I formerly intimated, hath twice lost the Gospel; Once, when the Saxons wrested it from the Britains, when, if we may believe their own dolefull moaning Historian, they were given over to all wickednes, oppression, and villany of life: which doubles was accompanied with contempt of the word, though for faith and persuasion we do not finde that they were corrupted, and do finde that they were tenacious enough of antique discipline, as appeared in their following oppositions to the Roman Tyranny, as in Beda.

Secondly, It was lost in regard of the purity and power thereof, by blinde superstition and Antichristian impiety, accompanied also with abominable lewdnes, oppression, and all manner of sin, in the face of the sun, so that first prophaneenes, working a despising of the Gospel, then superstition ushering in prophaneenes, have in this Land shewed their power for the extirpation of the Gospel; Oh, that we could remember the daies of old, that we could consider the goodnes and severity of God, on them which fell severity, but towards us goodnes, if we continue in that goodnes, for o-

F

therwise

Gildas de Ex-  
cid. Britannie,  
Omnia que  
Deo placebant  
& displicebat  
equalitance,  
pendebantur,  
non igitur ad-  
mirandum est  
degeneres tales  
patria: illam a-  
mittere, quam  
predicto modo  
maculabant.  
Hist. M. S.  
apud Foxum.

therwise even we also shall be cut off: yet here we may observe, that though both these times there was a forsaking in the midst of the Land, yet there was in it a tenth for to returne as a Teyle-tree, and as an Oak whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, so was the holy seed and the substance thereof, Isa 6. 13. at in the dereliction of the Jews, so of this Nation, there was a remnant that quickly took root, and brought forth fruit, both in the one devastation, and the other, though the watcher and the holy one from heaven, had called to cut down the tree of this Nation, and to scatter its branches from flourishing before him, yet the stump and root was to be left in the earth with a band of iron, that it might spring again; Thus twice did the Lord come seeking fruit of this vine, doing little more then pruning and dressing it, although it brought forth wilde grapes: but if he come the third time and finde no fruit, the sentence will be, Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? Now to prevent this I shall not follow all those Gospel-supplanting sins we finde in holy writ, onely I desire to cautionate you and us all in three things.

3.

First, Take heed of pretending or holding out the Gospel for a covert or shadow for other things. God will not have his Gospel made a stalking horse for carnall desires: put not in that glorious name, where the thing it self is not clearly intended; if in any thing it be, let it have no compeer; if not, let it not be named; if that you aim at be just, it needs no varnish; if it be not, it is the worke for it. Gilded pills lose not their bitterness, and painted faces are thought to have no native beauty; all things in the world should serve the Gospel; and if that be made to serve other things, God will quickly vindicate it into liberty.

From the beginning of these troubles, right honourable, you have held forth Religion and the Gospel, as whole preservation and restauration was principally in the aims, and I presume malice it self is not able to discover any insincerity in this, the fruits we behold proclaim to all the conformity of your words and hearts. Now the God of Heaven grant that the same minde be in you still, in every particular mem-  
ber.

ber of this Honourable Assembly, in the whole Nation, especially in the Magistracy and Ministry of it, that we be not like the boatmen, look one way, and rowe another; cry Gospel, and mean the other thing; Lord Lord, and advance our own ends, that the Lord may not stir up the staffe of his anger, and the rod of his indignation against us as an hypocriticall people.

Secondly, Take heed of resting upon, and trusting to the priviledge, how ever excellent and glorious, of the outward enjoyment of the Gospel. When the Jews cryed, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the time was at hand that they should be destroyed. Look onely upon the grace that did bestow, and the mercy that doth continue it; God will have none of his blessings rob him of his glory, and if we will rest at the Cisterne, he will stop at the fountain.

Thirdly, Let us all take heed of Barrennes under it, for the earth that drinks in the rain that cometh upon it, and beareth Thornes and Briers, is rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned, Heb. 6. 7, 8. Now what fruits doth it require? even those reckoned, Gal. 5. 22, 23. the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meeknes, temperance; Oh that we had not cause to grieve for a scarcity of these fruits, and the abundant plenty of these works of the flesh recounted, ver. 19, 20, 21. Oh that that wisdom which is an eminent fruit of the Gospel might flourish amongst us, Jam. 3. 17. it is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, that we might have lesse writing and more praying, lesse envy and more charity; that all evil surmisings, which are works of the flesh, might have no toleration in our hearts, but be banished for nonconformity to the golden rule of love and peace, but envy: Come we now to the last proposition:

No men in the world want help, like them that want the Gospel. Or, Of all distresses want of the Gospel cries loudest for relief.

Rachel wanted children, and she cries, Give me children, or I die; But that was but her impatience, she might have

Obs. 3.

Gen. 30. 1.  
Gen. 35. 18.

Gen. 21. 16.

lived, and have had no children, yea, see the justice of God, she dies so soon as ever she hath children: Hagar wants water for Ishmael, and she will go farre from him, that she may not see him die; an heavy distresse, and yet if he had died, it had been but an early paying of that debt, which in a few years was to be satisfied. But they that want the Gospel may truly cry, Give us the Gospel or we die, and that not temporally with Ishmael, for want of water, but eternally in flames of fire.

A man may want liberty, and yet be happy, as Joseph was: a man may want peace, and yet be happy, as David was: a man may want children, and yet be blessed, as Job was: a man may want plenty, and yet be full of comfort, as Micah was: but he that wants the Gospel, wants every thing that should do him good. A Throne without the Gospel, is but the Devils dungeon. Wealth without the Gospel, is fuel for hell. Advancement without the Gospel, is but a going high, to have the greater fall.

Gen. 15. 2.

Abraham wanting a childe, complains, What will the Lord do for me, seeing I go childelesse, and this Eliezer of Damascus must be my heire? much more may a man without the means of grace complain, What shall be done unto me, seeing I go Gospellese? and all that I have, is but a short inheritance for this lump of clay my body.

2 King. 4. 13;  
14.

When Eliſha was minded to do something for the Shunammite who had so kindly entertained him, he asks her, whether he should speak for her to the King, or the Captain of the host? she replies, she dwelt in the midst of her own people, she needeth not those things: but when he findes her to want a childe, and tells her of that, she is almost transported. Ah how many poor souls are there, who need not our word to the King or the Captain of the host; but yet being Gospellese, if you could tell them of that, would be even ravished with joy?

Gen. 3. 8.

Think of Adam after his fall, before the promise, hiding himself from God: and you have a perfect portraicture of a poor creature without the Gospel; now this appear-  
eth.

3. From

1. From the description we have of the people that are in this State and condition without the Gospel; they are a people that sit in darknes, yea in the region and shadow of death, Matth. 4. 16, 17. they are even darknes it self, Joh. 1. 7. within the dominion and dreadfull darknes of death; darknes was one of Egyptes plagues, but yet that was a darknes of the body, a darknes wherein men lived: but this is a darknes of the soul, a darknes of death, for these men though they live, yet are they dead; they are fully described, Ephes. 2. 12. Without Christ, aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, strangers from the Covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Christles men, and godles men, and hopeles men, and what greater distresse in the world? yea, they are called doggs, and unclean beasts, the wrath of God is upon them, they are the people of his curse and indignation. In the extreame North, one day and one night divide the year; but with a people without the Gospel, it is all night, the sun of righteousness shines not upon them, it is night whilest they are here, and they go to eternall night hereafter. What the men of China concerning themselves and others, that they have two eyes, the men of Europe one, and all the world besides is blinde, may be inverted too, the Jews had one eye, sufficient to guide them, they who enjoy the Gospel have two eyes, but the men of China, with the rest of the Nations that want it, are stark blinde, and reserved for the chains of everlasting darknes.

2. By laying forth what the men that want the Gospel; do want with it.

1. They want Jesus Christ: for he is revealed onely by the Gospel. Anſine refused to delight in Cicero's Hortensius, because there was not in it the Name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is all and in all, and where he is wanting, there can be no good. Hunger cannot truly be satisfied without manna, the bread of life, which is Jesus Christ: and what shall a hungry man do that hath no bread? Thirst cannot be quenched, without that water or living spring, which is Jesus Christ: and what shall a thirsty soul do without water?

F. 3.

Matth. 6. 23.  
Luk. 1. 79.  
A. 2. 18.  
Rom. 2. 15.  
Ephes. 5. 8.  
Col. 1. 13.  
1 Pet. 1. 9.

Nomē Iesū non  
erat ibi.

Joh. 6. 50.  
Revel. 2. 17.  
Joh. 4. 14.  
Cant. 4. 12.

A.

Joh. 7. 37, 38.  
1 Cor. 1. 30.

A captive as we are all, cannot be delivered without redemption, which is Jesus Christ: and what shall the prisoner do without his ransom? Fools as we are, all cannot be instructed without wisdom, which is Jesus Christ, without him we perish in our folly. All building without him, is on the sand, which will surely fall: All working without him, is in the fire, where it will be consumed: All riches without him, have wings, and will away: *mallem ruere cum Christo, quam regnare cum Cesare*, said Luther, a dungeon with Christ is a Throne, and a Throne without Christ a hell. Nothing so ill, but Christ will compensate: the greatest evil in the world is sin, and the greatest sin was the first; and yet Gregory feared not to cry, *O felix culpa que talem meruit redemptorem*, oh happy fault which found such a Redeemer; All mercies without Christ are bitter, and every cup is sweet that is seasoned but with a drop of his blood, he truly is *amor & delicia humani generis*, the love and delight of the sonnes of men, without whom they must perish eternally: for there is no other name given unto them, whereby they may be saved, *Act. 4.* He is the way, men without him, are *Cairns*, wanderers, *vagabonds*: He is the truth, men without him are *liars*, *devils*, who was so of old: He is the life, without him men are *dead*, dead in trespasses and sins: He is the light, without him men are in *darknes*, and go they know not whither: He is the vine, those that are not grafted in him, are withered *branches*, prepared for the fire: He is the rock, men not built on him, are carried away with a flood: He is *α* and *ω*, the first and the last, the Author and the ender, the founder and the finisher of our salvation; he that hath not him, hath neither beginning of good, nor shall have end of misery. O blessed Jesus, how much better were it, *not to be*, then to be without thee? Never to be borne, then not to die in thee? A thousand *hells* come short of this, eternally to want Jesus Christ, as men do, that want the Goipel.

Paura igitur de  
Christo. Tertul.

Joh. 14. 5.

Joh. 1. 3. 4. 5.  
Ephes. 4. 18.

Mat. 7. 26, 27.  
Matth. 16. 18.

2. They want all holy Communion with God, wherein the only happiness of the soul doth consist; He is the life, light, joy, and blessednes of the soul: without him, the soul

in

in the body is but a dead soul, in a living Sepulchre. It is true, there be many that say, who will shew us any good? but unless the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us, we perish for evermore. *Thou hast made us for thy self, O Lord, and our heart is unquiet, until it come to thee.* You who have tasted how gracious the Lord is, who have had any converse and communion with him, in the issues and goings forth of his grace, those delights of his soul with the children of men, would you live? would not life it self, with a confluence of all earthly endearments, be a very *hell* without him? Is it not the daily language of your hearts, *Whom have we in heaven but thee?* and in earth there is nothing in comparison of thee? The soul of man is of a vast boundles comprehension, so that if all created good were centred into one enjoyment, and that bestowed upon one soul, because it must needs be finite and limited, as created, it would give no solid contentment to his affections, nor satisfaction to his desires. In the presence and fruition of God alone there is joy for evermore: at his right hand are rivers of pleasure, the wellsprings of life and blessednes. Now if to be without communion with God in this life, wherein the soul hath so many avocations from the contemplation of its own misery, (for earthly things are nothing else) is so unsupportable a calamity, ah what shall that poor soul do, that must want him for eternity? as all they must do, who want the Goipel.

Egal. 4. 6.

3. They want all the Ordinances of God, the joy of our hearts, and comfort of our souls. Oh the sweetness of a Sabbath! The heavenly raptures of prayer! Oh the glorious communion of Saints, which such men are deprived of! if they knew the value of the hidden pearl, and these things were to be purchased, what would such poor souls not part with for them?

Egal. 4. 1, 2.  
Phil. 2. 4, 1, 2, 3.  
4. &c.

4. They will at last want Heaven and salvation; they shall never come to the presence of God in glory: never inhabit a glorious mansion: they shall never behold Jesus Christ, but when they shall call for rocks and mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from his presence: they shall want

Revel. 6. 16.

Matth. 22. 13.  
Luk. 16. 24.  
Mark. 9. 43, 44.  
Iſa. 66. 24.

want light, in utter darknes, want *life*, under the second death, want *refreshment*, in the middelt of flames, want *healing*, under gnawing of conscience, want *grace*, continuing to blaspheme, want *glory*, in full misery: and which is the *sum* of all this, they shall want an *end* of all this, for their *worme* dieth not, neither is their fire quenched.

Revel. 3. 17.

Thirdly, Because being in all this *want*, they *know* not that they want any thing, and so never make *out* for any supply. *Laodicea* knew much, but yet because she *knew* not her wants, she had almost as good have *known* nothing: *Gospelleſſe* men *know* not that they are *blinde*, and seek not for *eye-salve*: they *know* not that they are *dead*, and seek not for *life*; What ever they *call* for, not knowing their wants, is but like a mans *crying* for more *weight* to preſſe him to *death*: and therefore when the Lord comes to any with the *Gospel*, he is found of *them* that *sought* him not, and made manifest to them that asked not after him, *Rom. 10. 20*.

Joh. 10. 18.

This is a seal upon their misery, without Gods *free-mercy*, like the *stone* laid upon the mouth of the *cave* by *Joshua*, to keep in the five *Kings*, untill they might be brought out to be *hanged*. All that men do in the *World*, is but *seeking* to supply their *wants*; either their naturall wants, that nature may be supplied, or their *sinfull* wants, that their lusts may be satisfied, or their *spirituall* wants, that their *ſouls* may be laved. For the two *first*, men without the *Gospel*, lay out all their strength; but of the *last*, there is amongst them a *deep* silence. Now this is all *one*, as for men to cry out that their *finger* bleeds, whilest a *sword* is run thorow their *hearts*, and they *perceive* it not: to desire a *wart* to be cured, whilest they have a *plague-ſore* upon them; And hence perhaps it is, that they are laid to go to *hell* like sheep, *Pſal. 49. 14*. very quietly, without dread, as a *bird* halting to the snare, and not knowing that it is for his life, *Prov. 7. 23*. and there *ly* down in utter *disappointments* and sorrow for evermore.

4. Because all *merci's* are bitter *judgements* to men that want the *Gospel*; all *ſnell* for hell; *Aggravations* of condemnation; all *cold* drink to a man in a *feaver*: pleasant at  
the

Ego propro ad  
interior, nec est  
ut aliquid pro  
me azas: al-  
vocatus quidam  
mortens apud  
Bel. de arte  
Mor. lib. 2.  
cap. 10.  
(N. 2)

the entrance, but increasing his torments in the *close*: like the *book* in the Revelation, *sweet* in the mouth, but *bitter* in the belly. When God shall come to *require* his bread and wine, his *flax* and oil, peace and prosperity, liberty and victories, of *Gospelleſſe* men, they will curse the *day* that ever they *enjoyed* them; to *unspirituall* are many mens *mindes*, and so *unfavourey* their judgements, that they *reckon* mens happines, by their *possessions*, and suppose the *catalogue* of their titles, to be a *roll* of their felicities: calling the *proud* happy, and advancing in our conceits *them* that *work wicke dnes*, *Mal. 3. 15*. but God will *one* day come in with another *reckoning*, and make them *know*, that all things without Christ, are but as *cyphers* without a figure, of no value. In all their *banquets* where Christ is not a *guest*, their *vine* is of the *vine* of *Sodom*, and of the field of *Gomorrab*, their *grapes* are *grapes* of *gall*, their *clusters* are *bitter*, *Deut. 32. 32, 33*. their *palaces*, where Christ is not, are but *habitations* of *Zim* and *Ochim*, Dragons and unclean beasts. Their *prosperity* is but putting them into *ſull* pasture, that they may be *ſatted* for the day of *slaughter*, the day of *consumption* decreed for all the *Bulls* of *Babban*: the *Gospel* bringing Christ, is the *salt* that makes all other things *ſavoury*.

To shew us the great *priviledge* and preeminence, which, by the *free* grace of God, many parts of this *Island* do enjoy. To us that sat in *darknes* and in the shadow of *death*, a great *light* is risen, to *guide* us into the *waies* of peace. Let others recount, the glories, benefits, profits, *outward* *blissings* of this Nation, let us look only upon that which alone is *valuable* in it self, and makes *other* things so to be, the *Gospel* of Christ. It is reported of the *Heralds*: of our neighbour *Monarchs*, that when *one* of them had repeated the *numerous* titles of his Master of *Spain*, the *other* often repeated *France, France, France*; intimating that the *dominion* which came under that *one* denomination, would *counterpoise* the long catalogue of *Kingdomes* and *Dukedoms*, wherewith the *other* flourisheth. Were we to contend with the *grand ſignieur* of the East, about our *enjoyments*,  
G we

Use 1.

we might easily bear down his windy pompous train of titles, with this one, which *millies repetitum placebit*, the Gospel, the Gospel: upon all other things you may put the inscription in *Daniel*, *mene, mene, Tekel*, they are weighed in the balance, and found wanting, but proclaim before those that enjoy the Gospel, as *Haman* before *Mordecai*, Lo, thus shall it be done to them whom the Lord will honour. The fox in the fable had a thousand wiles to save himself from the hunters: but the cat knew *unum magnum*, one great thing that would surely do it. Earthly supports and contentments, are but a thousand failing wiles, which will all vanish in the time of need: the Gospel and Christ in the Gospel, is that *unum magnum*, that *unum necessarium*, which alone will stand us in any need. In this, this Island is as the mountain of the Lord, exalted above the Mountains of the earth, it is true, many other Nations partake with us in the same blessing: not to advance our own enjoyments, in some particulars wherein perhaps we might justly do it: but take all these Nations with us, and what a molehill are we to the whole earth, overpread with Paganisme, Mahumetanisme, Antichristianisme, which innumerable foolish Heresies? And what is England, that it should be amongst the choice branches of the vineyard, the top-boughs of the Cedars of God?

Use 2.

Shews that such great mercies, if not esteemed, if not improved, if abused, will end in great judgements; Wo be to that Nation, that City, that person, that shall be called to an account for despising the Gospel, *Amos 2. 2.* you only have I known of all the families of the earth, what then? Surely some great blessing is coming to that people, whom God thus knowes, and so ownes, as to make himself known unto them. No: but, therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities. How ever others may have some ease or mitigation in their punishments, do you expect the utmost of my wrath. Luther said, he thought hell was paved with the bald scalls of Friars; I know nothing of that; yet of this sure I am, that none shall have their portion so low in the nethermost hell, none shall drink to deep of the cup of Gods indignation.

indignation, as they, who have refused Christ in the Gospel. Men will curse the day to all eternity, wherein the blessed name of Jesus Christ was made known unto them, if they continue to despise it. He that abuseth the choicest of mercies, shall have judgement without mercy; What can help them, who reject the counsell of God for their good? If now England have received more culture from God then other Nations, there is more fruit expected of England, then other nations. A barren tree in the Lords Vineyard, must be cut down for cumbering the ground, the sheep of God must every one beare twins, and none be barren amongst them, Cant. 4. 2. If after all Gods care and husbandry, his vineyard brings forth wilde grapes, he will take away the hedge, break down the wall, and lay it waste. For the present the Vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of England, and if it be as earth, which when the rain falls upon it, brings forth nothing but thornes and briers, it is nigh unto cursings, and the end thereof is to be burned, Heb. 6. Men utterly and for ever neglect that ground, which they have tried their skill about, and laid out much cost upon it, if it bring not forth answerable fruits. Now here give me leave to say, (and the Lord avert the evil deserved by it) That England, (I mean these Cities, and those other places, which since the beginning of our troubles, have enjoyed the Gospel, in a more free and plentiful manner then heretofore) hath shewed it self not much to value it.

1. In the time of Straits, though the sound of the Gospel passed thorow all our streets, our villages enjoying them who preached peace, and brought glad tidings of good things, so that neither we, nor our fathers, nor our fathers fathers, ever saw the like before us; Though manna fell round about our tents every day: yet as though all were lost and we had nothing, Manna was loathed as light bread, the presence of Christ made not recompence for the losse of our swine: men had rather be again in Egypt, then hazard a pilgrimage in the wilderness. If there be any here, that ever entertained thoughts, to give up the worship of God to superstition, his Churches to tyranny, and the doctrine of the

Gospel to *Episcopall* corruptions, in the *pressing* of any troubles, let them now give God the glory, and be ashamed of their own hearts, lest it be bitterness in the end.

2. In the time of *prosperity*, by our *ferce* contentions about *mint* and *cammin*, whilst the *weightier* things of the Gospel have been *undervalued*, languishing about *unprofitable* questions, &c. but I shall not touch this wound lest it bleed.

Use 3.

For exhortation, that *every one* of us, in whose *hand* there is *any* thing, would set in, for the *help* of those parts of this *Island*, that as yet sit in *darknesse*, yea in the *shadow* of death, and have none to hold out the *bread of life* to their fainting souls. Doth not *Wales* cry, and the *North* cry, yea and the *West* cry, *Come and help us*? We are yet in a worse *bondage*, then *any* by your means we have been *delivered* from: if you *leave* us thus, all your *protection* will but yeeld us a more *free* and *joviall* passage to the chambers of death. Ah, little do the inhabitants of *Goshen* know, whilst they are *contending* about the *bounds* of their *pasture*, what *darknesse* there is in *other places* of the Land; How their poor *starved* souls would be glad of the *crums* that fall from our tables: *o* that God would stir up the hearts,

1. Of *Ministers* to cast off all *by-respects*, and to flee to those *places*, where in all probability, the *harvest* would be great, and the *labourers* are few or none at all. I have read of an *Heretick* that swom over a great *river* in a *frost*, to scatter his errors: the old *Jewish*, and now *Popish* Pharisees, compassed Sea and Land, to make *profelytes*; The *Merchants* trade not into more *Countries*, then the *Fa-tours* of *Rome* do, to gain souls to his *holinesse*: *East* and *West*, farre and wide, do these *Locusts* spread themselves, not without *hazard* of their *lives*, as well as *losse* of their *souls*, to scatter their *superstitions*: only the *Preachers* of the everlasting Gospel seem to have *lost* their zeal. *O* that there were the *same minde* in us that was in *Iesus Christ*, who counted it his *meat* and *drinke*, to doe his fathers *will*, in gaining souls.

2. Of the *Magistrates*, I mean of this Honourable *Assembly*,

*Ass: mblly*, to turn themselves every *lawfull* way, for the help of poor *Macedonians*: the truth is, in this, I could speak *more* then I intend, for perhaps my *zeal*, and some mens *judgements*, would scarce make good *harmony*. This only I shall say, that if *Iesus Christ* might be preached, though with some *defects* in some *circumstances*, I should rejoice therein. *O* that you would *labour*, to let all the *partes* of the Kingdom, taste of the sweetness of your *successes*, in carrying to them the *Gospel* of the Lord *I:esus*: that the *doctrine* of *Gospel* might make way for the *Discipline* of the Gospel, without which, it will be a very *skeleton*. When *Manna* fell in the *wildernesse* from the *hand* of the Lord, every one had an *equall* share: I would there were not too great an *inequality* in the scattering of *Manna*, when secondarily in the *hand* of men; whereby *some* have all, and *others* none, some *sheep* daily *picking* the choise *flowers* of every pasture, others *wandering* upon the barren mountains, without *guide* or *food*: I make no doubt, but the *best maies* for the furtherance of *this*, are known *full well* unto you, and therefore have as little need to be *petitioned* in this, as other things. What then remains? but that for *this*, and all other *necessary blessings*, we all set our hearts and hands to *petition* the Throne of grace.

*Soli Deo gloria.*

G 3



A short defensative about  
CHVRCH GOVERNMENT,  
Toleration and Petitions about  
these things.

Reader,



*His*, be it what it will, thou hast no cause to thank or blame me for. Had I been mine own, it had not been *thine*. My submission unto others *judgements*, being the only cause of submitting *this* unto thy censure. The substance of it, is concerning *things now adooing*: in some whereof, I heretofore thought it my *wisdom*, modestly *bestare*, (or at least, not with the most, peremptorily to dictate to others my apprehensions,) as *wiser* men have done in weightier things: And yet *this*, not so much for want of *perswasion* in my own minde, as out of opinion that we already had too many needlesse and *fruitlesse* discourses about these matters. *Would we could agree to spare perishing paper*, and for my own part had not the opportunity of a few lines in the close of this *sermon*, and the importunity of not a few friends urged, I could have *sighted* all occasions, and accusations, provoking to *publish* those thoughts which I shall now impart: the truth is, in things concerning the *Church*, (I mean things purely externall, of form, order and the like,) so many waies have I been *spoken*, that I often relolved to *speak my self*, desiring rather to appear (though conscious to my self of innumerable failings) what indeed I am, then what others incuriously suppose. But yet the many, I ever thought unworthy of an *Apology*, and some of *satisfaction*; Especially *those*, who would make their own judgements a *rule* for themselves and others:

impatient

*Laudatur ab his, culpatur ab illis.*

See August. Ep. 7. 28. 157. de orig. animi.

*...Deserti in vicinis vendentem ibi odoros, & piper, & quicquid charta amittit incepta. Occidit miseris crambes reposita magistros. Semper ego audior tantum*

impatient that any should *know*, what they do *not*, or conceive *otherwise* then they, of what they do; in the mean time, placing almost all *religion* in that, which may be perhaps a *hinderance* of it, and being so *valued*, or rather *overvalued*, is certainly the greatest. Nay, would they would make their *judgements*, only so farre as they are *convinced*, and are able to make out their *conceptions* to others, and not also their *impotent desires*, to be the *rule*: that so they might *condemn* only that, which *complies* not with their mindes, and not *all that also*, which they finde to thwart their *aims* and desires. But so it must be. Once more *conformity* is grown the touchstone, (and that not in practice, but opinion,) amongst the *greatest* part of men, however otherwise of different persuasions. *Dissent* is the *onely crime*, and where that is *all*, that is *culpable*, it shall be made, *all that is so*. From such as these, who almost hath not *suffered*? But towards such, *the best defence is silence*. Besides, My *judgement* commands me, to make no *known* *querrell* my own. But rather if it be possible, and as much as in me lieth, live peaceably with all men, *scilicet* *quodcumque*, I *proclaim* to none, but men whose *bowels* are full of gall: in this spring of *humours*, lenitives for our own *spirits*; may perhaps be as necessary, as purges for others *brains*. Further, I desire to *provoke* none; more *stings* then *combs* are got at a *single wasp*: even cold *stones*, smitten together, sparkle *stings*: the *wringing of the nose*, bringeth forth *blood*. Neither do I conceive it *wisdom* in these quarrelsome daies, to entrust *more of a mans self* with others, then is very necessary. The heart of man is deceitfull; some that have *smooth tongues*, have *sharp teeth*: such can give *titles* on the one side, and *wounds* on the other. Any of these *considerations*, would easily have prevailed with me, *stulti in hac carnisse*, had not mine ears been filled, presently after the preaching of the *precedent sermon*, which *sad* complaints of some, and *false* reports of others, neither of the lowest ranke of men, as though I had helped to open a *gate*, for that which is now called a *Trojan horse*, though heretofore counted an *engine* likelier to batter the walls of *Babylon*, then

*Immortale odium nunquam sanabile bellum, ardet adhuc, combos & Tentyra, summas utrinque inde / acor vulgo, quod usum vicinorum odit uterque locus. Juven. Graece scira aut polite loqui apud illos heresis est: Eras. de Sebasta.*

*Noli irritare crabrones. Si lapides teras nonne ignis evanuit? Ambrosi lib. 1. cap. 12. Prov. 30. 33. Job 3. 2. 1. Prov. 24. 18. Vch. Remed. contra pravam rationem Germanice. Luth. praesat. a lib. de concilio. Protef. 2. 4. minist. 1. 1. 1.*



3. Not to measure mens judgements, by their subscribing, or refusing to subscribe petitions in these daies about Church Government; for subscribers, would every one could not see, with what a zealous nescience, and implicite judgement many are lead. And for refusers, though perhaps they could close with the generall words, wherewith usually they are expressed, yet there are so many known circumstances, restraining those words to particular significations, directing them to by, and secondary tendencies, as must needs make some obtain: for mine own part, from subscribing late Petitions, about Church-Government, I have been withheld by such reasons as these.

1. I dare not absolutely assert, maintain, and abide by it, (as rationall men ought to do every clause, in any thing owned by their subscription) that the cause of all the evils, usually annumerated in such Petitions, is, the want of Church-Government, taking it for any government, that ever yet was establied amongst men, or in notion otherwise made known unto me. Yea, I am confident that more probable causes in this juncture of time might be assigned of them; Neither can any be ignorant, how plentifully such evils abounded, when Church-Discipline was most severely executed; And lastly, I am confident, that who ever lives to see them suppressed by any outward means (when spirituall weapons shall be judged insufficient) will finde it to be, not any thing, either included in, or necessarily annexed unto Church-Discipline, that must do it, but some other thing, not unlike that, which in daies of yore when all the world wondered after the beast, suppressed all truth and error, but only what the Arch enemy of Jesus Christ, was pleased to hold out to be believed; but of this afterward.

2. I dare not affirm that the Parliament hath not establied a Government already, for the essentials of it, themselves affirming that they have, and their Ordinances about rulers, rules, and persons to be ruled, (the requisita and materials of Government) being long since extant. Now to require a thing to be done, by them, who affirm that they

have

Vid catal. bz.  
ret. aut Ter-  
tul. de præ-  
script. Epi-  
phan. Aug.  
Vincent.

Ego Ancille  
tuz fitem ba-  
bui, nonus tu  
impades, qui  
nec tibi ipſi  
credis? P. bitof,  
apud Bluc.  
420h.

have already done it, argues, either much weaknesse or supine negligence in our selves, not to understand what is effected, or a strong imputation, on those that have done it, either fraudulently, to pretend that which is false, or foolishly to averse, what they do not understand; yet though I have learned to obey as farre as lawfully I may, my judgement is exceedingly farre from being enslaved, and according to that, by Gods assistance, shall be my practice; which if it run crosse to the prescriptions of authority, it shall cheerfully submit to the censure thereof; In the mean time, all Petitioning of any party about this businesse, seems to thwart some Declarations of the House of Commons, whereunto I doubt not, but they intend for the main, inviolably and unalterably to adhere. Adde hereunto, that petitioning in this kinde, was not long since voted breach in privilege, in them, who might justly expect, as much favour and liberty in petitioning, as any of their brethren in the Kingdom, and I have more then one reason to suppose, that the purpose and designe of theirs and others, was one, and the same.

3. There are no small grounds of supposall, that some petitions have not their rise from amongst them by whom they are subscribed, but that the spring and master wheels giving the first motion to them, are distant and unseen; My self having been lately urged to subscription, upon this grounds, that directions were had for it from above, (as we use to speak in the Countrey) yea in this, I could say more then I intend, aiming at nothing but the quieting of mens spirits, needlessly exasperated, only I cannot but say, that honest men ought to be very cautious, how they put themselves upon any engagement, that might make any party or faction in the Kingdom; suppose that their interest in the least measure, doth run crosse to that of the great Council thereof, thereby to strengthen the hands or designs of any, by occasioning an opinion that upon fresh or new divisions, (which God of his mercy prevent) we would not adhere constantly to our old principles, walking according to which, we have hitherto found protection and safety. And I can-

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not

not but be *jealous* for the honour of our noble *Parliament*, whose *authority* is every day *undermined*, and their regard in the affections of the people *shaken*, by such dangerous *innuendations*, as though they could in an *houre* put an end to all our *disturbances*, but refuse it. This season also for such *petitions*, seems to me very *unseasonable*, the greatest *appearing* danger impendent to this *Kingdom*, being from the contest about *Church-Government*, which by such means as this, is *exceedingly heightened*, and animosity added to the *parties* at variance.

4. A particular form of Church-Discipline is usually in such *petitions*, either directly *expressed*, or evidently *pointed* at, and directed unto, as that alone which our *Covenant* engageth us to *embrace*; Yea, as though it had long since *designed* that particular way, and distinguished it from all *others*; the *embracing* of it, is pressed under the pain of breach of *Covenant*, a crime abhorred of God and man. Now truly to suppose that our *Covenant* did ty us up *absolutely* to any one formerly known way of *Church-Discipline*, the words formally engaging us into a *disquisition* out of the word, of that which is agreeable to the minde and will of God, is to me, such a *childish, ridiculous, selfish conceit*, as I believe no knowing men will once entertain, unless *prejudice* begotten by their peculiar *interest*, hath *disturbed* their intellectualls: for my part I know no *Church-Government* in the world already *established* amongst any sort of men of the *truth*, and *necessity* whereof, I am convinced in all *particulars*, especially if I may take their *practice* to be the best *interpreter* of their maximes.

Fourthly, Another *postulatum* is, that men would not use an *over-zealous* speed, upon every small *differencie*, to characterise men (otherwise godly and peaceable) as *Seſtaries*, knowing the *odiousness* of the name, among the *vulgar*, deservedly or otherwise imposed, and the *evil* of the thing it self, rightly apprehended, whereunto *lighter differencies* do not amount; Such names as this, I know are *arbitrary*, and generally serve the *wills* of the greater number. They are commonly *Seſtaries*, who (*jure aut injuria*)

are

Nunc vero si  
nominis odium  
est, quis nomi-  
num reatus et  
que accusatio  
vocalorum?  
nisi aut Bar-  
barum sonat a-  
liqua vox nomi-  
nibus, aut tra-  
dicum, aut  
impudicum?  
Irenaeus Apol.

are oppressed. Nothing was ever *persecuted* under an esteem- ed name. Names are in the power of the *many* things, and their causes are known to *few*. There is *none* in the world can give an *ill title* to others, which from *some* he doth not receive: the same *right* which in this kinde I have towards *another*, he hath towards me: unless I affirm my self to be *infallible*, not to he: those names which men are known by, when they are *oppressed*, they commonly use against others whom they seek to *oppress*. I would therefore that all *horrid appellations*, as *increasers* of *strife*, *kindlers* of *wrath*, *enemies* of *charity*, food for *animosity*, were for ever banished from amongst us. Let a *spade* be called a *spade*, to we take heed *Christ* be not called *Beelzebub*. I know my *profession* to the greatest part of the world is *Seſtarisme*, as *Christianity*: amongst those who *professe* the name of *Christ*, to the greatest number, I am a *seſtary*, because a *Protestant*: amongst *Protestants*, at least the one *half*, account all men of my persuasion, *Calvinisticall Sacramentarian Seſtaries*: amongst *these* again, to *some* I have been a *Puritanicall seſtary*, an *Aerian Heretick*, because *Anti-prelaticall*: yea and amongst *these last*, not a *few* account me a *Seſtary*, because I plead for *Presbyteriall Government* in Churches: and to all these am I thus *esteemed*, as I am fully convinced, *causlessly* and *erroneously*, what they call *seſtarisme*, I am persuaded is *ipissima veritas*, the very truth it self, to which they also ought to submit, that others also though upon *false grounds*, are *convinced* of the truth of their own *perswasion*, I cannot but believe; and therefore as I finde by *experience*, that the horrid names of *Heretick*, *Schismatick*, *seſtary*, and the like, have never had any *influence* or force upon my *judgement*, nor otherwise moved me, unless it were unto *retaliation*; so I am persuaded it is also with *others*, for *homines sumus*; forcing them abroad in such *livories*, doth not at all *convince* them, that they are *servants* to the master of *seſts* indeed, but only, makes them *wait* an opportunity, to cast the like *mantle* on their traducers. And this usually is the beginning of *arming* the more against the few, with *violence*: impatient of bearing the *burdens*, which

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Ad. 14. 14.  
& 18. 22.  
Heresis christi-  
anorum, Irenaeus  
Irenaeus  
Christi. id.  
heresi catho-  
licae, & heresi  
sanctissime,  
Constantiniana.  
Epist. Chr. sy-  
rac. mistica  
systema: quo  
probare conatur  
Calvinianos  
esset hereticos.  
Huj. calu-  
Tyr Andrew  
Epist. ad Mo.  
litae.

they impose on others shoulders: by means whereof, *Christendoms* hath been made a theatre of blood: and one amongst all, after that by *cruelty and willany*, he had prevailed above the rest, took upon him to be the only *diktator* in Christian Religion: but of this afterwards.

Now by the *concession* of these, as I hope not *unequitable* demands, thus much at least I conceive will be attained, *viz.* that a peaceable dissent in some smaller things, *disputable* questions, *not-absolutely-necessary* assertions, deserves not any rigid censure, distance of *affections*, or breach of *Christian* Communion and amity: in such things as these, *veniam petimus, damusq, vicissim*: If otherwile, I *professe* I can hardly bring my minde to comply and close in with them, amongst whom almost any thing is *lawfull* but to dissent.

These things being *promised*, I shall now set down and make *publike*, that proposall, which heretofore I have *tended*, as a means to give some *light* into a way for the profitable and comfortable *practice* of *Church-Government*; drawing out of general *notions* what is practically applicable, to *circumstantiated*, as of necessity it must be: and herein I shall not alter any thing, or in the least *expression* go off from that which *long since* I drew up at the *request* of a worthy friend, after a discourse about it: And *this*, not only because it hath already been in the hands of *many*, but also because my *intent* is not, either to *assert*, dispute, or make out any thing further of my *judgement* in these things, then I have already done, (hoping for more leisure so to do, then the few houres assigned to the product of this short appendix will permit) but only by way of a *defensative*, to evince, that the *rumours* which have been *spread* by some, and entertained by *others*, too greedily about this matter, have been exceeding *causelesse* and *groundlesse*; So that though my second *thoughts* have, if I mistake not, much improved some particulars in this *Essay*, yet I cannot be *induced*, because of the reason before recounted (the only cause of the publication thereof) to make any *alteration* in it, only I shall present the *reader* with some few things, which

gave

gave *occasion* and rise to this proposall. As

1. A fervent *desire* to prevent all further *division* and separation, *disunion* of mindes amongst godly men, *suspitions* and *jealousies* in the people towards their *ministers*, as aiming at *power* and unjust domination over them, *fruitles* disputes, languishings about *unprofitable* questions, breaches of charity for *trifles*; exasperating the *mindes* of men one against another: all which *growing* evils, tending to the subversion of *Christian love*, and the power of godliness, with the *disturbance* of the *State*, are too much fomented by that sad breach and division, which is here attempted to be made up.

2. A *desire* to work and draw the mindes of all my brethren (the most I hope need it not) to set in, for a thorow *Reformation*, and for the obtaining of *holy Communion*, to keep off indifferently the unworthy from *Church* privileges, and prophaning of holy things. Whereunto, I presumed the *discovery* of a way whereby this might be effected, without their *disturbance* in their former *Station*, would be a considerable motive.

3. A *consideration* of the paucity of positive rules in the Scripture for *Church-Government* with the great difficulty of reducing them to *practice* in these present times, (both sufficiently evidenced by the endless disputes, and irreconcilable differences of godly, precious and learned men about them, made me conceive, that the *practice* of the *Apostolical* Churches, (doubtlesse for a time observed in those immediately succeeding) would be the best *externall help* for the right *interpretation* of those rules we have, and pattern to draw out a *Church way* by. Now truly after my best search, and inquiry, into the *first Churches* and their constitution, framing an *Idea* and exemplar of them, this poor heap following, seems to me, as like one of them, as any thing that yet I have seen: nothing at all *doubting*, but that if a more *skilfull* hand had the *finning* of it, the proportions, features and lines, would be very *exact*, & equal, and *parallell*: yea, did not *extream haste*, now call it from me, so that I have no *leisure*, so much as to *transcribe* the

first

διεγραψα δὲ ἕως  
ταύτης ἡμετέρας  
ἐπιπέρας, ὡς  
ἔστιν, καὶ ἡ  
ὁμοιοῦται.

first draught, I doubt not but, by *Gods assistance*, it might be so set forth, as not to be thought altogether *undesirable*; if men would but a little lay aside *beloved preconceptions*: but the *Printer staies for every line*: only I must intreat every one that shall cast a *candid eye*, on this unwillingly expoled *Embryo*, and rude *abortion*, that he would assume in his minde, any *particular Church* mentioned in the *Scripture*, as of *Hierusalem, Corinth, Ephesus*, or the like, consider the way and state they were *then*, and some ages *after*, in respect of outward *immunities and enjoyments*, and tell me, whether any *rationall man* can suppose, that either there were in those places, *sundry particular Churches*, with their *distinct peculiar officers*, acting in most *pastorall duties severally in them*, as distinguished and divided into *entire societies*, but ruling them in respect of some *particulars loyally in combination*, considered as *distinct bodies*; or elle, that they were *such single Congregations*, as that all that *power and authority which was in them*, may seem fitly and conveniently to be entrusted, with a *small handfull of men*, combined under one *single Pastour*, with one, two, or perhaps no associated *Elders*. More then this, I shall only ask, whether all *ordinary power*, may not without danger, be asserted to *reside* in such a *Church* as is here described, reserving all *due right and authority*, to *Councils and Magistrates*. Now for the *fountain, seat, and rise* of this power, for the just distribution of it, between *Pastours and people*, this is no place to *dispute*; these following *lines* were intended meerly to *sedate and bury such contests*, and to be what they are intitled, *viz.*