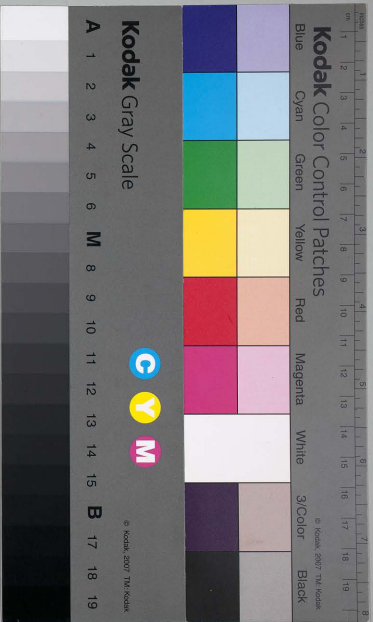


THE  
GROUNDS & OCCASIONS  
OF THE  
*CONTEMPT*  
OF THE  
CLERGY  
AND  
RELIGION  
*Enquired into.*

*In a* LETTER *written to* R. L.



L O N D O N,  
Printed by *W. Godbid* for *N. Brooke*, at the  
*Angel* in *Cornhill*. 1670.





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THE  
PREFACE  
TO THE  
READER.



*Can very easily phantasie,  
that many upon the very  
first sight of the Title,  
will presently imagin,  
that the Author does  
either want the great  
Tithe, lying under the pressure of some  
pitiful Vicaridge; or that he is much  
out of humour, and dissatisfied with  
the present condition of Affairs; or  
lastly, that he writes to no purpose at  
all, there having been an abundance  
of unprofitable Advisers in this kind.  
As to my being under some low  
Church*



## The Preface

*Church Dispensation, you may know, I write not out of a pinching necessity, or out of any rising Design; you may please to believe, that although I have a most solemn reverence for the Clergy in general, and especially for that of England; yet, for my own part, I must confess to you, I am not of that Holy Employment, and have as little thoughts of being Dean, or Bishop, as they that think so, have hopes of being all Lord Keepers.*

*Nor less mistaken will they be, that shall judge me in the least discontented, or any ways disposed to disturb the peace of the present settled Church: For in good truth, I have neither lost Kings nor Bishops Lands, that should incline me to a surly and quarrelsome complaining: As many be, who would have been glad enough to see His Majesty restored, and would have eudred Bishops daintily well, had they lost no Money by their coming in. I am not*  
I'll

to the Reader.

*I'll assure you, any of those occasional Writers, that missing preferment in the University can, presently write you their new ways of Education; or being a little tormented with an ill chosen Wife, set forth the Doctrine of Divorce to be truly Evangelical: The cause of these few sheets was honest and innocent, and as free from all passion, as any design.*

*As for the last thing which I supposed objected, viz. That this Book is altogether needless, there having been an infinite number of Church and Clergy-Members, that have made many tedious and unsuccessful offers: I must needs confess that it were very unreasonable for me to expect a better reward: Only thus much I think with Modesty may be said; that I cannot, at present, call to mind any thing that is propounded, but what is very hopeful, and easily accomplished, For indeed, should I go about to tell you, that a Child can never*

The Preface, &c.

never prove a profitable Instructor of the people, unless born when the Sun is in Aries; or brought up in a School that stands full South; that he can never be able to govern a Parish, unless he can ride the great Horse; or that he can never go through the great Work of the Ministry, unless, for three hundred years backward, it can be proved that none of his Family ever had Cough, Ague, or gray Hair; then I should very patiently endure, to be reckoned amongst the vaineſt, that ever made attempt. But believe me, Reader, I am not, as you will easily see, any contriver of an incorruptible and pure Crystalline Church; or any expecter of a Reign of nothing but Saints and Worthies; But only an honest and hearty misser, that the best of our Clergy might forever continue as they are, rich, and learned; and that the rest might be very useful, and well esteemed of in their Profession.

THE

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THE  
GROUNDS & OCCASIONS  
OF THE  
CONTEMPT  
OF THE  
CLERGY & RELIGION  
Enquired into.

SIR,



That short Discourse, which we lately had concerning the Clergy, continues so fresh in your mind, that I perceive; by your last, you are more than a little troubled to observe that disteem that lies upon several of those holy Men. Your good wishes for the Church, I know, are very strong and

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un-

unfeigned, and your hopes of the World receiving much more advantage, and better advice, from some of the Clergy, than usually it is found by Experience to do, are neither needless nor impossible. And as I have always been a devout admirer, as well as strict observer of your actions, so I have constantly taken a great delight to concur with you in your very thoughts. Whereupon it is, Sir, that I have spent some few hours upon that which was the occasion of your last Letter, and the subject of our late discourse. And before, Sir, I enter upon telling you what are my apprehensions; I must most heartily profess, that for my own part, I did never think, since at all I understood the excellency and perfection of a Church, but that Ours, now lately Restored, as formerly Established, does far outgo, as to all Christian ends and purposes, either the pomp and bravery of *Rome* her self, or the best of *Free Spiritual States*. But if so be it be allowable, where we have so undoubtedly learned and honourable a Clergy, to suppose, that some of that sacred Profession, might possibly have attain'd to a greater degree of esteem and usefulness to the World; then I hope what

has

has thus long hindred so great and desirable a Blessing to this Nation, may be modestly guess'd at, either without giving any willful offence to the present Church; or any great trouble, dear Sir, to your self; And if I be not very much mistaken, whatever has heretofore, or does at present lessen the value of our Clergy, or render it in any degree lesse serviceable to the World than might be reasonably hoped, may be easily referred to two very plain things; the *Ignorance* of some, and the *Poverty* of others of the Clergy.

And first, as to the *Ignorance* of some of our Clergy, if we would make a search to purpose, we must go as deep as the very beginnings of Education: and, doubtless, may lay a great part of our misfortunes to the old fashion'd Methods and discipline of Schooling it self: upon the well ordering of which, although much of the improvement of our Clergy cannot be denied mainly to depend; yet by reason this is so well known to your self, as also, that there has been many of undoubted Learning and Experience, that have set out their several Models for this purpose, I shall therefore only mention such loss of time and abuse of youth, as is most

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remarkable and mischievous, and as could not be conveniently omitted in a Discourse of this nature, though never so short.

And first of all, it were certainly worth the considering; whether it be unavoidably necessary to keep Lads to sixteen or seventeen years of Age, in pure slavery to a few *Latin* and *Greek* words? Or whether it may not be more convenient, especially if we call to mind their natural inclinations to ease and idleness, and how hardly they are perswaded of the excellency of the Liberal Arts and Sciences, any further than the finart of the last piece of discipline is fresh in their memories, whether I say it be not more proper and beneficial, to mix with those unpleasant tasks and drudgeries, something that in probability might not only take much better with them, but might also be much easier obtained?

As suppose, some part of time was allotted them for the reading of some innocent *English* Authors; where they need not go every line so unwillingly to a tormenting Dictionary; and whereby they might come in a short time to apprehend common sense; and to begin to judge what is true: For you shall have Lads that are arch knives at the Nominative

minative Case, and that have a notable quick Eye at spying out the Verb, who for want of reading such common and familiar books, shall understand no more of what is very plain and easie, than a well educated Dog or Horse. Or suppose, they were taught (as they might much ealier be, than what is commonly offered to them) the Principles of *Arithmetick*, *Geometry*, and such alluring parts of Learning: As these things undoubtedly would be much more useful, so much more delightful to them, than to be tormented with a tedious story how *Phaeton* broke his Neck; or how many Nuts and Apples *Tityrus* had for his Supper: For most certainly Youths, if handsomely dealt with, are much inclinable to Emulation, and to a very useful esteema of Glory; and more especially, if it be the reward of knowledge; and therefore if such things were carefully and discreetly propounded to them, wherein they might not only earnestly contend amongst themselves, but might also see how far they out-skill the rest of the World: A Lad hereby would think himself high and mighty, and would certainly take great delight in contemning the next unlearned Mortal he meets withall. But if





instead hereof, you diet him with nothing but with Rules and Exceptions; with tiresome Repetitions of *Amo's* and *Tomo's*: setting a day also apart to recite *verbatim* all the burdensome task of the foregoing week (which I am confident is usually as dreadful as an old Parliament Fast) we must needs believe, that such a one thus managed, will scarce think to prove immortal by such performances, and accomplishments as these. You know very well, Sir, that Lads in the general, have but a kind of ugly and odd conception of Learning; and look upon it, as such a starving thing, and unnecessary perfection, (especially as it is usually dispens'd out unto them) that Nine-pins or Span-counter, are judged much more heavenly employments: And therefore what pleasure, do we think, can such a one take, in being bound to get against breakfast two or three hundred rumples out of *Homer*, in commendation of *Achilles's* Toes, or the *Grecian's* Boots? Or to have measured out unto him, very early in the morning, fifteen or twenty well laid on Lashes, for letting a syllable slip too soon, or hanging too long upon it? Doubtless, instant execution upon such grand miscarriages as these, will eternally engage  
him

him to a most admirable opinion of the *Muses*:

Lads, certainly, ought to be won by all possible Arts and devices, and though many have invented fine Pictures and Games, to cheat them into the undertaking of unreasonable burdens, yet this by no means is such a lasting temptation, as the propounding of that, which in it self is pleasant and alluring: For we shall find very many, though of no excelling quickness, will soon perceive the design of the Landskip, and so looking through the veil, will then begin to take as little delight in those pretty contrivances, as in getting by heart three or four leaves of ungay'd non-sense.

Neither seems the stratagem of Money to be so prevailing and catching, as a right down offering of such Books which are ingenious and convenient; there being but very few so intollerably careful of their Bellies, as to look upon the hopes of a Cake, or a few Apples, to be a sufficient recompence for cracking their Pates with a heap of independent words.

I am not sensible, that I have said any thing in disparagement of those two famous Tongues, the *Greek* and *Latin*, there being



ing much reason to value them beyond others; because the best of humane Learning has been delivered unto us in those Languages. But he that worships them, purely out of honour to *Rome* and *Athens*, having little or no respect to the usefulness and excellency of the Books themselves (as many do) it is a sign he has a great esteem and reverence of Antiquity, but I think him by no means comparable for happiness to him who catches Frogs, or hunts Butterflies.

That some Languages therefore ought to be studied, is in a manner absolutely necessary, unless all were brought to one (which would be the happiest thing that the World could wish for;) but whether the beginning of them, might not be more insensibly instilled, and more advantageously obtained, by reading Philosophical, as well as other ingenious Authors, than *Jannus Linguarum's*, crabbed Poems, and cross-grain'd Prose, as it has been heretofore by others, so it ought to be afresh considered, by all well-wishers either to the Clergy or Learning.

I know where it is the fashion of some Schools, to prescribe to a Lad for his Evening

ing refreshment, out of *Comenius*, all the terms of Art belonging to *Anatomy*, *Mathematicks*, or some such piece of Learning. Now, is it not a very likely thing, that a Lad should take most absolute delight in conquering such a pleasant Task; where, perhaps, he has two or three hundred words to keep in mind, with a very small proportion of sense thereunto belonging; whereas the use and full meaning of all those difficult terms, would have been most insensibly obtained, by leisurely reading in particular this, or the other Science? Is it not also likely to be very favourable, and of comfortable use, to one, that can scarce distinguish between Virtue and Vice, to be tasked with high and moral Poems? For Example: It is usually said, by those that are intimately acquainted with him, that *Homer's Iliads* and *Odisses* contain mystically all the *Moral Law* for certain, it not a great part of the *Gospel* (I suppose much after that rate that *Rablais* said his *Garagantua* contained all the Ten Commandements) but perceivable only to those that have a poetical discerning Spirit; with which gift I suppose, few at School are so early qualified. Those admirable Verses, Sir, of yours, both *English*, and others,



others, which you have sometimes favoured me with a sight of, will not suffer me to be so foolish, as to slight or undervalue so great and noble an Accomplishment. But the committing of such high, and brave sens'd Poems to a School-boy, whose main business is to search out cunningly the Antecedent and the Relative, to lie at catch for a spruce Phrase, a Proverb, or a quaint and pithy sentence, is not onely to very little purpose, but that having gargl'd onely those elegant Books at School, this serves them in stead of reading them afterward, and does in a manner prevent their being further look'd into: So that all that improvement, whatsoever it be, that may be reap'd out of the best and choicest Poets, is for the most part utterly lost; in that a time is usually chosen of reading them, when discretion is much wanting to gain thence any true advantage. Thus that admirable and highly useful Morality, *Tullie's Offices*, because it is a book commonly construed at School, is generally afterwards so contemn'd by *Academicks*, that it is a long Hours work to convince them, that it is worthy of being look'd into again, because they reckon it as a Book read over at School, and no question notably digested. If

If therefore, the ill Methods of Schooling does not onely occasion a great loss of time there, but also does beget in Lads a very odd opinion and apprehension of Learning, and much disposes them to be idle, when got a little free from the usual severities; and that the hopes of more or lesse improvement in the Univerſities very much depend hereupon, it is without all doubt, the great concernment of all that will well to the Church, that such care and regard be had to the management of Schools, that the Clergy be not so much obstructed in their first attempts and preparations to Learning.

I cannot, Sir, possibly be so ignorant, as not to consider, that what has been now offer'd upon this Argument, has not onely been largely insisted on by others, but also refers not particularly to the Clergy (whose welfare and esteem I seem at present in a special manner solicitous about) but in general to all learned Professions, and therefore might reasonably have been omitted, which certainly I had done, had I not call'd to mind, that of those many, that propound to themselves Learning for a Profession, there is scarce one of ten, but that his  
lot,



lot, choice, or necessity, determines him to the Study of Divinity.

Thus, Sir, I have given you my thought concerning the orders and customs of common Schools: A consideration in my apprehension not slightly to be weigh'd; being that to me seems hereupon very much to depend the Learning and Wisdom of the Clergy, and the Prosperity of the Church.

The next unhappiness that seems to have hindred some of our Clergy from arriving to that degree of understanding, that becomes such an holy Office, whereby their company and discourses might be much more than they commonly are valued and desired, is, the inconsiderate sending of all kind of Lads to the Universities, let their parts be never so low and pitiful, the instructions they have lain under never so mean and contemptible, and the Purfes of their Friends never so short to maintain them there. If they have but the commendation of some lamentable and pitiful construing Master, it passes for sufficient evidence, that they will prove persons very eminent in the Church. That is to say, if a Lad has but a lusty and well-bearing Memory (this being the usual and almost only thing where-  
by

by they judge of their abilities) if he can sing over very tunably three or four stanza's of *Lilly's* Poetry, be very quick and ready to tell what's *Latin* for all the Instruments belonging to his Fathers Shop, if presently upon the first scanning, he knows a *sponde* from a *dactyl*, and can fit a few of those same without any sense to his fingers ends; if, lastly, he can say perfectly by heart his Academick Catechism, in pure and passing *Latin*, i. e. *What is his Name? Where went he to school? and, What Authors is he best and chiefly skill'd in?* A forward Boy, crys the School-Master, a very pregnant Child! ten thousand pities, but he should be a Scholar: He proves a brave Clergy-man, I'll warrant you. Away to the University he must needs go; then for a little *Logick*, a little *Ethicks*, and God knows a very little of every thing else, and the next time you meet him it is in the Pulpit.

Neither ought the mischief which arises from small Countrey-Schools to pass unconsidered; the little mighty Governours whereof, having, for the most part, not suck'd in above six or seven mouths full of University Air, must yet by all means suppose them-  
selves



selves so notably furnished with all sorts of Instructions, and are so ambitious of the glory of being counted able to send forth now and then to *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, from the little House by the Church-yard's side, one of their ill-educated Disciples, that to such as these oft-times is committed the guidance and instruction of a whole Parish; whose parts and improvements duely considered, will scarce render them fit Governours of a small Grammar-Castle. Not that it is necessary to believe, that there never was a learned or useful Person in the Church, but such whose education had been at *Westminster* or *St. Paul's*: But, whereas most of the small Schools, being by their first Founders design'd onely for the advantage of poor Parish Children, and also that the stipend is usually so small and discouraging, that very few, who can do much more than teach to write and read, will accept of such Preferment: for these to pretend to rig out their small ones for an University life, proves oft-times a very great inconvenience and dammage to the Church.

And as many such dismal things are sent forth thus with very small tackling, so not a few are predestinated thither by their  
Friends

Friends, from the foresight of a good Benefice. If there be rich Pasture, profitable Customs, and that *Henry* the Eighth has taken out no Toll, the Holy Land is a very good Land, and affords abundance of Milk and Honey: Far be it from their Consciences the considering whether the Lad is likely to be serviceable to the Church, or to make wiser and better any of his Parishioners.

All this may seem at first sight to be easily avoided by a strict examination at the Universities, and so returning by the next Carrier all that was sent up not fit for their purpose. But because many of their Relations are oft-times persons of an inferiour Condition, and who either by imprudent Counsellours, or else out of a tickling conceit of their Son's being, forsooth, an University Scholar, have purposely omitted all other opportunities of a livelihood, to return such, would seem a very sharp and severe disappointment. Possibly it might be much better, if Parents themselves, or their Friends, would be much more wary of determining their Children to the Trade of Learning. And, if some of undoubted knowledge and judgment, would offer their advice; and speak their hopes of a Lad  
about



about thirteen or fourteen years of Age : (which I'll assure you, Sir, may be done without conjuring : ) and never omit to enquire, whether his Relations are able and willing to maintain him seven years at the Univerſity, or ſee ſome certain way of being continued there ſo long, by the help of Friends, or others, as alſo upon ſuch conditions, as ſhall in likelihood deprive him of the greateſt part of his Studies.

For it is a common falſion of a great many, to complement, and invite inferior Peoples Children to the Univerſity, and there pretend to make ſuch an all-bountiful proviſion for them, as they ſhall not fail of coming to a very eminent degree of Learning : But when they come there, they ſhall ſave a Servants Wages. They took therefore heretofore a very good method to prevent Sizars over-heating their Brains : Bed-making, Chamber-ſweeping, and Water-ſeeking, were doubtleſs great preſervatives againſt too much vain Philoſophy. Now certainly ſuch pretended favours and kindneſſes as theſe, are the moſt right down diſcourteſies in the World. For it is ten times more happy, both for a Lad and the Church, to be a Corn-cutter, or Tooth-drawer, to  
make

make or mend Shooes, or to be of any inferior Profeſſion, than to be invited to, and promiſed the Conveniences of a learned Education, and to have his Name only ſtand airing upon the Colledge Tables, and his chief buſineſs ſhall be to buy Eggs and Butter.

Neither ought Lads parts, before they be determined to the Univerſity be only conſidered, and likelihood of being not diſappointed in their Studies, but alſo Abilities or hopes of being maintain'd until they be Maſters of Arts. For whereas two hundred, for the moſt part, yearly Commence, ſcarce the fifth part of theſe continue after their taking the firſt degree. As for the reſt, having exactly learned, *Quid eſt Logica?* and *Quot ſunt Virtutes Morales?* down they go by the firſt Carrier, upon the top of the Pack into the Weſt, or North, or elſewhere, according as their Eſtates lye, with *Burgeſdicus, Euftachius*, and ſuch great helps of Divinity; and then for Propagation of the Goſpel. By that time they can ſay the *Predicaments* and *Creed*, they have their Choice of Preaching, or Starving. Now, what a Champion for Truth is ſuch a thing likely to be? What an huge blaze he makes in the Church? What





a Raiser of Doctrines, what a Confounder of Heresies, what an able Interpreter of hard Places, what a Resolver of Cases of Conscience, and what a prudent Guide must he needs be to all his Parish?

You may possibly think, Sir, that this so early Preaching might be easily avoided, by with-holding Holy Orders: the Church having very prudently constituted in Her Canons, that none under Twenty three Years of Age (which is the usual Age after seven Years being at the Univerlity) should be admitted to that great Employment.

This indeed might seem to do some service, were it carefully observed; and were there not a thing to be got, called a Dispensation, which will presently make you, as old as you please.

But if you will, Sir, we'll suppose that Orders were strictly denyed to all, unless qualified according to Canon: I cannot foresee any other Remedy, but that most of those Univerlity Youngsters must fall to the Parish, and become a Town Charge, until they be of spiritual Age. For *Philosophy* is a very idle thing, when one is cold: And a small System of *Divinity* (though it  
be

be *Wolfebins* himself) is sufficient when one is hungry. What then shall we do with them, and where shall we dispose of them until they come to a holy ripeness? May we venture them into the Desk to Read Service? That cannot be, because not capable: Besides, the tempting Pulpit usually stands too near. Or, shall we trust them in some good Gentlemens Houses, there to perform holy Things? Withal my heart, so that they may not be called down from their Studies to say Grace to every Health: That they may have a little better Wages than the *Cook*, or *Butler*: As also that there be a *Groom* in the House, besides the *Chaplain*: (For sometimes into the Ten pounds a year, they crowd the looking after a couple of Geldings:) And that he may not be sent from Table, picking his Teeth, and sighing with his Hat under his Arm, whilst the *Knight* and *my Lady* eat up the Tarts and Chickens: It might be also convenient, if he were suffered to speak now and then in the Parlour, besides at Grace and Prayer time: And that my *Cosen Abigail* and he sit not too near one another at Meals: Nor be presented together to the little Vicarage. All this, Sir, must be thought of: For,  
C 2 in



in good earnest, a Person, at all thoughtfull of himself and Conscience, had much better chuse to live with nothing but Beans and Pease Pottage (so that he may have the command of his thoughts and time) than to obey the unreasonable humours of some Families.

And, as some think, two or three years continuance in the University, to be time sufficient for being very great Instruments in the Church; so others we have so moderate, as to count that a solemn admission, and a formal paying of Colledge detrimments (without the trouble of Philosophical Discourses, Disputations, and the like) are Virtues that will influence as far a *Newcastle*, and improve, though at never such a distance.

So strangely possessed are People in general, with the easiness and small Preparations that are requisite to the Undertaking of the Ministry, that, whereas in other Professions they plainly see what considerable time is spent, before they have any hopes of arriving to skill enough to Practice, with any confidence, what they have design'd; yet to Preach to ordinary People, and govern

govern a Country Parish, is usually judg'd such an easie performance, that any body counts himself fit for the Employment. We find very few so unreasonably confident of their parts, as to profess either *Law*, or *Physick*, without either a considerable continuance in some of the *Inns of Courts*, or an industrious search in Herbs, Anatomy, Chymistry, and the like; unless it be only to make a Bond, or give a Glister. But, as for the knack of Preaching, as they call it, that is such a very easie attainment, that he is counted dull for purpose that is not able, at a very small warning, to fasten upon any Text of Scripture; and to tear and tumble it till the Glass be out. Many, I know very well, are forced to discontinue, having neither stock of their own, nor Friends to Maintain them in the University. But, whereas a Man's Profession and Employment in this World, is very much in his own, or in the Choice of such who are most nearly concern'd for him: He therefore that foresees that he is not likely to have the advantage of a continued Education, he had much better commit himself to an approved of Cobler or Tinker, wherein he may be duly respected according to his



his Office, and condition of Life, than to be only a disesteemed *Pettifogger*, or *Empyrick* in Divinity.

By this time, Sir, I hope you begin to consider, what a great disadvantage it has been to the Church, and Religion, the meer venturous and inconsiderate determining of Youths to the Profession of Learning. There is still one thing, by very few at all minded, that ought also not to be overlooked; and that is a good Constitution, and Health of Body. And therefore discreet and wise Physicians ought also to be consulted, before an absolute resolve be made to live the Life of the Learned. For he that has strength enough to buy and bargain, may be of a very unfit habit of body to sit still so much, as in general is requisite to a competent degree of Learning: For although reading and thinking, breaks neither Legs nor Arms, yet certainly there is nothing that flags the Spirits, disorders the Blood, and enteebles the whole Body of Man, as intense Studies. As for him that rives Blocks, or carries Packs, there is no great Expense of Parts, no Anxiety of Mind, no great Intellectual Pensiveness: Let him but wipe his Forehead, and he is perfectly

perfectly recovered. But he that has many Languages to remember, the Nature almost of the whole World to consult, many Histories, Fathers, and Councils to search into, if the Fabrick of his Body be not strong and healthful, you will soon find him as thin as a piece of *Metaphysicks*, and look as piercing as a School subtlety. This, Sir, could not be conveniently omitted; not only, because many are very careless in this point, and at a venture determine their young Relations to Learning; but because, for the most part, if among many, there be but one of all the Family that is weak and sickly, that is languishing and consumptive, this of all the rest, as counted not fit for any course Emyloyment, shall be pick'd out as a choice Vessel for the Church: Whereas most evidently, he is much more able to dig daily in the Mines, than to sit cross-legg'd muling upon his Book.

I am very sensible, how obvious it might be here to hint, that, this so curious and severe Inquiry, would much hinder the Practice, and abate the flourishing of the Universities: As also, there has been several, and are still many living Creatures in



the World, who, whilst young, were of a very slow and meek apprehension, have yet afterward cheered up into a great briskness, and became Masters of much Reason: And others there have been, who, although forced to a short continuance in the University, and that oft-times interrupted by unavoidable services, have yet by singular care and industry, proved very famous in their Generation: And lastly, some also of very feeble and crasse Constitutions in their Childhood, have out studied their distempers, and have become very healthful and serviceable in the Church.

As for the flourishing, Sir, of the Universities; what has been before said, aims not in the least at Gentlemen, whose coming thither is chiefly for the hopes of single improvement, and whose Estates do free them from the necessity of making a gain of *Arts and Sciences*; but only at such, as intend to make Learning their Profession, as well as Accomplishment: So that our Schools may be still as full of Flourishings, of fine Cloaths, rich Gowns, and future Benefactors, as ever. And suppose we do imagin, as it is necessary we should, that the Number should be a little lessen'd; this

this surely will not abate the true splendour of an University in any Man's Opinion, but his, who reckons the flourishing thereof, rather from the multitude of meek Gowns, than from the Ingenuity and Learning of those that wear them; no more than we have reason to count the flourishing of the Church, from that vast number of People that crowd into holy Orders, rather than from those Learned and useful Persons that defend Her Truths, and manifest Her Ways.

But I say, I do not see any perfect necessity, that our Schools should hereupon be thinn'd and less frequented; having said nothing against the multitude, but the indiscreet Choice. If therefore, instead of such either of inferiour Parts, or a feeble Constitution, or of unable Friends, there were pick'd out those that were of a tolerable Ingenuity, of a study-bearing Body, and had good hopes of being continued; as hence there is nothing to hinder our Universities from being full, so likewise from being of great Credit and Learning.

Not to deny then, but that now and then there has been a Lad of very submissive Parts, and perhaps no great share of time allow'd



allow'd him for his Studies, who have proved, beyond all expectation, brave and glorious: Yet surely we are not to over-reckon this so rare a hit, as to think that one such proving Lad, should make recompense and satisfaction for those many weak ones (as the common People love to phrase them) that are in the Church. And that no care ought to be taken, no choice made, no Maintenance provided or considered, because, now and then in an Age, one miraculously, beyond all hopes, proves learned and useful, is a practice, whereby never greater Mischiefs, and disesteem has been brought upon the Clergy.

I have in short, Sir, run over, what seem'd to me, the first Occasions of that small learning, that is to be found amongst some of the Clergy. I shall now pass from Schooling to the Universities.

I am not so unmindful of that devotion which I owe to those places, nor of that great esteem I profess to have of the Guides and Governours thereof, as to go about to prescribe new Forms and Schemes of Education, where Wisdom has laid her Topstone. Neither shall I here examin which Philosophy, the old or new, makes the best  
Sermons:

Sermons: It is hard to say that Exhortations can be to no purpose, if the Preacher believes that the Earth turns round: Or, that his Reproofs can take no effect, unless he will suppose a *Vacuum*. There has been good Sermons, no question, made in the dayes of *Materia Prima*, and *Occult Qualities*: And there is, doubtless, still good Discourses now under the Reign of *A-*  
*tems*.

There is but two things wherein I account the Clergy chiefly concerned (as to University Improvements) that at present I shall venture to make enquiry into.

And the first is this, Whether or no it were not highly useful (especially for the Clergy, who are supposed to speak *English* to the People) that *English* Exercises were imposed upon Lads, if not in publick Schools, yet at least privately. Not, but that I am abundantly satisfied that *Latin*, O *Latin!* 'tis the all in all, and the very Cream of the Jest: As also, that Oratory is the same in all Languages: The same Rules being observed, the same Method, the same Arguments and Arts of Perswasion: But yet it seems somewhat beyond the reach of ordinary Youth, so to apprehend those  
genera



general Laws, as to make a just and allowable use of them in all Languages, unless exercised particularly in them. Now, we know that the Language, that the very learned part of this Nation must trust to live by, unless it be to make a Bond, or prescribe a Purge (which possibly may not oblige or work so well in any other Language as *Latin*) is the *English*. And after a Lad has taken his leave of Madam University, God bless him, he is not likely to deal afterward with much *Latin*; unless it be to checker a Sermon, or to say *Salveto* to some travelling *Dominatio Vestra*. Neither is it enough to say, that the *English* is the Language with which we are swaddled and rock'd asleep, and therefore there needs none of this artificial and superadded care. For there be those that speak very well, plainly, and to the purpose, and yet write most pernicious and phantastical stuff: Thinking, that whatsoever is written, must be more than ordinary, must be beyond the guise of common speech, must favour of Reading and Learning, though it be altogether needless, and perfectly ridiculous.

Neither ought we to suppose it sufficient, that *English* Books be frequently read;  
because

because there be of all sorts, good and bad (and the worst are likely to be admired by Youth more than the best) unless Exercises be required of Lads, whereby it may be guessed what their judgement is, where they be mistaken, and what *Authors* they propound to themselves for imitation. For by this means they may be corrected and advised early, according as occasion shall require: Which, if not done, their ill stile will be so confirmed, their improprieties of speech will become so natural, that it will be a very hard matter to stir or alter their fashion of Writing. It is very curious to observe, what delicate Letters your young Students write after they have got a little smack of University Learning? In what elaborate heights, and tossing nonsense will they greet a right down *English* Father, or Countrey Friend? If their be a plain word in it, and such as is used at home, this taunts not, say they, of Education among Philosophers, and it is counted damnable duncery and want of Phantasie: Because, *Your Loving Friend*, or *Humble Servant* is a common phrase in Countrey Letters; therefore the young *Epistler* is *Yours to the Antipodes*, or at least to the  
Centre





*Centre of the Earth*; and because ordinary Folks love and respect you, therefore you are to him the *Pole Star*, a *Jacob's Staff*, a *Load-stone*, and a *Damask Rose*.

And the misery of it is, this pernicious accustom'd way of expression, does not only oft-times go along with them to their Benefice, but accompanies them to the very Grave: And for the most part an ordinary Cheese-monger or Plum-seller, that scarce ever heard of a University, shall write much better sense, and more to the purpose, than these young Philosophers, who in judiciously hunting only for great words, make themselves learnedly ridiculous.

Neither can it be easily apprehended, how the use of *English Exercises* should any ways hinder the improvement in the *Latin Tongue*; but rather be much to its advantage: And this may be easily believed, considering what dainty stuff is usually produced for a *Latin Entertainment*. Chicken-broath is not thinner than that which is commonly offered for a piece of most pleading and convincing sense. For, I'll but suppose an *Academick Youngster* to be put upon a *Latin Oration*: Away he goes presently to his Magazine of collected *Phrases*; he

picks

picks out all the *Glitterings* he can find; he hales in all *Proverbs*, *Flowers*, *Poetical Snaps*, Tales out of the *Dictionary*, or else ready latin'd to his hand out of *Licentiousness*: This done, he comes to the end of the Table, and having made a submissive Leg, and a little admir'd the number, and understanding countenances of his Auditors (let the subject be what it will) he falls presently into a most lamentable complaint of his insufficiency and tenuity: *That he, poor thing, have no acquaintance with above a Muse and half; and that he never drunk above size-9: of Helicon, and you have put him here upon such a task* (perhaps the business is only, which is the noblest Creature a Flea or Louse) *that would much better fit some old Soker at Pernassus, than his sipping unexperienc'd Dibberiship. Alas poor Child: he is sorry at the very soul that he has so better speech; and wonders in his heart, that you will lose so much time as to hear him: For he has neither Squibs nor Fireworks, Stars nor Glories; the cursed Carrier lost his best Book of Phrases, and the malicious Mice and Rats eat up all his Pearls and Golden Sentences*: Then he tickles over a little the skirts of the business: By and by, for similitude

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litude from the *Sun* or *Moon*; or if they be not at leisure, from the *gray-eyed Morn*, a *shady Grove*, or a *purling Stream*: This done, he tells you, *that* Barnaby bright *would be much too short for him to tell you all that he could say; and so fearing he should break the thread of your patience*, he concludes.

Now it seems, Sir, very probable, that if Lads did but first of all determine in *English* what they intend to say in *Latin*, they would of themselves soon discern the triflingness of such Apologies, the pitifulness of their matter, and the impertinency of their Tales, and Phanxies, and would according to their subject, age, and parts, offer that which would be much more manly, and towards tolerable sense. And, if I may tell you, Sir, what I really think most of that ridiculousness, phantastical Phrases, harsh and sometimes blasphemous Metaphors, abundantly foppish Similitudes, childish and empty Transitions, and the like, so commonly uttered out of Pulpits, and so fatally redounding to the discredit of the Clergy, may in a great measure be charg'd, upon the want of that which we have here so much contended for.

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The second Inquiry that may be made, is this: Whether or no punning, quibbling, and that which they call joking, and such other delicacies of Wit, highly admir'd in some Academick Exercises, might not be very conveniently omitted? For one may desire but to know this one thing: In what Profession shall that sort of Wit prove of advantage? As for *Law*, where nothing but the most reaching subtilty, and the closest arguing is allow'd of, it is not to be imagined, that bleeding now and then a piece of a dry Verse, and wreathing here and there an old *Latin* Saying into a dismal Jingle, should give Title to an Estate, or clear out an obscure Evidence. And as little serviceable can it be to *Physick*, which is made up of severe Reason, and well tryed Experiments. And as for *Divinity*, in this place I shall say no more, but that those usually that have been Rope-dancers in the School, oft-times prove *Jack-Puddings* in the Pulpit. For he that in his youth has allowed himself this liberty of Academick Wit, by this means he has usually so chann'd his Judgment, becomes so prejudiced against sober sense, and so altogether disposed to trifling and jingling: that so soon as he gets hold

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of



of a Text, he presently thinks that he has catch'd one of his old School-Questions; and so falls a flinging it out of one hand into another, tossing it this way and that; lets it run a little upon the line, then *tanusui*, *high jingo come again*; here catching at a word, there lie nibbling and sucking at an *and*, a *by*, a *quis* or a *quid*, a *sic* or a *scit*; and thus minces the Text so small, that his Parishioners, until he rendezvous it again, can scarce tell what's become of it.

But, shall we debar Youth of such an innocent and harmless Recreation, of such a great quickner of parts, and promoter of sagacity? As for the first, its innocency of being allow'd of for a time, I am so far from that persuasion, that from what has been before hinted, I count it perfectly contagious, and as a thing that for the most part infects the whole life, and influences upon most actions. For he that finds himself to have the right knack of letting off a Joke, and of pleasing the Humsters, he is not only very hardly brought off from admiring those goodly applauses, and heavenly shouts, but it is ten to one if he directs not the whole bent of his Studies to such idle and contemptible Books, as shall only furnish

with him with Materials for a Laugh, and so neglects all that should inform his judgment and reason, and make him a Man of Use and Reputation in this World. And as for the pretence of making People sagacious, and pestilently witty: I shall onely desire, that the nature of that kind of Wit may be considered, which will be found to depend upon some such fooleries as these: As first of all, the lucky ambiguity of some word or sentence. Oh! what a happiness it is, and how much does a Youngster count himself beholding to the Stars, that should help him to such a taking Jest? And where as there be so many thousand words in the World, and that he should luck upon the right one, that was so very much to his purpose, and that at the explosion made such a goodly report? Or else they rake *Libby's* Grammer; and if they can but find two or three Letters of any Name in any of the Rules, or Example of that good Man's Works, it is as very a piece of Wit, as any has pass'd in Town since the *King* came in. Oh! how the Fresh-men will skip to hear one of those lines well laugh'd at, that they have been so often yeark'd for? It is true, such things as these go for Wit so



long as they continue in *Latin*; but what dismally shrimp'd things would they appear, if turn'd into *English*. And if we search into what was or might be pretended, we shall find the advantages of *Latin Wit* to be very small and slender, when it comes into the World. I mean not only amongst strict Philosphers, and Men of meer Notions, or amongst all damning and illiterate *Hectors*; but amongst those that are truly ingenious, and judicious Masters of Phansie: We shall find, that a Quotation out of *Qui mihi*, an Axiom out of Logick, a Saying of a Philosopher, or the like, though manag'd with some quickness, and applied with some seeming ingenuity, whatever they did heretofore, will not in our dayes pass, or be accepted for Wit. For we must know, that as we are now in an Age of great Philosphers, and Men of Reason; so of great quickness and phansie: And that *Greek* and *Latin* which heretofore, though never so impertinently fetch'd in, was counted admirable, because it had a learned twang, yet now, such stuff being out of fashion, is esteemed but very bad company. For the World is now, especially in Discourse, for one Language, and he that has somewhat in

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his mind of *Greek* or *Latin*, is requested now adayes to be civil, and Translate it into *English* for the benefit of the Company. And he that has made it his whole business, to accomplish himself for the applause of a company of Boys, School-Masters, and the easiest of Countrey Divines, and has been shoulderd out of the Cock-pit for his Wit; when he comes into the World, is the most likely person to be kick'd out of the Company, for his pedantry and over-wcening opinion of himself. And, were it necessary, it is an easie matter to appeal to Wits both Ancient and Modern, that beyond all controverse have been sufficiently approved of, that never, I am confident, received their improvements by employing their Time in Puns and Quibbles. There is the prodigious *Lucian*, the great *Dou of Mancha*, and there is many now living Wits of our own, who never certainly were at all inspir'd from a *Tripus's*, *Terra-filius's* or *Pravarecator's* Speech.

I have ventur'd, Sir, thus far, not to find fault with, but only to enquire into an ancient Custom or two of the Universities, wherein the Clergy seem to be a little concern'd, as to their Education there. I shall

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now look upon them as Beneficed, and consider their Preaching: Wherein I pretend to give no Rules, having neither any Gift at it, nor Authority to do it; but onely shall make some conjectures at those useles and ridiculous Things, commonly uttered in Pulpits, that are generally disgusted, and are very apt to bring contempt upon the Preacher, and that Religion which he professes.

Amongst the first things that seem to be useles, may be reckon'd the high tossing and swaggering Preaching; either mountingly Eloquent, or profoundly Learned. For there be a sort of Divines, who if they but happen of an unlucky hard word all the week, they think themselves not careful of their Flock, if they lay it not up till *Sunday*, and bestow it amongst them in their next Preachment. Or, if they light upon some difficult and obscure Notion, which their curiosity inclines them to be better acquainted with, how useles soever; nothing so frequent as for them, for a month or two months together, to tear and tumble this Doctrine, and the poor People once a week shall come and gaze upon them by the hour, until they Preach themselves, as they think, into a right understanding, Those

Those that are inclinable to make these useles Speeches to the People, they do it, for the most part, upon one of these two considerations: Either out of simple phantastick Glory, and a great studiousefness of being wonder'd at; as if getting into the Pulpit were a kind of Staging, where nothing was to be considered, but how much the Sermon takes, and how much star'd at: Or else they do this, to gain a respect, and reverence from their People; who, say they, are to be puzzled now and then, and carried into the Clouds. For, if the Ministers words be such as the Constable uses, his Matter plain and practical, such as come to the common Market, he may pass possibly for an honest and well-meaning Man, but by no means for any Scholar: Whereas, if he springs forth now and then in high raptures towards the uppermost Heavens, dashing here and there an all-confounding Word; if he soars aloft in unintelligible huffs, Preaches Points deep and mystical, and delivers them as dark and phantastical; this is the way, say they, of being accounted a most able and learned Instructor.

Others there be, whose parts stand not so much towards tall Words and lofty Notions,



tions, but consist in scattering up and down, and besprinkling all their Sermons with plenty of *Greek* and *Latin*. And because *St. Paul*, once or so, was pleased to make use of a little Heathen *Greek*; and that only, when he had occasion to discourse with some of the learned ones, that well understood him, therefore must they needs bring in twenty Poets and Philosophers (if they can catch them) into an hours talk: Spreading themselves in abundance of *Greek* and *Latin*, to a company perhaps of Farmers and Shepherds. Neither will they rest there, but have at the *Hebrew* also; not contenting themselves to tell the people in general, that they have skill in the Text, and that the Exposition they offer agrees with the Original, but must swagger also over the Poor Parishioners with the dreadful *Hebrew* it self, with their *Ben-Israel's*, *Ben-Mannasses's*, and many more *Ben's* that they are intimately acquainted with; whereas there is nothing in the Church, nor near it by a Mile, that understands them, but God Almighty himself, whom it is supposed, they go not about to inform or satisfie.

This learned way of talking, though for the most part it is done meerly out of ostentation,

tation, yet sometimes (which makes not the case much better) it is done in complement and civility to the all-wise *Patron*, or all-understanding *Justice of the Peace* in the Parish: Who, by the common Farmers of the Town, must be thought to understand the most intricate Notions, and the most difficult Languages. Now, what an admirable thing this is? Suppose there should be one or so in the whole Church that understands somewhat besides *English*; Shall not I think that he understands that better? Must I out of Courtship to his Worship and Understanding, and because perhaps I am to dine with him, prate abundance of such stuff, which I must needs know no body understands, or that will be the better for it, but himself, and perhaps scarce he? This I say, because I certainly know several of that disposition, who, if they chance to have a Man of any Learning or Understanding, more than the rest in the Parish, Preach wholly at him, and level most of their Discourses at his supposed capacity; and the rest of the good People shall have onely a handsome gaze or view of the Parson. As if plain words, useful and intelligible instructions, were not as good for an Esquire, or one that is  
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in Commission from the King, as for him that holds the Plough, or mends Hedges.

Certainly, he that considers the design of his Office, and has a Conscience answerable to that Holy Undertaking, must needs conceive himself engaged, not only to mind this or that accomplish'd or well-dress'd Person, but must have an universal care and regard of all his Parish. And as he must think himself bound not onely to visit Doun-beds, and silken Curtains, but also Flocks and Straw, if there be need: So ought his care to be as large to instruct the Poor, the weak and despicable part of his Parish, as those that sit in the best Pews. He that does otherwise, thinks not at all of a Man's Soul, but onely accommodates himself to fine Cloaths, an abundance of Ribbons, and the highest Seat in the Church: Not thinking, that it will be as much to his reward in the next World, by sober advice, care, and instruction, to have saved one that takes Collection, as him that is able to relieve half the Town. It is very plain, that neither our *Saviour*, when he was upon Earth and taught the World, made any such distinction in his Discourses: What more intelligible to all Man-kind, than his Sermon  
upon

upon the Mount? Neither did the *Apostles* think of any such way: I wonder whom they take for a Pattern? I will suppose once again, that the design of these Persons is to gain Glory: And I will ask them; Can there be any greater in the World than doing general Good? To omit future reward: Was it not alwayes esteemed of old, That correcting evil practises, reducing People that lived amiss, was much better, than making a high rant about a Shittle-cock, and talking *Tara-tantaro* about a Feather? Or if they would be only admired, then would I gladly have them consider, what a thin and delicate kind of admiration is likely to be produced, by that which is not at all understood? Certainly that Man that has a design of building up to himself real Fame in good earnest, by things well laid and spoken, his way to effect it, is not by talking staringly, and casting a Mist before the Peoples Eyes, but by offering such things by which he may be esteemed with knowledge and understanding.

Thus far concerning hard Words, high Notions, and unprofitable Quotations out of learned Languages. I shall now consider such things as are ridiculous, that serve for  
Chimney



Chimney and Market-talk, after the Sermon be done; and that do cause more immediately the Preacher to be scorn'd and undervalued. I have no reason, Sir, to go about to determine what stile or method is best for the improvement and advantage of all People: For I question not, but there has been as many several sorts of Preachers as Orators, and though very different, yet useful and commendable in their kind. *Tully* takes very deservedly with many, *Seneca* with others, and *Cato*, no question, said things wisely and well: So doubtless the same place of Scripture may by several be variously considered; and although their method and stile be altogether different, yet they may all speak things very convenient for the People to know, and be advis'd of. But yet certainly what is most undoubtedly useless, and empty, or what is judg'd absolutely ridiculous, not by this or that curious or squeamish Auditor, but by every Man in the Corporation that understands but plain English and common sense, ought to be avoided. For all People are naturally born with such a judgment of true and allowable Rhetorick, that is, of what is decorous and convenient to be spoken, that whatever is

grossly

grossly otherwise, is usually ungrateful, not onely to the wise and skilfull part of the Congregation, but shall seem also ridiculous to the very unlearned Tradesmen, and their young Apprentices. Amongst which, may be chiefly reckon'd these following; harsh Metaphors, childish Similitudes, and ill apply'd Tales.

The first main thing, I say, that makes many Sermons so ridiculous, and the Preachers of them so much disparag'd and undervalued, is an inconsiderate use of frightful Metaphors; which making such a remarkable impression upon the Ears, and leaving such a jarring twang behind them, are oft-times remembred to the discredit of the Minister, as long as he continues in the Parish. I have heard the very Children in the streets, and the little Boys close about the Fire, refresh themselves strangely, but with the repetition of a few of such far-fetch'd and odd-sounding Expressions: *Tully* therefore and *Cesar*, the two greatest Masters of Roman Eloquence, were very wary and sparing of that sort of Rhetorick: We may read many a Page in their Works, before we meet with any of those Bears; and if you do light upon one or so, it shall not

make



make your hair stand right up, or put you into a fit of Convulsion; but it shall be so soft, significant, and familiar, as if 'twere made for the very purpose. But as for the common sort of people that are addicted to this way of expression in their Discourses; away presently to both the *Indies*, rake Heaven and Earth, down to the bottom of the Sea, then tumble over all Arts and Sciences, ransack all Shops and Ware-houses, spare neither Camp nor City, but that they will have them. So fond are such deceived ones of these same gay words, that they count all Discourses empty, dull, and cloudy, unless bespangled with these Glitterings. Nay, so injudicious and impudent together, will they sometimes be, that the *Almighty* himself is often in danger of being dishonoured by these indiscreet and horrid Metaphor-Mongers: And when they thus Blaspheme the God of Heaven, by such unhallowed Expressions, to make amends, they'll put you in, an *As it were*, forsooth, or *As I may so say*; that is, they will make bold to speak what they please concerning God himself, rather than omit what they judge, though never so false, to be witty: And then they come in hobbling with their

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lame submission, and with their *Reverence* be it spoken. As if it were not much better to leave out what they foresee is likely to be interpreted for Blasphemy, or at least great extravagancy, than to utter that, for which their own Reason and Conscience tells them, they are bound to lay in before-hand an excuse.

To which may be further subjoyn'd, That Metaphors, though very apt and allowable, are intelligible but to some sorts of Men, of this or that kind of *Life*, of this or that Profession: For Example: Perhaps one Gentleman's metaphorical knack of Preaching comes of the Sea: And then we shall hear of nothing but *star-board* and *lar-board*, of *stems*, *sterns*, and *fore-castles*, and such like Salt-water Language: So that one had need take a Voyage to *Smyrna* or *Aleppo*, and very warily attend to all the Saylor's Terms, before I shall in the least understand my Teacher. Now, although such a Sermon may possibly do some good in a *Coast-Town*, yet upward into the Countrey in an Inland-Parish, it will do no more than *Syriack* or *Arabick*. Another he falls a fighting with his Text, and makes a Pitch'd Battel of it, dividing it into the *right-wing* and *left-wing*,

then

then he *rears* it, *flanks* it, *intrenches* it; *forms* it; then he musters all again, to see what word was lost, or lam'd in the Skirmish; and so falling on again with fresh valour, he fights backward and forward, Charges through and through, Routs, Kills, Takes, and then, Gentlemen, *as you were*. Now to such of his Parish, as have been in the late Wars, this is not very formidable; for they do but suppose themselves at *Naseby* or *Edge-hill*, and they are not much fear'd at his Doctrine: But as for others, who have not had such fighting opportunities, it is very lamentable to consider, how shivering they sit without understanding, till the Battle be over. Like instance might be easily given of many more Discourses; the Metaphorical phrasing whereof, depending upon peculiar Arts, Customs, Trades and Professions, makes them useful and intelligible onely to such who have been very well busied in such like Employments.

Another thing, Sir, that brings great disrespect and mischief upon the Clergy, and that differs not much from what were immediately before, is their packing their Sermons so full of *similitudes*; which, all the World know, carry with them but very  
small

small force of Argument, unless there be an exact Argument with that which is compared; of which there is very seldom any sufficient care taken. Besides, those that are addicted to this slender way of discourse, for the most part, do so weaken and enfeeble their judgment, by contenting themselves to understand by colours, features and glimpses, that they perfectly omit all the more profitable searching into the nature and causes of things themselves. By which means it necessarily comes to pass, that what they undertake to prove, and clear out to the Congregation, must needs be so faintly done, and with such little force of Argument, that the conviction or persuasion will last no longer in the Parishioners minds, than the warmth of those Similitudes shall glow in their Phantasie. So that he that has either been instructed in some part of his Duty, or excited to the performance of the same, not by any judicious dependance of things, and lasting reason, but by such faint and toyish evidence; his understanding upon all occasions will be as apt to be misled as ever, and his affections as troublesome and unmanageable.

But they are not so unmanageable, as usually

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ally they are ridiculous; for People of the weakest parts are most commonly over-born with these fooleries; which, together with the great difficulty of their being prudently manag'd, must needs occasion them, for the most part, to be very trifling and childish. Especially, if we consider the choiceness of the Authors, out of which they are furnish'd: There is the never-to-be-commended-enough *Licosthenes*; there is also the admirable Piece, called *The second Part of Wisd Common-wealth* (I pray mind it, it is the second Part, not the first); And there is besides, a Book wholly consisting of Similitudes, applied and ready fitted to most Preaching-subjects, for the help of Young-Beginners, who sometimes will not make them hit handsomly. 'Tis very well known, that such as are possess'd with an admiration of such Eloquence, think that they are very much encourag'd in their way, by the Scripture it self. For, say they, did not our Blessed *Saviour* himself use many Metaphors, and many Parables? And did not his Disciples, following his so excellent an Example, do the like? And is not this, not only warrant enough, but near upon a command to us so for to do? If you please  
there

therefore we will see what our Saviour does in this Case. In *St. Matthew* he tells his Disciples that they are *the Salt of the Earth; that they are the Light of the World; that they are a City set on a Hill*. Furthermore, he tells his Apostles, that *he sends them forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves; and bids them therefore, be as wise as Serpents, and harmles as Doves*. Now, are not all these things plain and familiar, even almost to Children themselves, that can but taste and see; and to Men of the lowest Education, and meanest Capacities?

I shall not here insist upon those special and admirable Reasons, for which our Saviour made use of so many Parables; Only thus much is needful to be said, namely, That they are very much mistaken, that from hence think themselves tolerated to turn all the World into frivolous and abominable Similitudes. As for our Saviour, when he spoke a Parable, he was pleas'd to go no further than the Fields, the Sea-shoar, a Garden, a Vineyard, or the like; which are things, without the knowledge whereof, scarce any Man can be supposed to live in this World. But as for our Metaphorical and Similitude--Men of the Pulpit, these  
B 2 things



things to them are too still and languid, they do not rattle and rumble: These lie too near home, and within vulgar kenne: There is little on this side the Moon, that will content them: Up presently to the *Primum Mobile*, and the trepidation of the Firmament: Dive into the Bowels and hid Treasures of the Earth: Dispatch forthwith for *Peru* and *Jamaica*; a Town-bred or a Conntrey-bred Similitude, it is worth nothing. *'Tis reported of a Tree, growing upon the bank of Euphrates, The great River Euphrates, that it brings forth an Apple, to the Eye very fair and tempting, but inwardly it is fill'd with nothing but useles and deceitfull dust; even so, dust we are, and to dust we must all go.* Now, what a lucky discovery was this, that a Man's Body should be so exactly like an Apple? And I will assure you, that this was not thought on till within these few years. And I am afraid too, he had a kind of a hint of this from another, who had formerly found out, that a Man's Soul was like an Oyster: For, says he, in his Prayer, *Our Souls are constantly gaping after thee, O Lord; yea verily, our Souls do gape, even as an Oyster gapeth.* It seems pretty hard, at first sight, to bring into

Sermon

Sermon all the Circles of the Globe, and all the frightfull rearms of *Astronomy*. But, I'll assure you, Sir, it is to be done, because it has been; But not by every Bungler and ordinary Text-divider, but by a Man of great Cunning and Experience: There is a place in the Prophet *Malachi*, where it will do very neatly, and that is chap. 4. vers. 2. *But unto you that fear my Name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his Wings:* From which words, in the first place, it plainly appears, that our Saviour passed through all the twelve Signs of the *Zodiack*: And more than that too, all proved by very apt and familiar places of Scripture. First then, our Saviour was in *Aries*; or else what means that of the *Psalmist*? *The Mountains skipped like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs.* And again, that in the second of the *Kings*, ch. 3. ver. 4. *And Melha King of Moab was a Sheep-Master, and rendered unto the King of Israel an hundred thousand Lambs:* and what follows? *and an hundred thousand Rams, with the whooll.* Mind it; it was the King of Israel. In like manner was he in *Taurus*, *Plal. 22. 12. Many Bulls have compassed me: Strong Bulls of Bashan have beset me round.*

E 3

They



They were not ordinary Bulls: They were *compassing Bulls*, they were *besetting Bulls*, they were *strong Bashan Bulls*. What need I speak of *Geminis*? Surely you cannot but remember *Jacob* and *Esau*, *Gen. 25. 24.* And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold there were *Twins* in her Womb. Or of *Cancer*? when as the *Psalmist* says so plainly: *What ailed thee, O thou Sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?* Nothing more plain. It were as easie to shew the like in all the rest of the Signs: But instead of that, I shall rather chuse to make this one practical Observation: That the Mercy of God to Mankind in sending his Son into the World, was a very *signal* Mercy: it was a *Zodiacal* Mercy. I say it was truly *Zodiacal*: For *Christ* keeps within the *Tropicks*: He goes not out of the *Pale* of the Church. But yet he is not always at the same distance from a Believer: Sometimes he withdraws himself into the *Apogee* of doubt, sorrow, and despair; but then he comes again into the *Perigee* of joy, content, and assurance: But as for *Heathens* and *Infidellers*, they are all *Arctic* and *Antarctic* *Reprobates*. Now when such stuff as this, as sometimes 'tis,

is vented in a poor Parish, where People can scarce tell what day of the month it is by the *Almanack*, how reasonable and-favoury it is likely to be? It seems also not very easie, for a Man in his Sermon to learn his Parishioners how to dissolve Gold: of what, and how the stuff is made. Now, to ring the Bells, and call the People on purpose together, would be but a blunt business; but to do it neatly, and when no Body look'd for it, that's the rarity and art of it. Suppose then, that he takes for his Text that of *St. Matthew*, *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.* Now tell me, Sir, do you not perceive the Gold to be in a dismal fear, to curl and quiver at the first reading of these words. It must come in thus: *The blotts and blurr*s of our Sins must be taken out by the *Aqua-fortis* of our Tears; to which *Aqua-fortis* if you put a *small* part of *Sal-Almoniack*, and set them in a gentle heat, it makes *Aqua-Regia*, which dissolves Gold. And now 'tis out. Wonderful are the things that are to be done by the help of Metaphors and Similitudes! And I'll undertake, that with a little more pains and consideration, out of the very same words, he could have taught the



People how to make Custards, Marmalade, or so few Prunes. But pray, why the *Aqua-fortis* of Tears? For, if it so falls out, that there should chance to be neither *Apothecary* nor *Druggist* at Church, there's an excellent Jest wholly lost. Now had he been to considerate, as to have laid his Wit in some more common and intelligible Material: For Example, had he said that the *blots of Sin*, will be easily taken out by the *Soap of Sorrow*, and the *Fullers-Earth of Contrition*; then possibly the Parson and the People might all have admired one another. For there be many a Good-Wife that understands very well all the intrigues of Pepper, Salt, and Vinegar, who knows not any thing of the all-powerfulness of *Aqua-fortis*, how that it is such a Spot-removing Liquor. I cannot but consider with what understanding the People sighed and cryed, when the Minister made for them this Metaphysical Confession: *Omnipotent All; Thou art only: Because thou art All, and because thou only art: As for us, we are not, but we seem to be; and onely seem to be, because we are not; for we be but Mites of Entity, and Crumbs of something; and so on: As if a company of Country People*  
were

were bound to understand *Suarez*, and all the *School-Divines*.

And as some are very high and learned in their attempts; so others there be who are of somewhat too mean and dirty imaginations: Such was he, who goes by the name of *Parson Slip-stocking*: Who preaching about the Grace and Assistance of God, and that of our selves we are able to do nothing; advised his Beloved to take him in this plain Similitude. *A Father calls his Child to him, saying, Child, pull off this Stocking: The Child mightily joyful, that it should pull off Father's Stocking, takes hold of the Stocking, and tuggs, and pulls, and sweats, but to no purpose; for Stocking stirs not, for it is but a Child that pulls; Then the Father bids the Child to rest a little, and try again; so then the Child sets on again, tuggs again, and pulls again, and sweats again, but no Stocking comes; for Child is but Child: Then at last the Father, taking pity upon his Childe, puts his hand behind, and slips down the Stocking, and off comes the Stocking: Then how does the Child rejoyce? for Child have pull'd off Father's Stocking. Alas, poor Childe! It was not Child's strength, it was not Child's sweating that*



that got of the Stocking, but yet it was the Fathers hand behind that slip down the Stocking. Even so — Not much unlike to this was he, that preaching about the Sacrament and Faith, makes Christ a *Shop keeper*; telling you, that *Christ is a Treasury of all Wares and Commodities*: And thereupon, opening his wide throat, cries aloud, *Good People, what do you lack? what do you buy? Will you by any Balm of Gilead, any Eye-salve, any Myrrho, Aloes, or Cassia? shall I fit you with a Robe of Righteousness, or with a white Garment? See here! what is it you want? Here's a very choice Armour: shall I shew you an Helmet of Salvation, a Shield or a Breast-plate of Faith? Or will you please to walk in, and see some precious Stones? a Jasper, a Sapphire, or a Chalcedonit? Speak, what do you buy?* Now for my part, I must needs say, and I much plaintive I speak the mind of thousands, that it had been much better for such an imprudent and ridiculous Bawler as this, to have been condemn'd to have cryed Oysters or Brooms, than to discredit, after this un-sanctified rate, his Profession, and our Religion.

It would be an endless thing, Sir, to count up

up to you all the Follies, for an hundred years last past, that have been Preached and Printed of this kind. But yet I cannot omit that of the famous *Divine*, in his time, who advising the People in days of danger to run unto the Lord, tells them, *that they cannot go to the Lord, much less run without feet: There be therefore two feet to run to the Lord, Faith and Prayer: 'Tis plain that Faith is a foot, for by Faith we stand, 2 Cor. 1.24. therefore by Faith we must run to the Lord who is faithful. The second is Prayer, a spiritual Leg to bear us thither: Now, that Prayer is a spiritual Leg, appears from several Places of Scripture; as from that of Jonah, speaking of coming, ch. 2. vers. 7. And my Prayer came unto thine holy Temple: And likewise from that of the Apostle, who says, Heb. 4. 16. Let us therefore go unto the Throne of Grace: Both intimating, that Prayer is the spiritual Leg, there being no coming or going to the Lord without the Leg of Prayer. He further adds: Now, that these feet may be able to bear us thither, we must put on the Hose of Faith; for the Apostle says our feet must be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. The truth of it is, the Author*



*shor* is somewhat obscure : For at first, Faith was a *Foot* ; and by and by, it is an *Hose* ; and at last it proves a *Shoo* : If he had pleased, he could have made it any thing.

Neither can I let pass that of a later Author ; who telling us, *It is Goodness by which we must ascend to Heaven* ; and that *Goodness is the Milky-way to Jupiter's Palace* ; could not rest here, but must tell us further, that *to strengthen us in our journey, we must not take morning Milk, but some morning Meditations* ; fearing, I suppose, lest some people should mistake, and think to go to Heaven by eating now and then a Mess of *Morning Milk*, because the way was *milky*.

Neither ought that to be omitted, not long since printed, upon those words of St. *John*, *These things I write unto you, that you sin not*. The Observation is, That it is the purpose of the Scripture to drive Men from Sin. *These Scriptures contain Doctrins, Precepts, Promises, Threatnings, and Histories* : Now, says he, *take these five smooth Stones, and put them into the scrip of the Heart, and throw them with the Sling of Faith, by the Hand of a strong Resolution, against the forehead of Sin, and we shall see it, like Goliath, fall before us.* But

But I shall not trouble you any further upon this subject ; but, if you have a mind to hear any more of this stuff, I shall refer you to the learned and judicious Author of the *Friendly Debates* ; who particularly has at large discovered the intollerable fooleries of this way of talking. I shall only add thus much ; that such as go a bout to fetch blood into their pale and lean discourses, by the help of their brisk and sparkling Similitudes, ought well to consider, whether their Similitudes be true. I am confident, Sir, you have heard it many and many a time (or, if need be, I can shew you't in a Book) that when the Preacher happens to talk, how that the things here below will not satisfie the Mind of Man ; then comes in, *the round World, which cannot fill the triangular Heart of Man* : Whereas every Butcher knows, that the Heart is no more triangular, than an ordinary Pear, or a Childs Top : But because Triangular is a hard word, and perhaps a jest, therefore people have stolen it one from another, these two or three hundred years : And, for ought I know, much longer ; for I cannot direct to the first Inventer of the Phantasia.

In like manner they are to consider, what things either in Heavens, or belonging to the Earth, have been found out by experience to contradict what has been formerly allow'd of. Thus, because some ancient *Astronomers* had observ'd, that both the Distances, as well as the Revolutions of the Planets, were in some proportion or harmony one to another; therefore people that are bounded more with imagination than skill, presently phansy'd the *Moon*, *Mercury*, and *Venus* to be a kind of *Violins* or *Trebles* to *Jupiter* and *Saturn*; and that the *Sun* and *Mars* supply'd the room of *Tenors*: And the *Primum Mobile* running Division all the time. So that one could scarce hear a Sermon, but they must give you a touch of the *Harmony of the Spheres*. Thus, Sir, you shall have'm take that of *St. Paul*, about *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*: And instead of a sober instructing the People in those eminent and excellent Graces, they shall onely ring you over a few changes upon the three words: crying, *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*; *Hope*, *Faith* and *Charity*; and so on: And when they have done their Peal, they shall tell you, that *this is much better than the Harmony of the Spheres*.

Ac

At other times I have heard a long Chyming only between two words; as suppose *Divinity* and *Philosophy*, or *Revelation* and *Reason*; setting forth with *Revelation* first: *Revelation is a Lady: Reason an Handmaid. Revelation's the Esquire: Reason the Page. Revelation's the Sun: Reason but the Moon. Revelation is Manna: Reason's but an Acorn. Revelation a Wedge of Gold: Reason a small piece of Silver.* Then by and by Reason gets it and leads it away. *Reason indeed is very good; but Revelation is much better. Reason is a Counsellor; but Revelation is the Law-giver. Reason is a Candle; but Revelation is the Sunffer.* Certainly those People are possess'd with a very great degree of dulness, who, living under the means of such enlightning Preaching, should not be mightily settled in the right Notion, and true bounds of Faith and Reason.

Not lets able, me-thought, was the difference between the Old Covenant and New, lately determin'd. *The Old Covenant was of Works; the New Covenant of Faith. The Old Covenant was by Moses; the New by Christ. The Old was heretofore; the New afterwards. The Old was first; the New was second. Old things are pass'd away; behold*

all



*all things are become new.* And so the business was very fundamentally done.

I shall say no more upon this subject, but this one thing, which relates to what was said a little before: He that has got a set of Similitudes, calculated according to the old Philosophy, and *Protolomy's* Systeme of the World, must burn his *Common-place-Book*, and go a gleaning for new ones: It being now adays much more gentile and warrantable, to take a Similitude from the *Man* in the *Moon*, than from *solid Orbs*: For though few People do absolutely believe, that there is any such *Eminent Person* there, yet the thing is possible, whereas the other is not.

I have now done, Sir, with that imprudent way of speaking, by Metaphor and Similitude. There be many other things commonly spoken out of the Pulpit, that are much to the disadvantage, and discredit of the Clergy, that ought also to be briefly hinted. And that I may the better light upon them, I shall observe their common method of Preaching.

Before the Text be divided, a *Preface* is to be made: And it is a great chance, if, first of all, the Minister does not make his

Text

Text to be like something or other. For Example: One he tells you, *And now (methinks) my Text, like an ingenious Picture, looks upon all here present; in which both Nobles and People may behold their sin and danger represented.* This was a Text out of *Hosea*: Now, had it been out of any other place of the Bible, the Gentleman was sufficiently resolv'd, to make it like an ingenious Picture. Another taking (perhaps) the very same words, says, *I might compare my Text to the Mountains of Bether, where the Lord disports himself as a young Hart, or a pleasant Roe among the Spices.* Another Man's Text is like the *Red of Moses*, to divide the *Waves of Sorrow*; or, like the *Mantle of Elijah*, to restrain the *swellings floods of Grief*. Another gets to his Text thus; *As Solomon went up six steps to come to the great Throne of Ivory; so must I ascend six degrees to come to the high top-meaning of my Text.* Another thus: *As Deborah arose, and went with Barack to Kadesh; so, if you will go along with him, and call in at the third Verse of the Chapter, he will shew you the meaning of his Text.*

Another he fancies his Text to be extraordinarily like to an *Orchard of Pomogranices*,

F

nces,



nates; or like St. Matthew, *sitting at the Receipt of Customs*; or like the Dove that Noah sent out of his Ark. I believe there are above forty places of Scripture that have been like Rachel and Leah: And there is one in *Genesis*, as I well remember, that is like a pair of Compasses straddling: And, if I be not much mistaken, there is one somewhere else, that is like a Man going to Jericho.

Now, Sir, having thus made the way to the Text, as smooth and plain as *anything*; with a *Preface*, perhaps from *Adam*; though his business lie at the other end of the *Bible*: In the next place, he comes to divide the Text.

— Hic Labor, hoc Opus.

Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum,  
Silvestrum tenui —

Now come off the Gloves, and the Hands being well chafed, he shrinks up his shoulders, and stretcheth forth himself as if he were going to cleave a Bullock's head, or give the Body of an Oak. But we must observe, that there is a great difference of Texts: For all Texts come not afunder alike; For sometimes the words naturally fall afunder;

afunder; sometimes they drop afunder; sometimes they melt; sometimes they *untwix*; and there be some words so willing to be parted, that they *divide themselves*, to the great ease and rejoicing of the Minister. But if they will not easily come in pieces; then he falls to hacking and hewing, as if he would make all fly into shivers. The truth of it is, I have known, now and then, some knotty Texts, that have been divided seven or eight times over, before they could make them *split* handsomely, according to their mind.

But then comes the joy of joyes, when the parts *jingle*, or begin with the same letter; and especially if in *Latine*. O how it tickled the *Divider*, when he had got his Text into those two excellent Branches: *Accusatio vera: Comminatio severa.* A charge full of verity: A discharge full of severity. And I'll warrant you that did not please a little, *viz.* There is in the words, *duplex miraculum; Miraculum in modo; and Miraculum in nodo.* But the luckiest that I have met withal, both for wit and keeping the letter, is upon those words of St. *Mat.* 12. 43; 44, 45. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a Man, he walketh through dry places,*

places, seeking rest, and finding none. Then he saith, I will return, &c. In which words all these strange things were found out. First, there was a *Cap'tain* and a *Castle*. Do ye see, Sir, the same later? Then there was an *ingress*, an *egress*; and a *regress*, or *re-ingress*. Then there was *unroofing* and *unresting*. Then there was *number* and *name*, *manner* and *measure*, *trouble* and *tryall*, *resolution* and *revolution*, *assaults* and *assassination*, *voidness* and *vacuity*. This was done at the same time, by the same Man: But, to confess the truth of it, 'twas a good long Text; and so he had the greater advantage.

But for a short Text, that certainly was the greatest *break* that ever was; which was occasioned from those words of St. Luke 23. 28. *Weep not for me, weep for your selves*; or, as some read it, *but weep for your selves*. It is a plain case, Sir, here's but eight words, and the business was so cunningly ordered, that there sprung out eight parts: *Here are*, sayes the Doctor, *eight words, and eight parts*. 1. *Weep not*. 2. *But weep*. 3. *Weep not, but weep*. 4. *Weep for me*. 5. *For your selves*. 6. *For me, for your selves*. 7. *Weep not for me*. 8. *But weep*

*weep for your selves*. That is to say, *North, North and by East, North North East, North East and by North, North East, North East and by East, East North East, East and by North, East* — Now it seems not very easie to determine, which has obliged the World most, he that found out the *Compass*, or he that divided the fore-mentioned Text: But I suppose the cracks will go generally upon the *Dollar's* side; by reason what he did was done by undoubted Art, and absolute Industry; but as for the other, the common report is, That it was found out by meer foolish fortune. Well: Let it go how it will, questionless, they will be both famous in their way, and honourably mentioned to Posterity.

Neither ought he to be altogether slighted, who taking that of Gen. 48. 2. for his Text, *viz. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy Son Joseph cometh unto thee*; presently perceived, and made it out to the People, That *his Text was a Spiritual Dial*: For, sayes he, *here be in my Text twelve words, which do plainly represent the twelve hours. Twelve words: And one told Jacob, and said, thy Son Joseph cometh unto thee. And here is besides, Behold, which is the*

*Hand of the Dial, that turns and points at every word in the Text. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee. For it is not said, Behold Jacob, or Behold Joseph: But it is, And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy Son Joseph cometh unto thee. That is to say: Behold And. Behold one. Behold told. Behold Jacob. Again: Behold and. Behold said. (And also:) Behold behold, &c. Which is the reason that this word Behold is placed in the middle of the other twelve words, indifferently pointing at each word.*

*Now, as it needs must be One of the Clock, before it can be Two or Three; so I shall handle this word And, the first word in the Text, before I meddle with the following. And one told Jacob: This word And is but a Particle, and a small one: But small things are not to be despised: St. Mat. 18. 10. Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones. For this And is as the Tackles and Loops amongst the Curtains of the Tabernacle. The Tackles put into the Loops did couple the Curtains of the Tent, and sew the Tent together: So this Particle And being put into the Loops of the words immediately before the Text, does couple the*

*the Text to the foregoing Verse, and sews them close together.*

I shall not trouble you, Sir, with the rest; being much after this witty rate, and to as much purpose. But we'll go on if you please, Sir, to the cunning *Observations, Doctrines, and Inferences*, that are commonly made and rais'd from places of Scripture.

One he takes that for his Text, *Psal. 68. 3. But let the Righteous be glad.* From whence he raiseth this Doctrine, That there is a Spirit of Singularity in the Saints of God. *But let the Righteous.* A Doctrine, I'll warrant him, of his own raising; it being not very easie for any body to prevent him.

Another, he takes that of *Isa. 41. 14, 15. Fear not, thou Worm Jacob, &c. thou shalt thresh the Mountains*— Whence he observes, That the Worm *Jacob* was a threshing Worm.

Another, that of *Gen. 44. 1. And he commanded the Steward of his House, saying, Fill the Mens sacks with food as much as they can carry.* And makes his Note from the words; That *great Sacks, and many Sacks, will hold more than few Sacks, and little*



ous. For look, sayes he, how they came prepared with Sacks and Beasts, so they were sent back with Corn: The greater and the more Sacks they had prepared, the more Corn they carry away; if they prepared but small Sacks, and a few, they had carried away the less: Verily and indeed extraordinarily true.

Another he falls upon that of *Isa. 58. 5.* Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? A day for a Man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a Bulrush? The observation is, That Repentance for an hour, or a day, is not worth A Bulrush. And there, I think, he hit the business.

But of these, Sir, I can shew you a whole Book full, in a Treatise called *Flames and Discoveries*: Consisting of very notable and extraordinary things, which the inquisitive Author had privately observed, and discovered, upon reading the *Evangelists*. As for example: Upon reading that of *St. John c. 2. v. 15.* And when he had made a scourge of small Cords, he drove them all out of the Temple: This crying Divine makes these Discoveries. I discover, sayes he, in the first place, that in the Church or Temple, a scourge may be made. And when he had made a scourge. Secondly, that

that it may be made use on: He drove them all out of the Temple. And it was a great chance, that he had not discovered a third thing, and that is, that the scourge was made before it was made use of. Upon *Mar. 4. 25.* And there followed him great Multitudes of People from Galilee: I discover, sayes he, when Jesus prevails with us, we shall soon leave our Galilees. I discover also, sayes he, a great Miracle, viz. that the way after Jesus being straight, that such a multitude should follow him *Matth. 5. 1.* And seeing the Multitude, he went up into a Mountain: Upon this he discovers several very remarkable things: First, he discovers, that Christ went from the Multitude. Secondly, That it is safe taking warning at our eyes; for seeing the Multitude he went up. Thirdly, It is not fit to be always upon the plains and flats with the Multitude; but if we be risen with Christ, to seek those things that are above. He discovers also very strange things from the latter part of the fore-mentioned Verse: And when he was set, his Disciples came unto him. 1. Christ is not always in motion: And when he was set. 2. He walks not on the Mountain, but sits: And when he was set. From whence also, in the third place,

place, he advises People, That when they are Teaching, they should not move too much, for that is to be carried to and fro with every wind of Doctrine: Now certainly never was this place of Scripture more seasonably brought in. Now, Sir, if you be for a very short and witty Discovery, let it be upon that of *St. Mat. 6. 27. Which of you by taking thought, can add one Cubit unto his stature?* The Discovery is this: That whilst the Disciples were taking thought for a Cubit, Christ takes them down a Cubit lower. Notable also are two Discoveries made upon *St. Mat. 8. 1. When he came down from the Mountain, great Multitudes followed him.*

1. That Christ came down as well as went up; When he came down from the Mountain.
2. That the Multitude did not go hail fellow well met with him, nor before him: For, great Multitudes followed him.

I love with all my heart, when People can prove what they say: For there be many that will talk of their Discoveries and spiritual Observations; and when all comes to all, they are nothing but pitiful ghesse, and slender conjectures. In like manner that was no contemptible Discovery that was made upon *St. Mat. 8. 19. And a certain Scribe came*  
and

and said, Master, I will follow thee where-soever thou goest. A thou shalt be followed more than a that: I will follow thee where-soever thou goest. And, in my opinion, that was not altogether amiss upon *St. Mat. 11. 2. Now when John had heard in the Prison the Works of Christ, he sent two of his Disciples.* The Discovery is this, That it is not good sending single to Christ: He sent two of his Disciples. Some also possibly may not dislike that upon *St. Luk. 12. 35. Let your Loyns be girded. I discover, says he, there must be a holy girding and trussing up for Heaven.* But I shall end all with that very politick one, that he makes upon *St. Mat. 12. 47. Then one said unto him, Behold thy Mother and thy Brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said, Who is my Mother? and who are my Brethren? I discover now, says he, that Jesus is upon business.* Doubtless, this was one of the greatest Discoverers of hidden mysteries, and one of the most Pryers into Spiritual Secrets, that ever the World was owner of. It was very well that he happen'd upon a Godly Calling, and no secular Employment; or else in good truth, down had they all gone, *Turke, Pope,*  
and



and *Emperour*; for he would have discovered them, one way or other, every Man.

Not much unlike to these wonderful Discoverers are they, who chusing to Preach upon some *Point in Divinity*, shall purposely avoid all such plain Texts, as might give them very just occasion to discourse upon their intended Subject, and shall pitch upon some other places of Scripture, which no Creature in the World but themselves did ever imagine that which they offer to be therein designed. My meaning Sir, is this: Suppose you have a mind to make a Sermon concerning *Episcopacy*, (as in the late Times there was several occasions for it) you must by no means take any place of Scripture that proves or favours that kind of *Ecclesiastical Government*: For then the Plot will be discovered, and the People will say to themselves, we know where to find you, you intend to Preach about *Episcopacy*. But you must take that of the *Acts*, 16. v. 30. *Sirs, What must I do to be saved?* An absolute place for *Episcopacy*, that all former *Divines* had idly overlook'd: For, *Sirs*, being in the *Greek* *Κεῖται*, which is to say in true and strict translation, *Lords, what more plain than that of old, Episcopacy was not*  
only

only the acknowledg'd Government, but that *Bishops* were formerly *Peers of the Realm*, and so ought to sit in the *House of the Lords*. Or, suppose that you have a mind to commend to your People *Kingly Government*; you must not take any place that is plainly to the purpose, but that of the *Evangelist*, *Seek first the Kingdom of God*. From which words the Doctrine will plainly be; *That Monarchy or Kingly-Government is most according to the Mind of God*. For it is not said, *Seek the Parliament of God*, the *Army of God*, or the *Committee of Safety of God*; but it is, *Seek the Kingdom of God*. And who could expect leis? Immediately after this, the *King* came in, and the *Bishops* were restored. Again Sir, because I would willingly be understood, Suppose you design to preach about *Election* and *Reprobation*: As for the eighth Chapter to the *Romans*, that's too too well known: But there's a little private place in the *Psalms* that will do the business as well, *Psal. 90. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my Soul*. The Doctrine which naturally flows from the words, will be, *That amongst the multitude of thoughts, there is a great thought of Election and Reprobation*.



*probation.* And then away with the Point according as the Preacher is inclined. Or, suppose lastly, that you were not fully satisfied that *Pluralities* were lawful or convenient: May I be so bold, Sir, I pray what Text would you chuse to preach upon against *Non-residence*? Certainly nothing ever was better pick'd than that of St. *Matth.* 1. 2. *Abraham begat Isaac.* A clear place against *Non-residence*: For had *Abraham* not resided, but discontinued from *Sarah* his Wife, he could nor have begotten *Isaac*.

But it is high time, Sir, to make an end of their Preaching, lest you be as much tired with the repetition of it, as the People were little benefited, when they heard it. I shall onely mind you, Sir, of one thing more, and that is, the ridiculous, senseless, and un-intended use, which many of them make of *Concordances*. I shall give you but one Instance of it, although I could furnish you with an hundred printed ones. The Text, Sir, is this, *Gal. 6. 15. For in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a New Creature.* Now all the World know the meaning of this to be, That let a Man be of what Nation he will, *Jew or Gentile,* if

he amends his life, and walks according to the Gospel, he shall be accepted with God. But this is not the way that pleases them: They must bring into the Sermon, to no purpose at all, a vast heap of places of Scripture (which the *Concordance* will furnish them with) where the word *New* is mentioned: And the Observation must be, That *God is for new things; God is for a new Creature.* St. *John* 19. 41. *Now in the place where he was Crucified, there was a Garden; and in the Garden a new Sepulchre, wherein was never Man yet laid; there laid they Jesus:* And again: St. *Mark* 16. 17. *Christ* tells his Disciples, That they that are true Believers, shall cast out Devils, and speak with new Tongues: And likewise the Prophet teaches us, *Isa. 42. 10. Sing unto the Lord a new Song, and his Praise unto the end of the Earth.* Whence it is plain, that *Christ* is not for old things; he is not for an old Sepulchre; he is not for old tongues; he is not for an old Song; he is not for the old Creature; *Christ* is for the new Creature; *Circumcision and Uncircumcision availeth nothing, but the new Creature.* And what do we read concerning *Sampson,* *Judg. 15. 15.* Is it not, that he slew a thousand of the *Philistines*



*liffines* with one *new Jaw-bone*? An old one might have killed its tens, its twenties, its hundreds; but it must be a *new Jaw-bone* that's able to kill a thousand. God is for the *new Creature*.

But may not some say, Is God altogether for new things? How comes it about then that the Prophet says, *Iſa. 1. 13, 14. Bring no more vain Oblations, &c. your New-Moons and your appointed Feaſts my Soul hateth*? And again, what means that, *Deut. 32. 17, 19. They ſacrificed unto Devils, and to New-Gods, whom they knew not; to New-Gods, that came newly up: And when the Lord ſaw it, he abhorred them*? To which I answer; that God indeed is not for *New-Moons*, nor for *New-Gods*; but, excepting *Moons* and *Gods*, he is for new things: God is for the *New-Creature*.

It is poſſible, Sir, that ſome-body, beſides your ſelf, may be ſo vain as to reade this Letter; and they may perhaps tell you, that there be no ſuch ſilly and uſeleſs people as I have deſcribed; and if there be, there be not above two or three in a County; or ſhould there be more, it is no ſuch complaining matter, ſeeing that the ſame happens in other Profeliions, in *Law* and *Physick*:

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In both which there be many a contemptible Creature.

Such therefore as theſe may be pleaſed to know; that if there had been need, I could have told them either the *Book* and very *Pages*, almoſt of all that has been ſpoken about Preaching; or eſſe the *when* and *where*; and the *Perſon* that Preached it.

As to the ſecond, *viz.* That the Clergy are all mightily furniſhed with Learning and Prudence, except ten, twenty, or ſo; I ſhall not ſay any thing my ſelf; becauſe a very great *Scholar* of our Nation ſhall ſpeak for me, who tells us, *That ſuch Preaching as is uſual, is a hindrance of Salvation, rather than the means to it.* And what he intends by *uſual*, I ſhall not here go about to explain.

As to the laſt, I ſhall alſo in ſhort answer: That if the advancement of true Religion, and the eternal Salvation of a Man, were no more conſiderable than the health of the Body, and the ſecurity of his Eſtate, we need not be more ſolicitous about the Learning and Prudence of the *Clergy*, than of the *Lawyers* and *Physicians*: But being we believe it to be otherwiſe, ſurely we ought to be more concern'd for the Reputation,

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and success, of the one, than of the other.

I come now, Sir, to the second Part, that was designed, *viz.* the *Poverty* of some of the Clergy: By whose mean condition, their sacred Profession is much disparaged, and their Doctrine undervalued.

What large provisions of old, God was pleased to make for the *Priesthood*, and upon what reasons, is easily seen to any one that looks but into the *Bible*. The *Levites*, it is true, were left out in the Division of the Inheritance; not to their loss, but to their great temporal advantage: For whereas, had they been common sharers with the rest, a twelfth part only would have been their just allowance, God was pleased to settle upon them a tenth; and that without any trouble or charge of Tillage: Which made their portion much more considerable than the rest.

And as this provision was very bountiful, so the reasons, no question, were very divine and substantial: Which seem chiefly to be these two.

First, that the *Priesthood* might be altogether at leisure for the Service of God, and that they of that Holy Order might

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not be distracted with the cares of the World, and interrupted by every Neighbour's Horse or Cow, that breaks their hedges, or shackles their Corn: But, that living a kind of spiritual life; and being removed a little from all worldly affairs, they might alwayes be fit to receive holy Inspirations, and alwayes ready to search out the mind of God, and to advise and direct the People therein. Not, as if this divine exemption of them from the common troubles and cares of this life, was intended as an opportunity of Luxury and Laziness; for certainly there is a labour besides digging: And there is a true carefulness without following the Plough, and looking after their Cattel. And such was the Employment of those holy Men of old: their care and business was to please God, and to charge themselves with the welfare of all his People: Which thing he that does with a good and satisfied Conscience, I'll assure you, he has a task upon him, much beyond them that have for their care, their hundreds of Oxen, and five hundreds of Sheep.

Another reason that this large allowance was made to the *Priests*, was, that they might be enabled to relieve the Poor, to

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entertain Strangers, and thereby to encourage People in the ways of Godliness: For they being in a peculiar manner the Servants of God, God was pleas'd to entrust in their hands a portion more than ordinary of the good things of the Land, as the safest store-house and treasury for such as were in need. That in all Ages therefore, there should be a continued tollerable Maintenance for the Clergy; the same reasons, as well as many others, make us think to be very necessary. Unless, they'll count Money and Victuals to be only Types and Shadows, and so to cease with the Ceremonial Law.

For where the *Minister* is pinch'd, as to the tollerable conveniences of this Life, the chief of his care and time must be spent not in an impertinent considering what Text of Scriptures will be most useful for his Parish, what Instructions most seasonable, and what Authors best to be consulted: But the chief of his thoughts, and his main business must be to study how to live that week: Where he shall have Bread for his Family? Whose Sow has lately Pigg'd? Whence will come the next rejoicing Goose, or the next cheerful Basket of Apples? How far to *Lammus*, or *Offerings*? When shall

shall we have another Christening and Cakes, and who is likely to Marry or Die? These are very seasonable considerations, and worthy of a Mans thoughts. For a Family cannot be maintain'd by Texts and Contexts: And the Child that lies crying in the Cradle, will not be satisfied without a little Milk, and perhaps Sugar, though there be a small *German System* in the house.

But suppose he does get into a little hole over the Oven, with a Lock to it, call'd his *Study*, towards the latter end of the week (for you must know, Sir, there is very few Texts of Scripture that can be divided, at soonest, before *Friday* night; and some there be that will never be divided but upon *Sunday* morning, and that not very early, but either a little before they go, or in the going to Church: ) I say, suppose the Gentleman gets thus into his Study; one may very near guess, what is his first thought when he comes there, *viz.* that the last Kilderkin of Drink is near departed; and that he has but one poor single Grote in the house, & there's judgment and execution ready to come out against it, for Milk and Eggs. Now, Sir, can any Man think that one thus rack'd, and tortur'd, can



be seriously intent half an hour to contrive any thing that might be of real advantage to his People? Besides; perhaps that week he has met with some dismal crosses & most undoing misfortunes. There was a scurvy condition'd Mole that broke into his Pasture, and plough'd up the best part of his Glebe: And a little after that, came a couple of spiteful ill-favour'd Crows, and tramp'd down the little remaining Grass: Another day, having but four Chickens, sweep comes the Kite, and carries away the fattest and hopesullest of all the Brood. Then after all this came the Jack-daws, and Starlings (idle Birds that they are!) and they scattered & carried away from his thin thatch'd house forty or fifty of the best straws: And to make him compleatly unhappy, after all these afflictions, another day, that he had a pair of Breeches on, coming over a perverse stile, he suffered very much in carelessly lifting over his Leg. Now, what Parish can be so inconsiderate and unreasonable, as to look for any thing from one; whose phansie is thus check'd, and whose understanding is thus ruffl'd & disorder'd. They may as soon expect comfort and consolation from him that lies rack'd with the Gout and Stone,

Stone, as from a *Divine* thus broken and shatter'd in his Fortunes.

But we'll grant, that he meets not with any of these such frightful disasters, but that he goes into his Study with a Mind as calm as the Evening: For all that, upon *Sunday*, we must be content even with what God shall please to send us. For as for *Books*, he is (for want of Money) so moderately furnish'd, that except it be a small *Geneva-Bible*, so small, as it will not be desired to lie open of it self, together with a certain *Concordance* thereunto belonging; as also a Book for all kind of *Latin* Sentences, call'd *Polyantha*; with some Exposition upon the *Catechism* (a portion of which is to be got by heart, and to be put off for his own;) and perhaps *Mr. Caryl* upon *Pineda*, *Mr. Dod* upon the Commandements, and *Mr. Clerk's* Lives of famous Men, both in Church and State; such as *Mr. Carter* of *Norwich*, that uses to eat such abundance of Pudden: Besides, I say, these, there is scarce any thing to be found but a boudget of old stich'd Sermons hung up behind the door, with a few broken Girts, two or three yards of Whip cord, and perhaps a Saw and a Hammer to prevent dilapi-

dissipations. Now, what may not a *Divine* do, though but of ordinary parts, and unhappy Education, with such learned helps and assistances as these? No Vice surely durst stand before him, nor Heresie affront him.

And furthermore, Sir, it is to be considered, that he that is but thus meanly provided for, it is not his only infelicity that he has neither time, mind, nor Books, to improve himself for the inward benefit and satisfaction of his People, but also that he is not capable of doing that outward good amongst the needy, which is a great ornament to that holy Profession, and a considerable advantage towards the having his Doctrine believed and practised in a degenerate World. And that which augments the misery, whether he be able or not, it is expected from him. If there comes a *Brief* to *Town*, for the *Minister* to cast in his Mite, will not satisfy, unless he can create six pence or a stiling to put into the Box, for a stale to decoy in the rest of the Parish: Nay, he that has but twenty or thirty Pounds *per annum*; if he bids not up as high as the best in the Parish, in all acts of Charity, he is counted carnal, and earthly-minded,

minded, onely because he durst not Coin, and cannot work Miracles. And let there come never so many Beggars, half of these I'll secure you, shall presently enquire for the Ministers house: For God, say they, certainly dwells there, and has laid up for us sufficient relief.

I know many of the *Laity* are usually so extremely tender of the spiritual welfare of the Clergy, that they are apt to wish them but very small temporal Goods, lest their inward state should be in danger, (A thing they need not much fear, since that effectual humiliation of *Henry* the Eighth.) For, say they, the great Tithes, large Glebes, good Victuals and warm Cloathes, do but puff up the *Priest*, making him fat, foggy, and useless, and fill him with pride, vain glory, and all kind of inward wickedness and pernicious corruption. We see this plain, say they, in the *Whore of Babylon*: To what a degree of luxury and intemperance (besides a great deal of false Doctrine) have Riches and Honour raised up that *Strumpet*? How does she strut it, and swagger it over all the World, terrifying Princes, and despising Kings and Emperours? The Clergy, if ever we would expect any edification





eration from them, ought to be dieted and kept low, to be meek and humble, quiet, and stand in need of a pot of Milk from their next Neighbour, and alwayes be very loth to ask for their very right, for fear of making any disturbance in the Parish, or seeming to understand, or have any respect for this vile and outward World. Under the *Law*, indeed, in those old times of darkness and eating, the Priests had their first and second dishes, their Milk and Honey, their Manna and Quails, their outward also and inward Vestments: But now under the *Gospel*, and in times of Light and Fasting, a much more sparing Diet is fitter, and a single Coat, though it be never so ancient and thin, is fully sufficient. We must now look, say they, (if we would be the better for them) for a hardy and labouring Clergy, that is mortified to a Horse, and all such pampering vanities; and that can foot it five or six Miles in the dirt, and Preach till star-light for as many shillings; as also a sober and temperate Clergy, that will not eat so much as the Laity, but that the least Pig, and the least Sheaf, and the least of every thing, may satisfie their Spiritualship. And besides, a  
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Money-renouncing Clergy, that can abstain from seeing a penny a month together, unless it be when the *Collectors*, and *Visitationers* come. These are all Gospel-Dispensations, and great instances of Patience, contentedness, and resignation of affections; to all the empinesses and fooleries of this life.

But, cannot a Clergy-man chuse rather to lie upon Feathers than an Hardle, but he must be idle, soft, and effeminate? May he not desire wholesome Food, and fresh Drink, unless he be a Cheat, a Hypocrite, and an Impostor? And must he needs be void of all Grace, though he has a shilling in his Purse after the Rates be cross'd? And full of pride and vanity, though his house stands not upon crutches, and though his Chimney is to be seen a foot above the Thatch? Oh, how prettily and temperately may half a score Children be Maintained with almost twenty pounds *per annum*! What a handsome shift a poor ingenious, and frugal *Divine* will make, to take it by turns, and wear a Cassock one year, and a pair of Breeches another? What a becoming thing is it, for him that serves at the Altar, to fill the Dung-Cart in dry weather, and to heat  
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the Oven, and pill Hemp in wet? And what a pleasant sight is it, to see the Man of God fetching up his single Melancholy Cow, from a small rib of land, that is scarce to be found without a Guide? Or to be seated upon a soft and well grinded pouch of Meal? Or to be planted upon a Pannier with a pair of Geese, or Turkeys, bobbing out their heads from under his Canonical Coat, as you cannot but remember the Man, Sir, that was thus accomplish'd? Or to find him raving about the Yards, or keeping his Chamber close, because the Duck lately miscarried of an Egg, or that the never-failing Hen has unhappily forsaken her wonted Nest?

And now, shall we think that such Employments as these can any ways consist with due reverence, or tollerable respect from a Parish? And he speaks altogether at a venture, that either says that this is false, or, at least it need not be so, notwithstanding the mean condition of some of the Clergy. For let any one make it out to me, which way it is possible, that a Man shall be able to maintain perhaps eight or ten in his Family, with twenty or thirty Pounds *per annum*, without a most intolerable dependance upon  
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his Parish, and without committing himself to such vileness, as will, in all likelihood, render him contemptible to his People. Now, where the In-come is so pitifully small (which, I'll assure you, is the portion of hundreds of the Clergy of this Nation) which way shall he manage it for the subsistence of himself, and his Family: If he keeps the Glebe in his own hand (which he may easily do, almost in the hollow of it) what increase can he expect from a couple of Apple-Trees, a brood of Ducklings, a Hemp-Land, and as much Pasture as is just able to summer a Cow? And as for his Tithes, he either Rents them out to a Layman, who will be very unwilling to be his Tenant, unless he may be sure to save by the bargain at least a third part: Or else he compounds for them; and then as for his Money, he shall have it when all the rest of the World be paid. But if he thinks fit to take his Dues in kind, he then either demands his true and utmost Right; and if so, it is a great hazzard if he be not counted a Caterpillar, a Muck-worm, a very Earthly-minded Man, and too much sighted into this lower World; which was made, as many of the Laity think, altogether for themselves;



selfes : Or else he must tamely commit himself to that little Dose of the Creature, that shall be pleased to be proportioned out unto him : Chusing rather to starve in peace and quietness, than to gain his right by noise and disturbance : The best of all these wayes that a Cleggy-man shall think fit for his preferment to be manag'd, where it is so small, are such, as will undoubtedly make him either to be hated and reviled, or else pitifully poor and disesteemed.

But has it not gone very hard in all Ages with the Men of God ? Was not our *Lord* and *Master*, our Great and *High Priest*, and was not his fare low, and his life full of trouble ? And was not the Condition of most of his *Disciples* very mean ? Were not they notably pinch'd, and severely treated after him ? And is it not the Duty of every Christian to imitate such holy Patterns : But especially of the Clergy, who are to be shining Lights and visible Examples, and therefore to be satisfied with a very little Morfel, and to renounce ten times as much of the World as other People ? And is not Patience better than the great Tithes, and Contentedness to be preferred before large Fees and Customs ? Is there any com-

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parison between the expectation of a cringing Bowe, or a low Hat, and mortification to all such Vanities and Popperies ; especially with those who, in a peculiar manner, hope to receive their Inheritance, and make their Harvest in the next Life ? This was well thought of indeed : But for all that, if you please, Sir, we will consider a little some of those remarkable Inconveniences, that do most undoubtedly attend upon the Ministers being so meanly provided for.

First of all, the holy Men of God, or the Ministry in general, hereby is disesteemed, and rendered of small account. For though they be called the *Men of God*, yet when it is observed, that God seems to take but little care of them, in making them tollerable Provisions for this Life, or that Men are suffered to take away that which God was pleased to provide for them, the People are presently apt to think, that they belong to God no more than ordinary folks, if so much. And although it is not to be question'd, but that the laying on of Hands is a most Divine Institution ; yet it is not all the *Bishops* Hands in the World, laid upon a Man, if he be either notoriously ignorant, or dismally poor, that can procure

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him any hearty and lasting respect. For though we find that some of the *Disciples of Christ*, that carried on and established the great Designs of the Gospel, where Persons of ordinary Employments and Education; yet we see little reason to think that Miracles should be continued to do that, which natural endeavours, assisted by the Spirit of God, are able to perform. And if *Christ* were still upon Earth to make Bread for such as are his peculiar Servants, and Declarers of his Mind and Doctrine, the Laity, if they please, should eat up all the Corn themselves, as well the tenth sheaf as the other; but seeing it is otherwise, and that that miraculous power was not left to the succeeding Clergy, for them to beg their Bread, or depend for their subsistence upon the good pleasure and humour of their Parish, is a thing that renders that holy Office very much slighted, and disregarded.

That constitution therefore of our Church was a most prudent design; that says, that all who are Ordain'd, shall be Ordain'd to somewhat: Not Ordain'd at random, to Preach in general to the whole World, as they travel up and down the Road, but to

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this or that particular Parish. And no question, the reason was to prevent spiritual Peddling, and gadding up and down the Country with a bag of trifling and insignificant Sermons; enquiring, who will buy any Doctrine? So that no more might be received into Holy Orders, than the Church had Provision for. But so very little is this regarded, that if a young *Divinity-intender* has but got a Sermon of his own, or of his Fathers, although he knows not where to get a Meals Meat, or one penny of Money by his Preaching, yet he gets a Qualification from some Benefic'd Man or other, who perhaps is no more able to keep a Curate, than I am to keep ten Foot-boys, and so he is made a Preacher. And upon this accompt I have known an ordinary Divine, whose Living would but just keep himself and his Family from Melancholly and Despair, shroud under his protection as many *Curats*, as the best Nobleman in the Land has *Chap-lains*. Now, many such as these go into Orders against the Sky falls; foreseeing no more likelihood of any Preferment coming to them, than you or I do of being Secretaries of State. Now, so often as any such as these, for want of Maintenance, are pu

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to any unworthy and disgraceful shifts, this reflects disparagement upon all that Order of Holy Men.

And we must have a great care of comparing our small prefer'd Clergy with those but of the like fortune in the Church of *Rome*, they having many Arts and Devices of gaining respect and reverence to their Office, which we count neither just nor warrantable. We design no more than to be in a likely capacity of doing good, and not discrediting our Religion, nor suffering the Gospel to be disesteem'd: But their aim is clearly, not only by Cheats, contriv'd Tales, and fained Miracles, to get Money in abundance; but to be worshipp'd and almost deified, is as little as they will content themselves withall. For how can it be, but that the People belonging to a Church, wherein the Supream Governour is believed never to erre, either purely by vertue of his own single Wisdom, or by the help of his inspiring Chair, or by the assistance of his little Infallible *Cardinals* (for it matters not where the root of error being mistaken lies) I say, how can it be, but that all that are Believers of such extraordinary knowledge, must needs stand

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in most direful awe, not only of the fore-said Supreme, but of all that adhere to him, or are in any Ghostly Authority under him? And although it so happens, that this same extraordinary knowing *Person* is pleas'd to trouble himself with a good large proportion of this vile and contemptible World, so that should he now and then, upon some odd and cloudy day, count himself Mortal and be a little mistaken; yet, he has chanced to make such a comfortable provision for himself and his Followers, that he must needs be sufficiently valud and honoured amongst all: But had he but just enough to keep himself from catching cold, and starving, so long as he is invest'd with such spiritual Sovereignty, and such a peculiar priviledge of being Infallible, most certainly, without quarrelling, he takes the Rode of all Mankind.

And as for the most inferiour Priests of all, although they pretend not to such perfection of Knowledge, yet there be many extraordinary things, which they are believed to be able to do, which beget in People a most venerable respect towards them; such is the power of Making God in the *Sacrament*; a thing that must infallibly

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procure an infinite admiration of him that can do it, though he scarce knows the Ten Commandments, and has not a farthing to buy himself Bread. And then when *Christ* is made, their giving but half of him to the Laity, is a thing also, if it be minded, that will very much help on the business, and make the People stand at a great distance from the Clergy. I might instance likewise in their auricular Confessions, in-joyning of Penance, forgiving Sins, making of *Saints*, freeing People from Purgatory, and many such useful Tricks they have, and Wonders they can doe, to draw in the forward believing *Laity* into a most Right Worshipful Opinion, and Honourable Esteem of them. And therefore seeing our Holy Church of *England* counts it not just, nor warrantable thus to Cheat the World, by belying the Scriptures, and by making use of such falshood and stratagems to gain respect and reverence: It behoves us certainly to wish for, and endeavour all such means as are useful, and lawful, for the obtaining the same.

I might here, I think, conveniently add, that though many Preferments amongst the Clergy of *Rome* may possibly be as small

as some of ours in *England*, yet we are to be put in mind of one more excellent Contrivance of theirs, and that is the denial of Marriage to Priests, whereby they are freed from the Expences of a Family, and a train of young Children, that, upon my word, will soon suck up the Milk of a Cow or two, and grind in pieces a few sheaves of Corn. The Church of *England* therefore thinking it not fit to oblige their Clergy to a single Life, and I suppose are not likely to alter their Opinion, unless they receive better reasons for it from *Rome*, then has been as yet sent over; he makes a comparison very wide from the purpose, that goes about to try the livings here in *England*, by those of the Church of *Rome*: There being nothing more frequent in our Church, than for a Clergy-man to have three or four Children to get Bread for, by that time one in theirs shall be allowed to go into Holy Orders.

There is still one thing remaining, which ought not to be forgotten (a thing that is sometimes urged, I know, by the Papists, for the single life of the Priests) that does much also lessen the Esteem of our Ministry; and that is the poor and contemptible





Employment that many Children of the Clergy are forced upon by reason of the meanness of their Fathers Revenue. It has happen'd, I know, sometimes that whereas it has pleas'd God to bestow upon the Clergy-man a very sufficient Incom; yet such has been his carelesness, as that he hath made but pittiful provision for his Children. And on the other side, notwithstanding all the good care and thoughtfulness of the Father, it has happen'd at other times that the Children, beyond the power of all advice, have seem'd to be resolv'd for Debauchery; but to see Clergy-mens Children condemn'd to the Walking of Horses, to wait upon a Tapsler, or the like, and that only because their Father was not able to allow them a more Gentile Education, are such Employments that cannot but bring great disgrace and dishonor upon the Clergy.

But this is not all the inconvenience that attends the small Income that is the Portion of some Clergy-men; for besides that the Clergy in general is disesteem'd, they are likely also to do but little good in their Parishes. For it is a hard matter for the People to believe that he talks any thing to the purpose, that wants ordinary Food for his Family

family, and that his Advice and Exposition can come from above, that is scarce defended against the Weather. I have heard a travelling poor Man beg with very good Reason, and a great stream of seasonable Rhetorick, and yet it has been very little minded, because his Cloaths were torn, or at least out of fashion: And, on the other side, I have heard but an ordinary saying, proceeding from a fine Suit, and a good lusty Title of Honour, highly admir'd; which would not possibly have been harken'd to, had it been utter'd by a meaner person; yet by all means, because it was a phansie of his *Worships*, it must be counted high, and notably express'd. If indeed this World was made of sincere and pure beateen Vertue, like the Gold of the first Age, then such idle and fond prejudices would be a very vain supposal: And the Doctrine that proceeded from the most tattered and contemptible Habit, and the most sparing Diet, would be as acceptable as that which flow'd from the Silken Cassock, and the best Chear: But seeing the World is not absolutely perfect, it is to be question'd, whether he that runs upon Trust for every Ounce of Provision he spends in his Family,



Family, can scarce look from his Pulpit into any Seat of the Church, but that he spies some body or other that he is beholden to, and depends upon; and for want of money has scarce confidence to speak handsomly to his *Seaton*; it is to be question'd, I say, whether one thus destitute of all tolerable subsistence, and thus shattered and distracted with most necessary Cares, can either invent with discretion, or utter with courage any thing that may be beneficial to his People, whereby they may become his diligent attenders, and hearty respecters.

And as the People do almost resolve against being amended, or bettered by that Minister's Preaching, whose circumstances, as to this life, are so bad, and his condition so low; so likewise is their Devotion very cool, and indifferent in hearing, from such a one, the *Prayers* of the Church. The *Divine-Service*, all the World know, is the same, if read in the most magnificent *Cathedral*, or in the most private Parlour: Or, if performed by the *Archbishop* himself, or by the meanest of his Priests: But as the Solemnity of the place, besides the Consecration of it to God Almighty, do much influence upon the Devotion of the People;

so also the quality and condition of the person that reads it. And although there be not that acknowledged difference between a Priest comfortably provided for, and him that is in the Thorns and Briers, as there is between one placed in great Dignity and Authority, and one that is in less; yet such a difference the People will make, that they will scarce hearken to what is read by the one, and yet be most religiously attentive to the other. Not surely that any one can think, that he whose countenance is chearly, and his Barns full, can petition Heaven more effectually, or prevail with God for the forgiveness of a greater sin, than he who is pitifully pale, and is not owner of an Ear of Corn: Yet most certainly they do not delight to confess their Sins, and sing Praises to God with him, who sighs more for want of Money and Victuals, than for his Trespases and Offences. Thus it is, and will be, do you and I (Sir) what we can to the contrary: Did our Church indeed believe, with the *Papists*, every Person rightfully Ordained, to be a kind of God Almighty, working Miracles and doing Wonders; then would People most readily prostrate themselves to every thing in Holy Orders,



ders, though it could but just creep: But being our Church counts those of the Clergy to be but mortal Men (though peculiarly dedicated to God and his Service) their behaviour, their condition, and circumstances of life will necessarily come into our value, and esteem of them. And therefore it is no purpose for Men to say, that this need not be; it being but meer prejudice, humor, and phansie: And that if the Man be but truly in Holy Orders, that's the great matter: And from thence come Blessings, Absolution and Intercession through Christ with God: And that it is not *Philosophy, Languages, Ecclesiastical History, Prudence, Discretion, and Reputation*, by which the Minister can help us on towards Heaven: Notwithstanding this, I say again, that seeing Men are Men, and seeing that we are of the Church of *England*, and not of that of *Rome*, these things ought to be weighed and considered: and for want of being so, our Church of *England* has suffered much.

And I am almost confident, that since the Reformation, nothing has more hindered People from a just estimation of a Form of *Prayer*, and our *Holy Liturgie*, than employing

employing a company of Boys, or old illiterate Mumbler, to read the Service. And I do verily believe, that at this very day, especially in *Cities and Corporations*, (which make up the third part of our Nation) there is nothing that does more keep back some dissatisfied People from Church, till the *Service* be over, than that it is read by some Ten or Twelve-pound-Man, with whose parts and education they are so well acquainted, as to have reason to know, that he has but just skil enough to read the *Lessons* with twice conning over. And though the Office of the Reader, be only to read word for word, and neither to invent or expound; yet People love he should be a Person of such worth and knowledge, as it may be supposed he understands what he reads. And although for some it were too burthenome a task to read the *Service* twice a day, and Preach as often, yet certainly it were much better if the People had but one Sermon in a fortnight or month, so the Service were performed by a knowing and valuable Person, than to run an unlearned rout of contemptible People into Holy Orders, on purpose only to say the Prayers of the Church, who perhaps shall understand



stand very little more than a hollow pipe made of Tin of Waincot.

Neither do I here at all reflect upon *Cathedrals*: Where the Prayers are usually read by some grave and worthy Person; And as for the unlearned Singers, whether Boys or Men, there is no more complaint to be made, as to this case, than that they have not an all-understanding *Organ*, or a prudent and discreet *Cornet*.

Neither need People be afraid that the Minister for want of Preaching should grow stiff and rusty, supposing he came not into the Pulpit every week: For he may spend his time very honestly, either by taking better care of what he Preaches, and by seriously considering what is most useful and seasonable for the People; and not what Subject he can Preach upon with most ease, or upon what Text he can make a brave Speech, for which no body shall be better, or where he can best steal without being discover'd, as is the Practice of many *Divines* in private Parishes: Or else he may spend it in visiting the Sick, Instructing the Ignorant, and recovering such as are gone astray: For, though there be Churches built for publick Assemblies, for publick Instruction, and

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Exhortation; and though there be not many absolutely plain places of Scripture that do oblige the Minister to walk from house to house, yet certainly People might receive much more advantage from such charitable Visits, and friendly Conferences, than from general Discourses levell'd at the whole World; where perhaps the greatest part of the time shall be spent in useless Prefaces, Dividings and Flourishings. Which thing is very practicable, excepting some vast Parishes: In which also it is much better to do good to some, than to none at all.

There is but one calamity more. that I shall mention, which though it need not absolutely, yet it does too frequently accompany the low condition of many of the Clergy: And that is, it is a great hazzard, if they be not *idle, intemperate, and scandalous*. I say, I cannot prove it strictly and undeniably that a Man smally Beneficed, must of necessity be dissolute and debauched: But when we consider, how much he lies subject to the humour of all kind of Reprobates, and how easily he is tempted from his own house of Poverty and Melancholy; it is to be feared, that he will be willing too often to forsake his own Study of a few servy

Books,



Books, and his own Habitation of Dark-  
ness, where there is seldom eating or drink-  
ing, for a good lightsome one, where there  
is a bountiful provision of both. And  
when he comes here, though he swears not  
at all, yet he must be sure to say nothing to  
them that does it, by all that they can think  
of: And though he judges it not fit to lead  
the Forelor in Vice and Prophanes;  
yet, if he goes about to damp a Frolick, there  
is great danger, not only of losing his *Sun-  
day* Dinner, but all opportunities of such  
future refreshments, for his niceness and  
squeamishness. And such as are but at all  
disposed to these lewd kind of Meetings,  
besides the Devil, he shall have sollicitors  
enough, who count all such revelling occa-  
sions very unfavory, and unhollow'd, un-  
less they have the presence of some Clergy-  
man to sanctifie the Ordinance: Who, if he  
sticks at his Glasse, bless him, and call him  
but *Dector*, and it slides presently. I take  
no delight, I must confess, to insist upon  
this; but only I could very much wish that  
such of our Governours, as go amongst our  
small prefer'd Clergy, to take a view of  
the Condition of the Church and Chancel,  
that they would make but enquiry whe-  
ther

ther the Minister himself be not much out  
of repair.

I have now done, Sir, with the Grounds  
of that disease that many of the Clergy  
lie under, both by the *Ignorance* of some,  
and the extream *Poverty* of others: And I  
should have troubled you no farther, but  
that I thought it convenient not to omit  
the particular occasions that do concur to the  
making up of many of our Clergy so pitti-  
fully poor and contentible.

The first thing that contributes much to  
the *Poverty* of the Clergy, is the great *scar-  
city* of *Living*s: *Churches* and *Chappels* we  
have enough, it is to be confessed, if com-  
pared with the bigness of our *Nation*: But  
in respect of that infinite number that are  
in Holy Orders, it is a very plain case, that  
there is a very great want. And, I am con-  
fident, that in a very little time I could  
procure hundreds, that should ride both  
Sun and Moon down, and be everlastingly  
yours, if you could help them but to a  
Living of Twenty five, or Thirty pounds a  
year: And this I suppose to be chiefly occa-  
sioned upon these two accounts; either  
from the *Eagerness* and Ambition that some  
People have of going into Orders; or from  
the



the *refuge* of others into the Church; who being otherwise disappointed of a Livelihood, hope to make sure of one by that means.

First, I say, that which encreases the unprovided-for number of the Clergy, is people posting into Orders, before they know their Message or Business, onely out of a certain kind of Pride and Ambition. Thus some are hugely in love with the meer Title of Priest, or Deacon; never considering how they shall live, or what good they are likely to do in their Office: But only they have a phansie that a Cassock, if it be made long, is a very handfom Garment, though it be never paid for: And that the Desk is clearly the best, and the Pulpit the higheest Seat in all the Parish: That they shall take place of most but *Esquires* and *Right Worshipfuls*: That they shall have the Honour of being Spiritual Guides and Counsellors: And they shall be supposed to understand more of the Mind of God than ordinary, though perhaps they scarce know the *old Law* from the *new*, nor the *Canon* from the *Apocrypha*. Many, I say, such as these there be, who know not where to get two Groats, nor what they have to say to the People, but onely because

because they have heard that the Office of a Minister is the most Noble and Honourable Employment in the World, therefore they, not knowing in the least what the meaning of that is, Orders by all means must have, though it be to the disparagement of that Holy Function.

Others also there be, who are not so highly possess'd with the meer dignity of the Office, and honourableness of the Employment, but think, had they but a License and Authority to Preach, Oh how they could pay it away! And that they can tell the People such strange things, as they never heard before in all their Lives: That they have got such a commanding Voice, such Heart-breaking Expressions, such a peculiar Method of Text-dividing, and such notable Helps for the interpreting all difficulties in Scripture, that they can shew the People a much shorter way to Heaven, than has been as yet made known by any. Such a forwardness as this of going into Holy Orders, either meerly out of an ambitious humour of being called a Priest, or of thinking they could do such feats and wonders, if they might be but free of the Pulpit, has filled the Nation with many more Divines, than there





there is any competent Maintenance for in the Church.

Another great crowd that is made in the Church, is by those that take in there only as a place of *shelter* and *refuge*: Thus we have many turn Priests and Decons, either for want of Employment in their Profession of *Law*, *Physick*, or the like; or having been unfortunate in their Trade; or having broken a Leg, or an Arm, and so disabled from following their former Calling; or having had the pleasure of spending their Estate, or being, perhaps deservedly, disappointed of their Inheritance. The Church is a very large and good Sanctuary, and one spiritual shilling is as good as three temporality shillings: Let the hardest come to the hardest; if they can get by heart, *Quid est Fides, quid est Ecclesia, quot sunt Concilia Generalia*, and gain Orders, they may prove *Readers* or *Preachers* according as their Gifts and Opportunities shall lie. Now, many such as these, the Church being not able to provide for (as there is no great reason that she should be solicitous about it) must needs prove a very great disparagement to Her: They coming hither just as the old *Heathens* use to go to Prayers: When no-  
thing

thing would stop the anger of the Gods; then for a touch of Devotion: And if there be no way to get Victuals, rather than starve let us Read or Preach.

In short, Sir, we are perfectly overstock'd with Professors of Divinity; There being scarce employment for half of those who undertake that Office. And unless we had some of the *Romish* Tricks, to ramble up and down, and cry *Pardons* and *Indulgences*: Or for want of a Living, have good store of *Clients* in the *Business* of *Purgatory*, or the like, and so make such unrighteous Gains of Religion, it were certainly much better if many of them were otherwise determined. Or unless we had some vent for our Learned Ones beyond Sea; and could transport so many Tunn of *Divines* yearly, as we do other Commodities, with which the Nation is over-stocked; we do certainly very unadvisedly to breed up so many to that Holy Calling, or to suffer so many to steal into Orders, seeing there is not sufficient work and employment for them.

The next thing that does much heighten the Misery of our Church, as to the Poverty of it, is the *Gentries* designing, not



ly the weak, the lame, and usually the most ill-favour'd of their Children for the Office of the Ministry, but also such as they intend to settle nothing upon for their subsistence; leaving them wholly to the bare hopes of Church-preferment. For, as they think, let the thing look how it will, it is good enough for the Church; and that if it has but Limbs enough to climb the Pulpit, and Eyes enough to find the day of the month, it will serve well enough to Preach and Read Service: So likewise they think they have obliged the Clergy very much, if they please to bestow two or three years Education upon a younger Son at the *University*, and then commend him to the Grace of God, and the favour of the Church, without one Penny of Money or Inch of Land. You must not think, that he will spoil his Eldest Son's Estate, or hazzard the lessening the Credit of the Family, to do that which may any way tend to the reputation and honour of the Clergy. And thus it comes to pass that you may commonly Ride ten Miles, and scarce meet with a *Divine* that is worth above two Spoons and a Pepper-Box, besides his Living, or spiritual Preferments. For as for the Land,

that

that goes sweeping away with the Eldest Son, for the immortality of the Family; and as for the Money, that is usually employed for to Bind out, and to Set up other Children. And thus you shall have them make no doubt of giving five hundred or a thousand pounds for a Stock to them: But for the poor *Divinity-Son*, if he gets but enough to buy a broad Hae at second hand, and a small *System* or two of Faith, that's counted stock sufficient for him to set up withall. And possibly he might make some kind of shift in this World, if any Body will engage that he shall have neither Wife nor Children; But if it so falls out, that he leaves the World, and behind him, either the one or the others; in what a dismal condition are these likely to be, and how will their sad Calamities reflect upon the Clergy! So dismal a thing is this commonly judged, that those that at their departure out of this Life are piously and vertuously disposed, do usually reckon the taking care for the Relief of the poor *Ministers Widows*, to be an opportunity of as necessary Charity, as the mending of Highways, and the erecting of Hospitals.

But neither are spiritual Preferments only



scarce by reason of that great number that lie hovering over them, and that they that are thus upon the wing, are usually destitute of any other Estate and Livelihood; but also when they come into possession of them, they finding for the most part nothing but a little Sauce, and second Course, Pigs, Geese, and Apples, must needs be put upon great perplexities for the standing necessities of a Family. So that if it be enquired by any one, How comes it to pass that we have so many in Holy Orders, that understand so little, and that are able to do so little service in the Church? If we would answer plainly and truly, we must say, because they are good for nothing else: For, shall we think that any man, that is not curs'd to uselessness, poverty, and misery, will be content with Twenty or Thirty Pounds a Year? For though in the Bulk, it looks at first like a bountiful Estate; yet, if we think of it a little better, we shall find that an ordinary *Brick-layer*, or *Carpenter* (I mean not your great Undertakers and Master-Workmen) that earns constantly but his two shillings a day, has clearly a better Revenue, and hath certainly the command of more Money: For that the one has no

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dilapidations, and the like, to consume a great part of his weekly Wages, which you know how much the other is subject unto. So that as long as we have so many small and contemptible Livings belonging to our Church (let the World do what it can) we must expect that they should be supplied by very lamentable and unserviceable things: For that no body else will meddle with them; unless one in an Age, abounding with Money, Charity and Goodness, will preach for nothing. For, if Men of Knowledge, Prudence, and Wealth, have a phanfic against a Living of Twenty or Thirty Pounds a year; There is no way to get them into such an undertaking, but by sending out a Spiritual Pres: For that very few Volunteers that are of worth (unless better encouraged) will go into that holy Warfare: But it will be left to those who cannot devise how otherwise to live.

Neither must people say, that besides *Bishopsricks*, *Prebendries*, and the like, we have several brave Benefices, sufficient to invire those of the best Parts, Education, and Discretion. For imagin one Living in forty is worth a Hundred Pounds a year: And supplied by a Man of Skill, and

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whole,



wholesome Counsel: What are the other thirty nine the better for that? What are the People about *Carlisle* better'd by his Instructions and advice who lives at *Dover*? It was certainly our *Saviour's* Mind, not only that the Gospel should be Preached to all *Nations* at first, but that the meaning and power of it should be preserved and constantly declared to all People, by such as had judgement to do it.

Neither again must they say, that *Cities*, *Corporations*, and the great *Trading Towns* of this Nation, (which are the strength and glory of it, and that contain the useful People of the World) are usually instructed by very learned and judicious Persons. For, I suppose, that our *Saviour's* Design was not that *Mayors*, *Aldermen*, and *Merchants*, should be only saved; but also that all plain Country People should partake of the same means: Who, though they read not so many *Gazets*, as a *Citizen*, nor concern themselves where the *Turk*, or *King of France* sets on next; yet the true knowledge of God is now so plainly delivered in Scripture, that there wants nothing but sober and prudent Offerers of the same, to make it saving to those of the meanest understandings.

dings. And therefore in all Parishes, if possible, there ought to be such a fix and settled Provision, as might reasonably invite some careful and prudent Person, for the Peoples Guide and Instruction in Holy Matters.

And furthermore: It might be added, that the *Revenue* belonging to most of *Corporation-Livings* is no such mighty business: For were it not for the uncertain and humour-some contribution of the well-pleas'd Parishoners, the *Parson* and his Family might be easily starved, for all the *Lands* or Income that belongs to his Church. Besides the great mischief that such kind of hired Preachers have done in the World: Which I shall not stay here to insist upon.

And as we have not *Churches* enough, in respect of the great multitude that are qualified for a Living; so, considering the smallness of the Revenue, and the number of people that are to be the Hearers, it is very plain that we have too many. And we shall many times find two Churches in the same Yard, when as one would hold double the people of both the Parishes: And if they were united for the encouragement of some deserving person, he might easily make shift.

stife to spend very honestly and temperately the Revenue of both. And what though Churches stand at a little further distance? People may please to walk a Mile without distemp'ring themselves: When as they shall go three or four to a Market, to sell two penny-worth of Eggs.

But suppose they resolve to pretend, that they shall catch cold (the Clouds being more than ordinarily thick upon the *Sunday*, as they usually are, if there be Religion in the case) and that they are absolutely bent upon having instruction brought to their own *Town*: Why might not one Sermon a day, or rather than fail one in a fortnight, from a prudent and well esteem'd of Preacher, do as well, as two a day from him, that talks all the year long nothing to the purpose, and thereupon is laugh'd at and despis'd?

I know what people will presently say unto this, *viz.* That if upon *Sunday* the *Church doors be shut*, the *Ale-houses will be open*. And therefore there must be some body, though never so weak and lamentable, to pass away the time in the Church, that the People may be kept sober and peaceable. Truly, if Religion and the Worship of God consisted only in Negatives;

tives; and that the Observation of the *Sabbath* was only not to be drunk; then they spake much to the purpose; but, if it be otherwise, very little. It being not much unlike (as it is the fashion in many places) to the sending of little Children of two or three years old to a *School-Dame*, without any design of learning one Letter, but only to keep them out of the fire and water.

Last of all, People must not say that there needs no great store of Learning in a Minister; and therefore a small Living may answer his deserts: For that there be *Homes* made on purpose by the Church for young Beginners & slow Inventors. Whereupon it is that such difference is made between giving *Orders* and *License* to Preach; the last being granted only to such as the Bishop shall judge able to make Sermons.

But this does not seem to do the business: For though it be not necessary for every Guide of a Parish to understand all the *Oriental Languages*. or to make exactly elegant or profound Discourses for the Pulpit; yet most certainly it is very requisite that he should be so far learned and judicious, as prudently to advise, direct, inform, and satisfy the People in Holy Matters, when they



they demand it, or beg it from him. Which, to perform readily and judiciously, requires much more discretion and skill, than upon long deliberation to make a continued talk of an hour, without any great discernable failings. So that were a Minister tyed up never to speak one sentence of his own invention out of the Pulpit in his whole Lifetime, yet doubtless many other occasions there be, for which neither Wisdom nor Reputation should be wanting in him that has the Care and Government of a Parish.

I shall not here go about to please myself with the imagination of all the great *Tribes* being restored to the Church, having little reason to hope to see such dayes of vertue. Nor shall I here question the almightiness of former *Kings* and *Parliaments*; nor dispute whether all the *King Henries* in the World, with never such a powerful *Parliament*, were able to determine to any other use what was once solemnly dedicated to God and his Service. But yet when we look over the Prefaces to those *Acts of Parliament*, whereby some Church-Revenues were granted to *Henry* the Eighth, one cannot but be much taken with the ingenuity

of that *Parliament*: That when the *King* wanted a supply of money, and an augmentation to his Revenue, how handsomely out of the *Church* they made provision for him, without doing themselves any injury at all: For, say they, seeing His *Majesty* is Our joy and life, seeing that He is so couragious and wise, seeing that he is so very tender of, and well affected to all His Subjects; and that He has been at such large Expences for five and twenty whole years to defend and protect this His Realm; therefore in all Duty and Gratitude, and as a manifest token of Our unfeigned thankfulness, We do Grant unto the *King* and His Heirs for ever, &c. It follows as closely as can be, That because the *King* had been a good and deserving *King*, and had been at much trouble and expence for the safety and honour of the Nation, that therefore all his wants should be supplied out of the Church: As if all the Charges that He had been at, was upon the account only of His *Ecclesiastical Subjects*, and not in relation to the rest.

It is not, Sir, for you and I to guess which way the whole Clergy in general might be better provided for. But sure it is, and must  
not





not be denied, that so long as many Livings continue, as they now are, thus impoverished; and that there be so few encouragements for Men of sobriety, wisdom and learning, we have no reason to expect much better Instructors and Governours of Parishes, than at present we commonly find.

There is a way, I know, that some people love marvelously to talk of, and that is, a just and equal levelling of *Ecclesiastical* Preferments. What a delicate refreshment, say they, would it be, if Twenty or Thirty thousand pounds a year were taken from the *Bishops*, and discreetly sprinkled amongst the poorer and meaner sort of the Clergy? how would it rejoyce their hearts, and encourage them in their Office? What need those great & sumptuous Palaces, their City and their Country-houses, their Parks and spacious Waters, their costly Dishes and fashionable Sauces? May not he that lives in a small thatch'd house, that can scarce walk four strides in his own ground, that has only read well concerning *Venison, Fish, and Fowl*; may not he, I say, preach as loud, and to as much purpose, as one of those high and mighty *Spiritualists*? Go to then, seeing it hath pleased God to make

such

such a bountiful provision for his Church in general, what need we be so solicitous about the amending the low condition of many of the Clergy, when as there is such a plain remedy at hand, had we but grace to apply it? This invention pleases some mainly well: But for all the great care they pretend to have of the distressed part of the Clergy, I am confident, one might easily shew what would please them much better: If instead of augmenting small Benefices, the *Bishops* would be pleased to return to them those *Lands* that they purchased in their absence. And then as for the relieving of the Clergy; they would try if they could find out another way.

But art thou in good earnest my excellent Contriver? Dost thou think that if the greatest of our Church Preferments were wisely parcell'd out amongst those that are in want, it would do much feats and courtesies? And dost thou not likewise think, that if ten or twenty of the lustiest *Noble-mens* Estates of *England* were cleverly sliced among the Indigent, would it not strangely refresh some of the poor *Lairys*, that Cry small-Coal, or grind Scissars? I do suppose that if God should afterwards incline thy mind (for



I phantise it will not be yet a good while) to be a *Benefactor* to the Church; thy wisdom may possibly direct thee to disperse thy goodness in smaller parcels, rather than to flow in upon two, or three, with full happiness. But if it be my inclination to settle upon one *Ecclesiastical* Person, and his successors for ever, a thousand pounds a year; upon condition only to read *the Service of the Church*, once in a week, and you take it ill, and find fault with my prudence, and the method of my munificence; and say, that the stipend is much too large for such a small task: Yet, I am confident, that should I make thy *Laisship* Heir of such an Estate, and oblige thee only to the trouble and expence of spending a single Chicken, or half a dozen of Larks, once a year, in commemoration of me, that thou wouldest count me the wisest Man that ever was since the Creation: And pray to God, never to dispose thy mind, to part with one farthing of it, for any other use than for the service of thy self, and thy Family. And yet, so it is, that because the *Bishops*, upon their first being restored, had the confidence to levy Fines according as they were justly due, and desired to live in their own Houses (if not

pull'd

down) and to receive their own Rents: Presently they cry out the *Churchmen* have got all the Treasure, and Money of the Nation into their hands. If they have any, let them thank God for it, and make good use of it. Weep not, Beloved, for there is very little hopes, that they will cast it all into the Sea, on purpose to stop the mouths of them, that say they have too much.

What other contrivances there may be for the settling upon Ministers in general a sufficient Revenue for their subsistence, and encouragement in their Office, I shall leave to be considered of by the *Governours* of Learning and Religion. Only, thus much is certain, that so long as the Maintenance of many *Ministers* is so very small, it is not to be avoided, but that a great part of them will want learning, prudence, courage, and esteem to do any good where they live. And what if we have (as by all must be acknowledged) as wise, and learned Bishops, as be in the World; and many others of very great understanding, and wisdom, yet (as was before hinted) unless there be provided for most Towns and Parishes, some tollerable and sufficient Guide;

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the strength of Religion, and the Credit of the Clergy will daily languish more and more. Nor that it is to be believed, that every small Country Parish should be altogether hopeless as to the next Life, unless they have a *Hooker*, a *Chillingworth*, a *Hammond*, or a *Sanderson*, dwelling amongst them; but requisite it is, and might be brought about, that some body there should be, to whom the People have reason to attend, and to be directed, and guided by him.

I have, Sir, no more to say, were it not that you find the word *Religion* in the Title; of which in particular I have spoken very little: Neither need I, considering how nearly it depends, as to its glory and strength, upon the reputation and mouth of the *Priest*. And I shall add no more but this, *viz.* that among those many things that tend to the decay of Religion, and of a due Reverence of the *Holy Scriptures*, nothing has more occasion'd it, than the ridiculous, and idle discourses that are uttered out of Pulpits. For when the *Gallants* of the World do observe, how the *Ministers* themselves do jingle, quibble, and play the fools with their *Texts*, no wonder if they, who

who are so inclinable to *Atheism*, do not only deride and despise the *Priests*, but droll upon the Bible, and make a mock of all that is sober and sacred. I am,

Sir,

August 8.  
1670.

Your most humble Servant;

T. B.

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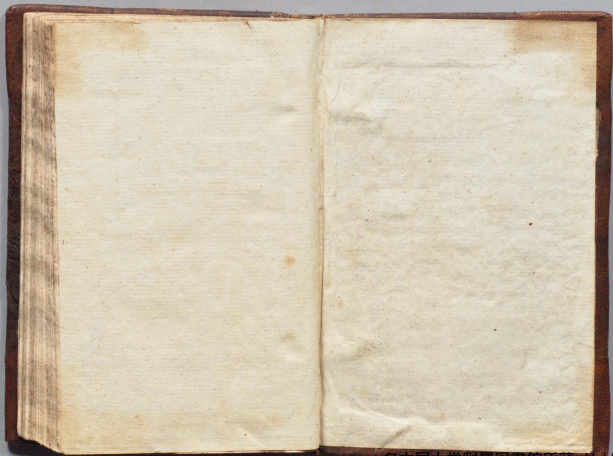
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