

AN
ADDRESS

TO THE

CLERGY.

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A D D R E S S S

T O T H E

C L E R G Y.

BRETHREN and FATHERS,

LET it not be imputed to Forwardness, Vanity or Presumption, that one who is of little Esteem in the Church, takes upon him thus to address a Body of People, to many of whom he owes the highest Reverence. I owe a still higher Regard to Him who I believe requires this at my Hands; to the great Bishop of our Souls; before whom both you and I must shortly give an Account of our Stewardship. It is a Debt I owe to Love, to real, disinterested Affection, to declare what has long been the Burden of my Soul. And may the GOD of Love enable you to read these Lines, in the same Spirit wherewith they were wrote!

It will easily appear to an unprejudiced Reader, That I do not speak from a Spirit of Anger or Resentment. I know well, *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of GOD.* Much less would I utter one Word out of *Contempt*; a Spirit justly abhorred by GOD and Man. Neither of these can consist with that earnest, tender Love, which is the Motive of my present Undertaking. In this Spirit I desire to *cast my Bread upon the Waters*; It is enough, if I *find it again after many Days.*

Meantime you are sensible, Love does not forbid, but rather require Plainness of Speech. Has it not often constrained you as well as me, to lay aside not only Disguise, but Reserve also? And by *Manifestation of the Truth to commend ourselves to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of GOD?* And while I endeavour to do this, let me earnestly entreat you, for the Love of GOD, for the Love of your own Soul, for the Love of the Souls committed to your Charge, yea, and of the whole Church of *Christ*, do not bias your Mind, by thinking *who* it is that speaks; but impartially consider, *what* is spoken. And if it be false or foolish, reject it: But do not reject *the Words of Truth and Soberness.*

My first Design was, to offer a few plain Thoughts to the Clergy of our own Church only. But upon farther Reflection, I see no Cause for being so *straitened in my own Bowels.* I am a Debtor to all: And therefore tho' I primarily speak to them with whom I am more immediately connected, yet I would not be understood to exclude any, of whatsoever Denomination, whom GOD has called to *watch over the Souls of others, as they that must give Account.*

In order to our giving this Account with Joy, are there not Two Things which it highly imports us to consider, *First*, What Manner of Men ought we to be? *Secondly*, Are we such; or are we not?

I. And, *First*, If we are *Overseers over the Church of GOD*, which He hath bought with his own Blood, what Manner of Men ought we to be, in *Gifts* as well as in *Grace*?

(1.) To begin with *Gifts*, and 1. with those that are from *Nature*. Ought not a Minister to have, *1st*, A good Understanding? A clear Apprehension, a sound Judgment, and a Capacity of reasoning with some Closeness? Is not this necessary in an high Degree for the Work of the Ministry? Otherwise how will he be able to understand the various States of those under his Care? Or to steer them through a thousand Difficulties and Dangers, to the Haven where they would be? Is it not necessary, with Respect to the numerous Enemies whom he has to encounter? Can a Fool cope with all the Men that know not GOD? And with all the Spirits of Darkness? Nay, he will neither be aware of the Devices of *Satan*, nor the Craftiness of his Children.

2dly, Is it not highly expedient that a Guide of Souls should have likewise some Liveliness and Readiness of Thought? Or how will he be able, when Need requires, to answer a Fool according to his Folly? How frequent is this Need? seeing we almost every where meet with those empty, yet petulant Creatures, who are far wiser in their own Eyes, than seven Men that can render a Reason. Reasoning therefore is not the Weapon to be used with them. You cannot deal with them thus. They scorn being

being *convinced*; nor can they be *silenced*, but in their own Way.

3dly, To a sound Understanding, and a lively Turn of Thought, should be joined a good *Memory*: If it may be, *ready*, that you may make whatever occurs in Reading or Conversation, your own; but however *retentive*, lest we be *ever learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*. On the contrary, *every Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, every Teacher fitted for his Work, is like an Householder who bringeth out of his Treasures Things new and old*.

2. And as to *acquired Endowments*, can he take one Step aright, without, first, a competent Share of *Knowledge*? A Knowledge, 1st, of his own Office; of the high Trust in which he stands, the important Work to which he is called? Is there any Hope that a Man should discharge his Office well, if he knows not what it is? That he should acquit himself faithfully of a Trust, the very Nature whereof he does not understand? Nay: If he *knows* not the Work GOD has given him to do, he cannot *finish* it.

2dly, No less necessary is a Knowledge of the *Scriptures*, which teach us how to teach others: Yea, a Knowledge of all the Scriptures; seeing Scripture interprets Scripture; one Part fixing the Sense of another. So that whether it be true or not, that every good Textuary is a good Divine, it is certain, none can be a good Divine who is not a good Textuary. None else can be *mighty in the Scriptures*; able both to instruct, and to stop the Mouths of Gainsayers.

In order to do this accurately, ought he not to know the literal Meaning of every Word, Verse and Chapter, without which there can be no firm Foundation on which the spiritual Meaning can be built? Should he not likewise be able to deduce the proper Corollaries, speculative and practical, from each Text; to solve the Difficulties which arise, and answer the Objections which are or may be raised against it; and to make a suitable Application of all, to the Consciences of his Hearers?

3dly, But can he do this, in the most effectual Manner, without a Knowledge of the *Original Tongues*? Without this, will he not frequently be at a Stand, even as to Texts which regard Practice only? But he will be under still greater Difficulties, with Respect to controverted Scriptures. He will be ill able to rescue these out of the Hands of any Man of Learning that would pervert them: For whenever an Appeal is made to the Original, his Mouth is stopt at once.

4thly, Is not a Knowledge of profane *History* likewise, of antient Customs, of Chronology and Geography, tho' not absolutely necessary, yet highly expedient for him that would thoroughly understand the Scriptures? Since the Want even of this Knowledge is but poorly supplied by reading the Comments of other Men.

5thly, Some Knowledge of the *Sciences* also, is (to say the least) equally *expedient*. Nay, may we not say, that the Knowledge of one (whether Art or Science) altho' now quite unfashionable, is even *necessary*, next, and in order to, the Knowledge of the Scripture itself? I mean, *Logic*. For what is this, if rightly understood, but the *Art of Good Sense*? Of apprehending Things clearly, judging truly, and reasoning conclusively? What is it,
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view'd in another Light, but the *Art of Learning and Teaching*? Whether by convincing or persuading? What is there then, in the whole Compass of *Science*, to be desired in Comparison of it?

Is not some Acquaintance with what has been term'd The Second Part of Logic, *Metaphysics*, if not so necessary as this, yet highly expedient, 1. In order to clear our Apprehension (without which it is impossible either to judge correctly, or to reason closely or conclusively) by ranging our Ideas under General Heads: And, 2. In order to understand many useful Writers, who can very hardly be understood without it?

Should not a Minister be acquainted too with at least the General Grounds of *Natural Philosophy*? Is not this a great Help to the accurate understanding several Passages of Scripture? Assisted by this, he may himself comprehend, and on proper Occasions explain to others, how *the invisible Things of GOD are seen from the Creation of the World? How the Heavens declare the Glory of GOD, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work: 'Till they cry out, O LORD, how manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast Thou made them all.*

But how far can he go in this, without some Knowledge of *Geometry*? Which is likewise useful, not barely on this Account, but to give Clearness of Apprehension, and an Habit of thinking closely and connectedly.

It must be allowed indeed, That some of these Branches of Knowledge are not so indispensably necessary as the rest; and therefore no thinking Man will condemn the Fathers of the Church, for having in all Ages and Nations, appointed some to the Ministry, who
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suppose they had the Capacity, yet had not had the Opportunity of attaining them. But what Excuse is this, for one who has the Opportunity, and makes no Use of it? What can be urged for a Person who has had an University Education, if he does not understand them all? Certainly, supposing him to have any Capacity, to have common Understanding, he is inexcusable before God and Man.

6thly, Can any who spend several Years in those Seats of Learning, be excused, if they do not add to that of the *Languages* and *Sciences*, the Knowledge of the *Fathers*? The most authentic Commentators on Scripture, as being both nearest the Fountain, and eminently endued with that Spirit by whom *all Scripture was given*? It will be easily perceived, I speak chiefly of those who wrote before the Council of *Nice*. But who would not likewise desire to have some Acquaintance with those that followed them? With *S. Chrysoptom, Basil, Jerom, Austin*; and above all, the Man of a broken Heart, *Ephraim Syrus*?

7thly, There is yet another Branch of Knowledge highly necessary for a Clergyman, and that is, *Knowledge of the World*; a Knowledge of Men, of their Maxims, Tempers and Manners, such as they occur in real Life: Without this he will be liable to receive much Hurt, and capable of doing little Good; as he will not know, either how to deal with Men, according to the vast Variety of their Characters; or to preserve himself from those, who almost in every Place lie in wait to deceive.

How nearly allied to this, is, *the Discernment of Spirits*? So far as it may be acquired by diligent Observation.

tion: And can a Guide of Souls be without it? If he is, is he not liable to stumble at every Step?

8thly, Can he be without an eminent Share of *Prudence*? That most uncommon Thing which is usually called *Common Sense*? But how shall we define it? Shall we say, with the Schools, that it is, *Recta ratio rerum agibiliū particularium*? Or is it, an habitual Consideration of all the Circumstances of a Thing?

Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando?

And a Facility of adapting our Behaviour to the various Combinations of them? However it be defined, should it not be studied with all Care, and pursued with all Earnestness of Application? For what terrible Inconveniences ensue, whenever it is remarkably wanting?

9thly, Next to *Prudence* or *Common Sense* (if it be not included therein) a Clergyman ought certainly to have some Degree of *Good-breeding*: I mean, Address, Easiness and Propriety of Behaviour, wherever his Lot is cast: Perhaps one might add, He should have (tho' not the Stateliness; for *he is the Servant of all*, yet) all the *Courtesy* of a *Gentleman*, joined with the *Correctness* of a *Scholar*. Do we want a Pattern of this? We have one in *St. Paul*, even before *Felix, Festus, King Agrippa*. One can scarce help thinking, he was one of the best bred Men; one of the finest Gentlemen in the World. O that we likewise had the Skill to *please all Men, for their Good, unto Edification!*

In order to this, especially in our public Ministrations, would not one wish for a *strong, clear, musical Voice*, and a *good Delivery*, both with Regard to Pronunciation and
Action?

Action? I name these here, because they are far more acquirable, than has been commonly imagined. A remarkably weak and untuneable Voice has by steady Application become strong and agreeable. Those who stammered almost at every Word, have learned to speak clearly and plainly. And many who were eminently ungraceful in their Pronunciation, and awkward in their Gesture, have in some Time by Art and Labour not only corrected that Awkwardness of Action, and Ungracefulness of Utterance, but have become excellent in both, and in these Respects likewise the Ornaments of their Profession.

What may greatly encourage those who give themselves up to the Work, with Regard to all these Endowments, many of which cannot be attained without considerable Labour, is this: They are assured of being assisted in all their Labour, by Him who *teacheth Man Knowledge*. And *who teacheth like Him?* Who, like Him, *giveth Wisdom to the Simple?* How easy is it for Him, (if we desire it, and *believe* that He is both able and willing *to do this*) by the powerful, tho' secret Influences of his Spirit, to open and enlarge our Understanding; to strengthen all our Faculties; to bring to our Remembrance whatsoever Things are needful, and to fix and sharpen our Attention to them; so that we may profit above all who depend wholly on themselves, in whatever may qualify us for our Master's Work.

(2.) But all these Things, however great they may be in themselves, are little in Comparison of those that follow. For what are all other *Gifts*, whether natural or acquired, when compared to the *Grace* of God? And how ought this to animate and govern the whole *Intention, Affection* and *Practice* of a Minister of Christ?

1. As to his *Intention*, both in undertaking this important Office, and in executing every Part of it, ought it not to be singly this, To glorify GOD, and to save Souls from Death? Is not this absolutely and indispensably necessary, before all and above all Things? *If his Eye be single, his whole Body, his whole Soul, his whole Work will be full of Light.* GOD who commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, will shine on his Heart; will direct him in all his Ways, will give him to see the Travel of his Soul and be satisfied. But if his Eye, his Intention be not single, if there be any Mixture of meaner Motives, (how much more, if those were or are his *leading Motives*, in undertaking or exercising this high Office?) his *whole Body, his whole Soul will be full of Darkness*, even such as issues from *the bottomless Pit*: Let not such a Man think, that he shall have any Blessing from the LORD. No: The Curse of GOD abideth on him. Let him not expect to enjoy any settled Peace, any solid Comfort in his own Breast: Neither can he hope, there will be any Fruit of his Labours, any Sinners converted to GOD.

2. As to his *Affections*. Ought not a *Steward of the Mysteries of GOD*, a Shepherd of the Souls for whom *Christ* died, to be endued with an eminent Measure of Love to GOD, and Love to all his Brethren? A Love the same in Kind, but in Degree far beyond that of ordinary Christians? Can he otherwise answer the high Character he bears, and the Relation wherein he stands? Without this, how can he go through all the Toils and Difficulties which necessarily attend the faithful Execution of his Office? Would it be possible for a Parent to go through the Pain and Fatigue of bearing and bringing up even one Child, were it not for that vehement Affection, that inexpressible *στοργή*, which the Creator has given for that very End? How much less will it be possible

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ble for any Pastor, any spiritual Parent, to go through the Pain and Labour of *travailing in Birth for*, and bringing up many Children, to the Measure of the full Stature of *Christ*, without a large Measure of that inexpressible Affection, which a *Stranger intermeddleth not with?*

He therefore must be utterly void of Understanding, must be a Madman of the highest Order, who on any Consideration whatever, undertakes this Office, while he is a Stranger to this Affection. Nay, I have often wondered, that any Man in his Senses, does not rather dig or thresh for a Livelihood, than continue therein, unless he feels at least (which is *extremâ lineâ amare*) such an earnest Concern for the Glory of GOD, and such a Thirst after the Salvation of Souls, that he is ready to do any Thing, to lose any Thing, or to suffer any Thing, rather than one should perish for whom *Christ* died.

And is not even this Degree of Love to GOD and Man utterly inconsistent with the Love of the World? With the Love of Money or Praise? With the very lowest Degree of either Ambition or Sensuality? How much less can it consist with that poor, low, irrational, childish Principle, the Love of Diversions? (Surely even a *Man*, were he neither a Minister, nor a Christian, should *put away childish Things*.) Not only this, but the Love of Pleasure, and what lies still deeper in the Soul, the Love of Ease, flees before it.

3. As to his *Practice*: *Unto the Ungodly, saith GOD, why dost thou preach my Laws?* What is a Minister of *Christ*, a Shepherd of Souls, unless he is all devoted to GOD? Unless he abstain with the utmost Care and Diligence,

Diligence, from every evil Word and Work; from all Appearance of Evil; yea, from the most innocent Things, whereby any might be offended or made weak? Is he not called above others, to be an *Example to the Flock*, in his private as well as public Character? An Example of all holy and heavenly Tempers, filling the Heart so as to shine through the Life? Consequently, is not his whole Life, if he walks worthy of his Calling, one incessant Labour of Love? One continued Tract of praising God, and helping Man? One Series of Thankfulness and Beneficence? Is he not always humble, always serious, tho' rejoicing evermore; mild, gentle, patient, abstinent? May you not resemble him to a Guardian Angel, ministering to those *who shall be Heirs of Salvation*? Is he not one sent forth from GOD, to stand between GOD and Man, to guard and assist the poor, helpless Children of Men, to supply them both with Light and Strength, to guide them through a thousand known and unknown Dangers, 'till at the appointed Time he returns with those committed to his Charge, to his and their Father who is in Heaven?

O who is able to describe such a Messenger of GOD, faithfully executing his high Office? Working together with GOD, with the great Author both of the Old and of the New Creation! See his LORD, the eternal Son of GOD, going forth on that Work of Omnipotence, and creating Heaven and Earth by the Breath of his Mouth! See the Servant whom He delighteth to honour, fulfilling the Counsel of his Will, and in his Name speaking the Word, whereby is raised a new, spiritual Creation. Impowered by Him, he says to the dark, unformed Void of Nature, *Let there be Light: And there is Light. Old Things are passed away: Behold all Things are become new.* He is continually employed, in what
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the Angels of GOD have not the Honour to do, co-operating with the Redeemer of Men, in *bringing many Children to Glory*.

Such is a true Minister of *Christ*. And such, beyond all Possibility of Dispute, ought both you and I to be.

II. But are we such? What are we in the Respects above-named? It is a melancholy, but necessary Consideration. It is true, many have wrote upon this Subject; and some of them admirably well. Yet few, if any, at least in our Nation, have carried their Enquiry through all these Particulars. Neither have they always spoken so plain and home, as the Nature of the Thing required. But why did they not? Was it because they were unwilling to give Pain to those whom they loved? Or were they hindered by Fear of disobliging? Or of incurring any temporal Inconvenience? Miserable Fear! Is any temporal Inconvenience whatever to be laid in the Ballance with the Souls of our Brethren? Or were they prevented by Shame, arising from a Conscioufness of their own many and great Defects? Undoubtedly this might extenuate the Fault, but not altogether remove it. For is it not a wise Advice, *Be not ashamed when it concerneth thy Soul?* Especially, when it concerns the Souls of Thousands also? In such a Case may GOD

“ Set as a Flint our steady Face,
“ Harden to Adamant our Brow.”

But is there not another Hindrance? Should not Compassion, should not Tenderness hinder us from giving Pain? Yes, from giving unnecessary Pain. But what Manner of Tenderness is this? It is like that of a Surgeon, who lets his Patient be lost, because he is too com-

compassionate to probe his Wounds. Cruel Compassion! Let me give Pain, so I may save Life. Let me probe, that GOD may heal.

(1.) Are we then such as we are sensible we should be, *1/2*, With Regard to Natural Endowments? I am afraid not. If we were, how many Stumbling-blocks would be removed out of the Way of serious Infidels? Alas, what terrible Effects do we continually see of that common, tho' senseless Imagination, "The Boy, if he is fit for nothing else, will do well enough for a Parson?" Hence it is, that we see (I would to GOD, there were no such Instance in all *Great-Britain* or *Ireland*) dull, heavy, blockish Ministers; Men of no Life, no Spirit; no *Readiness* of *Thought*; who are consequently the Jest of every pert Fool, every lively, airy Coxcomb they meet. We see others whose *Memory* can retain nothing. Therefore they can never be Men of considerable Knowledge. They can never know much even of those Things which they are most nearly concerned to know. Alas, they are pouring the Water into a leaky Vessel; and the broken Cistern can hold no Water. I do not say, with *Plato*, That "all human Knowledge is nothing but *Remembring*." Yet certain it is, that without *Remembring*, we can have but a small Share of Knowledge. And even those who enjoy the most retentive Memory, find great Reason still to complain,

"Skill comes so slow, and Life so fast does fly;
"We learn so little, and forget so much."

And yet we see and bewail a still greater Defect, in some that are in the Ministry. They want *Sense*; they are defective in *Understanding*; their Capacity is low and shallow;

shallow; their Apprehension is muddy and confused: Of Consequence they are utterly incapable, either of forming a true Judgment of Things, or of reasoning justly upon any Thing. O how can these who themselves know nothing aright, impart Knowledge to others? How instruct them in all the Variety of Duty, to God, their Neighbour, and themselves? How will they guide them through all the Mazes of Error, through all the Intanglements of Sin and Temptation? How will they apprize them of the *Devices* of Satan, and guard them against all *the Wisdom of the World*?

It is easy to perceive, I do not speak this for *their* Sake; (for they are incorrigible) but for the Sake of Parents, that they may open their Eyes and see, A Blockhead can never “do well enough for a Parson.” He may do well enough for a Tradesman; so well as to gain fifty or an hundred thousand Pounds. He may do well enough for a Soldier; nay, (if you pay well for it) for a very well-drest and well-mounted Officer. He may do well enough for a Sailor, and may shine on the Quarter-deck of a Man of War. He may do so well, in the Capacity of a Lawyer or Physician, as to ride in his gilt Chariot. But O! think not of his being a Minister, unless you would bring a Blot upon your Family, a Scandal upon our Church, and a Reproach on the Gospel, which he may murder, but cannot teach.

Are we such as we are sensible we should be, *ably*, With Regard to *acquired Endowments*? Here the Matter (suppose we have common Understanding) lies more directly within our own Power. But under this, as well as the following Heads, methinks I would not consider at all, how *many* or how *few*, are either excellent or defective. I would only desire every Person who

reads this, to apply it to himself. Certainly some one in the Nation is defective. Am not I the Man?

Let us each seriously examine himself. Have I
 1. Such a *Knowledge of Scripture*, as becomes him who undertakes so to explain it to others, that it may *be a Light in all their Paths?* Have I a full and clear View of the Analogy of Faith, which is the Clue to guide me through the whole? Am I acquainted with the several Parts of Scripture; with all Parts of the Old Testament and the New? Upon the Mention of any Text, do I know the Context, and the parallel Places? Have I that Point at least of a good Divine, the being a good Textuary? Do I know the Grammatical Construction of the Four Gospels? Of the Acts? Of the Epistles? And am I a Master of the spiritual Sense (as well as the literal) of what I read? Do I understand the Scope of each Book, and how every Part of it tends thereto? Have I Skill to draw the natural Inferences deducible from each Text? Do I know the Objections raised to them or from them by *Jews, Deists, Papists, Arians, Socinians*, and all other Sectaries, who more or less *corrupt or cannonize the Word of God?* Am I ready to give a satisfactory Answer to each of these Objections? And have I learned to *apply* every Part of the Sacred Writings, as the various States of my Hearers require?

2. Do I understand *Greek and Hebrew?* Otherwise how can I undertake (as every Minister does) not only to explain Books which are written therein, but to defend them against all Opponents? Am I not at the Mercy of every one who does understand, or even pretends to understand the Original? For which Way can I confute his Pretence? Do I understand the Language of the Old Testament? Critically? At all? Can I read
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into *English* one of *David's Psalms*? Or even the first Chapter of *Genesis*? Do I understand the Language of the New Testament? Am I a critical Master of it? Have I enough of it even to read into *English* the first Chapter of *St. Luke*? If not, how many Years did I spend at School? How many at the University? And what was I doing all those Years? Ought not Shame to cover my Face?

3. Do I understand *my own Office*? Have I deeply considered before GOD the Character which I bear? What is it to be an Ambassador of *Christ*? An Envoy from the King of Heaven? And do I know and *feel* what is implied in *watching over the Souls of Men, as he that must give Account*?

4. Do I understand so much of profane *History* as tends to confirm and illustrate the Sacred? Am I acquainted with the antient *Customs* of the *Jews* and other Nations mentioned in Scripture? Have I a competent Knowledge of *Chronology*, that at least which refers to the Sacred Writings? And am I so far (if no farther) skill'd in *Geography*, as to know the Situation, and give some Account of all the considerable Places mentioned therein?

5. Am I a tolerable Master of the *Sciences*? Have I gone through the very Gate of them, *Logic*? If not, I am not likely to go much farther, when I stumble at the Threshold. Do I understand it, so as to be ever the better for it? To have it always ready for Use? So as to apply every Rule of it, when Occasion is, almost as naturally as I turn my Hand? Do I understand it at all? Are not even the *Moods* and *Figures* above my Comprehension? Do not I poorly endeavour to cover my Ignorance, by affecting to laugh at their barbarous Names?

Can I even reduce an *indirect* Mood to a *direct*? An *Hypothetic* to a *Categorical* Syllogism? Rather, have not my stupid Indolence and Laziness, made me very ready to believe what the little Wits and pretty Gentlemen affirm, “That Logic is good for nothing?” It is good for this at least (wherever it is understood) to make People *talk less*; by showing them both what is, and what is not to the Point; and how extremely hard it is to *prove* any Thing. Do I understand *Metaphysics*? If not the Depths of the Schoolmen, the Subtleties of *Scotus* or *Aquinas*, yet the first Rudiments, the general Principles of that useful *Science*? Have I conquered so much of it, as to clear my Apprehension and range my Ideas under proper Heads? So much as enables me to read with Ease and Pleasure as well as Profit, Dr. *Henry More’s* Works, *Malebranche’s Search after Truth*, and Dr. *Clark’s Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*? Do I understand *Natural Philosophy*? If I have not gone deep therein, have I digested the general Grounds of it? Have I mastered *Gravesande*, *Keil*, Sir *Isaac Newton’s Principia*, with his *Theory of Light and Colours*? In order thereto, have I laid in some Stock of *Mathematical* Knowledge? Am I Master of the Mathematical A B C, of *Euclid’s Elements*? If I have not gone thus far, if I am such a Novice still, what have I been about ever since I came from School?

6. Am I acquainted with the *Fathers*? At least with those venerable Men, who lived in the earliest Ages of the Church? Have I read over and over the golden Remains of *Clemens Romanus*, of *Ignatius* and *Polycarp*? And have given one Reading, at least, to the Works of *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Clemens Alexandrinus* and *Cyprian*?

7. Have

7. Have I any Knowledge of the *World*? Have I studied *Men* (as well as Books) and observed their Tempers, Maxims and Manners? Have I learned, to *beware of Men*? To add the Wisdom of the Serpent to the Innocence of the Dove? Has GOD given me by Nature, or have I acquired, any Measure of the *Discernment of Spirits*? Or of its near Ally, *Prudence*, enabling me on all Occasions to consider all Circumstances, and to suit and vary my Behaviour according to the various Combinations of them? Do I labour never to be rude or ill-manner'd? Not to be remarkably wanting in *Good-breeding*? Do I endeavour to copy after those who are eminent for Address and Easiness of Behaviour? Am I (tho' never light or trifling, either in Word or Action, yet) *affable* and *courteous* to all Men? And do I omit no Means which is in my Power, and consistent with my Character, of *pleasing all Men* with whom I converse, for their Good, to Edification?

If I am wanting even in these lowest Endowments, shall I not frequently regret the Want? How often shall I move heavily, and be far less useful than I might have been? How much more shall I suffer in my Usefulness, if I have wasted the Opportunities I once had of acquainting myself with the great Lights of Antiquity, the *Antenicene* Fathers? Or if I have droned away those precious Hours, wherein I might have made myself Master of the *Sciences*? How poorly must I many Times drag on, for Want of the Helps which I have vilely cast away? But is not my Case still worse, if I have loitered away the Time wherein I should have perfected myself in *Greek* and *Hebrew*? I might before this have been critically acquainted with these Treasuries of Sacred Knowledge. But they are now hid from my Eyes; they are close locked up, and I have no Key to open them. However,
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have I used all possible Diligence to supply that grievous Defect, (so far as it can be supplied now) by the most accurate Knowledge of the *English* Scriptures? Do I meditate therein Day and Night? Do I think (and consequently speak) thereof, *when I sit in the House, and when I walk by the Way; when I lie down, and when I rise up?* By this Means have I at length attained a thorough Knowledge as of the sacred Text, so of its literal and spiritual Meaning? Otherwise how can I attempt to instruct others therein? Without this, I am *a blind Guide* indeed! I am absolutely incapable of teaching my Flock, what I have never learned myself: No more fit to lead Souls to GOD, than I am to govern the World.

(2.) And yet there is a higher Consideration than that of *Gifts*; higher than any or all of these joined together; a Consideration in View of which all *external* and all *intellectual Endowments* vanish into nothing. Am I such as I ought to be, with Regard to the *Grace* of GOD? The LORD GOD enable me to judge aright of this!

And 1. What was my *Intention* in taking upon me this Office and Ministry? What was it, in taking Charge of this Parish, either as Minister or Curate? Was it always, and is it now, wholly and solely, to glorify GOD, and save Souls? Has my Eye been singly fixed on this, from the Beginning hitherto? Had I never, have I not now, any Mixture in my Intention; any Alloy of baser Metal? Had I, or have I no Thought of worldly Gain? *Filthy Lucre*, as the Apostle terms it. Had I at first, have I now, no secular View? No Eye to Honour or Preferment? To a plentiful Income? Or, at least, a Competency? A warm and comfortable Livelihood?

Alas,

Alas, my Brother! *If the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness? Was a comfortable Livelihood then your Motive for entering into the Ministry? And do you avow this in the Face of the Sun, and without one Blush upon your Cheek? I cannot compare you with Simon Magus: You are many Degrees beneath him. He offered to give Money for the Gift of God, the Power of conferring the Holy Ghost. Hereby however he shewed, that he set an higher Value on the Gift than on the Money which he would have parted with for it. But you do not: You set a far higher Value on the Money than on the Gift; insomuch that you do not desire, you will not accept of the Gift, unless the Money accompany it! The Bishop said, when you was ordained, "Receive thou the Holy Ghost." But that was the least of your Care. Let who will receive this, so you receive the Money, the Revenue of a good Benefice. While you minister the Word and Sacraments before God, He gives the Holy Ghost to those who duly receive them; so that through your Hands likewise the Holy Ghost is in this Sense given now. But you have little Concern whether He be or not: So little, that you will minister no longer, He shall be given no more either through your Lips or Hands, if you have no more Money for your Labour. O Simon, Simon! what a Saint wert thou, compared to many of the most honourable Men now in Christendom?*

Let not any either ignorantly or wilfully mistake me. I would *not muzzle the Ox that treadeth out the Corn. I know the spiritual Labourer too is worthy of his Reward; and that if we sow unto our Flock spiritual Things, it is meet that we reap of their carnal Things. I do not therefore blame, no, not in any Degree, a Minister's taking a yearly Salary: But I blame his seeking it. The Thing*
blameable

blameable is, the having it in his View, as the Motive; or any Part of the Motive, for entering into this sacred Office.

*Hic nigræ succus loliginis; hæc est
Ærugo mera.*

If Preferment, or Honour, or Profit was in his Eye, his Eye was not *single*. And our LORD knew no Medium between a *single* and an *evil Eye*. The Eye therefore which is not *single* is *evil*. It is a plain, adjudged Case: He then that has any other Design in undertaking or executing the Office of a Minister, than purely this, To glorify GOD and save Souls, his Eye is not *single*. Of Consequence, it is *evil*; and therefore his *whole Body* must be *full of Darknes*. *The Light which is in him is very Darknes*: Darknes covers his whole Soul: He has no solid Peace: He has no Blessing from GOD: And there is no Fruit of his Labours.

It is no Wonder, that they who *see no Harm* in this, see no Harm in adding one *Living* to another, and, if they can, another to *that*; yet still *wiping their Mouth*; and saying, they *have done no Evil*. In the very first Step, their *Eye was not single*: Therefore their Mind was filled with Darknes. So they stumble on still in the same Mire, 'till their *Feet stumble on the dark Mountains*:

It is pleaded indeed, That “a small Living will not maintain a large Family.” Maintain? How? It will not *cloath* them in *Purple and fine Linnen*; nor enable them to *fare sumptuously every Day*: But will not the Living you have now, afford you and yours the plain Necessaries, yea and Conveniencies of Life? Will it not maintain you in the frugal, Christian Simplicity, which becomes
a Mini-

a Minister of *Christ*? It will not maintain you in Pomp and Grandeur, in elegant Luxury, in fashionable Sensuality. So much the better. If your Eyes were open, whatever your Income was, you would flee from these as from Hell-fire.

It has been pleaded, Secondly, "By having a larger Income, I am able to do more Good." But dare you aver, in the Presence of GOD, that it was *singly* with this View, *only* for this End, that you sought a larger Income? If not, you are still condemned before GOD; your *Eye* was not *single*. Do not therefore quibble and evade. This was not your Motive of Acting. It was not the Desire of doing more Good, whether to the Souls or Bodies of Men, it was not the Love of GOD; (you know it was not, your own Conscience is as a thousand Witnesses) but it was *the Love of Money*, and *the Desire of other Things*, which animated you in this Pursuit. If then the Word of GOD is true, you are in Darkness still: It fills and covers your Soul.

I might add, a larger Income does not necessarily imply a Capacity of doing more *spiritual Good*. And this is the highest Kind of Good. It is good to feed the Hungry, to cloath the Naked: But it is a far nobler Good, to *save Souls from Death*, to *pluck poor Brands out of the Burning*. And it is that to which you are peculiarly called, and to which you have solemnly promised to "bend all your Studies and Endeavours." But you are by no Means sure, that by adding a second Living to your first, you shall be more capable of doing Good in this Kind, than you would have been, had you laid out all your Time, and all your Strength, on your first flock.

D

" However

“ However I shall be able to do more *temporal Good*.
 You are not sure even of this. *If Riches increase, they are increased that eat them.* Perhaps your Expences may rise proportionably with your Income. But if not, if you have a greater Ability, shall you have a greater Willingness to do Good? You have no Reason in the World to believe this. There are a thousand Instances of the contrary. How many have less Will, when they have more Power? Now they *have* more Money, they *love* it more. When they had little, they *did* their *Diligence gladly to give of that little*: But since they have *had much*, they are so far from *giving plenteously*, that they can hardly *afford* to give at all.

“ But by my having another Living, I maintain a valuable Man, who might otherwise want the Necessaries of Life.” I answer, 1. Was this your *whole and sole* Motive, in seeking that other Living? If not, this Plea will not clear you from the Charge: Your *Eye* was *not single*. 2. If it was, you may put it beyond Dispute. You may prove at once the Purity of your *Intention*. Make that valuable Man Rector of one of your Parishes, and you are clear before God and Man.

But what can be pleaded for those who have two or more Flocks, and take Care of none of them? Who just look at them now and then for a few Days, and then remove to a convenient Distance, and say, *Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years; take thine Ease; eat, drink, and be merry?*

Some Years ago I was asking a plain Man, “ Ought not he who feeds the Flock, to eat of the Milk of the Flock?” He answered, “ Friend, I have no Objection to that. But what is that to him who *does not feed the Flock?* He

stands on the far Side of the Hedge, and feeds himself. It is another who feeds the Flock. And ought *he* to have the Milk of the Flock? What canst thou say for him?" Truly, nothing at all. And he will have nothing to say for himself, when the great Shepherd shall pronounce that just Sentence, *Bind* the unprofitable Servant *Hand and Foot, and cast him into outer Darknes.*

I have dwelt the longer on this Head, because a right *Intention* is the first Point of all, and the most necessary of all; inasmuch as the Want of this cannot be supplied by any Thing else whatsoever. It is the setting out wrong; a Fault never to be amended, unless you return to the Place whence you came, and set out right. It is impossible therefore to lay too great Stress upon a single Eye, a pure *Intention*: Without which, all our Sacrifice, our Prayers, Sermons and Sacraments are an Abomination to the LORD.

I cannot dismiss this important Article, without touching upon one Thing more. How many are *directly* concerned therein, I leave to the Searcher of Hearts.

You have been settled in a Living or a Curacy for some Time. You are now going to exchange it for another. Why do you do this? For what Reason do you prefer this before your former Living or Curacy? "Why, I had but Fifty Pounds a Year where I was before, and now I shall have an Hundred." And is this your real Motive of Acting? The true Reason why you make the Exchange? "It is: And is it not a sufficient Reason?" Yes, for a Heathen; but not for one who calls himself a Christian.

Perhaps a more gross Infatuation than this, was never yet known upon Earth. There goes one, who is commissioned to be an Ambassador of *Christ*, a Shepherd of never-dying Souls, a Watchman over the *Israel of God*, a Steward of the Mysteries which Angels desire to look into. Where is he going? “To *London*, to *Bristol*, to *Northampton*.” Why does he go thither? “To get more Money.” A tolerable Reason for driving an Herd of Bullocks to one Market rather than the other; (tho’ if a Drover does this, without any farther View, he acts as an Heathen, not a Christian.) But what a Reason for leaving the immortal Souls, over whom the Holy Ghost had made you Overseer! And yet this is the Motive which not only influences in secret, but is acknowledged openly and without a Blush! Nay, it is excused, justified, defended; and that not by a few, here and there, who are apparently void both of Piety and Shame; but by Numbers of seemingly religious Men, from one End of *England* to the other!

2. Am I, Secondly, such as I ought to be, with Regard to my *Affections*? I am taken from among, and ordained for Men, in Things pertaining to GOD. I stand between GOD and Man, by the Authority of the great Mediator, in the nearest and most endearing Relation both to my Creator and to my Fellow-creatures. Have I accordingly given my Heart to GOD, and to my Brethren for his Sake? Do I love GOD with all my Soul and Strength? And my Neighbour, every Man, as myself? Does this Love swallow me up? Possess me whole? Constitute my supreme Happiness? Does it animate all my Passions and Tempers, and regulate all my Powers and Faculties? Is it the Spring which gives Rise to all my Thoughts, and governs all my Words and Actions?

If

If it does, not unto me, but unto GOD be the Praise.
If it does not, GOD *be merciful to me a Sinner!*

At least, do I feel such a Concern for the Glory of GOD, and such a Thirst after the Salvation of Men, that I am ready to do any Thing, however contrary to my natural Inclination, to part with any Thing, however agreeable to me, to suffer any Thing, however grievous to Flesh and Blood, so I may save one Soul from Hell? Is this my ruling Temper at all Times and in all Places? Does it make all my Labour light? If not, what a Weariness is it? What a Drudgery? Had I not far better hold the Plough?

But is it possible this should be my ruling Temper, if I still love the World? No certainly. *If I love the World, the Love of the Father is not in me.* The Love of GOD is not in me, if I love Money; if I love Pleasure, so called, or Diversion. Neither is it in me, if I am a Lover of Honour, or Praise, or of Dress, or of good Eating and Drinking. Nay, even Indolence, or the Love of Ease, is inconsistent with the Love of GOD.

What a Creature then is a covetous, an ambitious, a luxurious, an indolent, a Diversion-loving Clergyman? Is it any Wonder that Infidelity should increase, where any of these are to be found? That many, comparing their Spirit with their Profession, should blaspheme that worthy Name whereby they are called? But *Woe be unto him by whom the Offence cometh!* It were good for that Man if he had never been born. It were good for him now, rather than he should continue to turn the Lane out of the Way, that a Mill-stone were hanged about his Neck, and he were cast into the Depth of the Sea!

3. May not you, who are of a better Spirit, consider, Thirdly, Am I such as I ought to be, with Regard to my *Practice*? Am I in my private Life, wholly devoted to GOD? Intent upon this one Thing, to do in every Point *not my own Will, but the Will of Him that sent me*? Do I carefully and resolutely abstain from every evil Word and Work? *From all Appearance of Evil*? From all indifferent Things, which might lay a Stumbling-block in the Way of the Weak? Am I zealous of good Works? As I have Time, do I do Good to all Men? And that in every Kind, and in as high a Degree as I am capable?

How do I behave in the public Work whereunto I am called? In my pastoral Character? Am I a *Pattern* to my *Flock, in Word, in Behaviour, in Love, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity*? Is my *Word*, my daily Conversation, *always in Grace, always meet to minister Grace to the Hearers*? Is my *Behaviour* suitable to the Dignity of my *Calling*? Do I walk as *Christ* also walked? Does the *Love* of GOD and Man not only fill my Heart, but shine through my whole Conversation? Is the *Spirit*, the Temper which appears in all my Words and Actions, such as allows me to say, with humble Boldness, *Herein be ye Followers of me, as I am of Christ*? Do all who have spiritual Discernment take Knowledge, (judging of the Tree by its Fruits) that *the Life which I now live, I live by Faith in the Son of GOD*; and that *in all Simplicity and godly Sincerity I have my Conversation in the World*? Am I exemplarily *pure* from all worldly Desire? From all vile and vain Affections? Is my Life one continued Labour of Love? One Tract of praising GOD and helping Man? Do I in every Thing see *Him who is invisible*? And *beholding with open Face the Glory of the LORD, am I, changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, by the Spirit of the LORD*?

Brethren, is not this our Calling, even as we are Christians? But more eminently as we are Ministers of *Christ*? And why (I will not say, do we fall short, but why) are we satisfied with falling so short of it? Is there any Necessity laid upon us, of sinking so infinitely below our Calling? Who hath required this at our Hands? Certainly not He by whose Authority we minister. Is not his Will the same with Regard to us, as with Regard to his first Ambassadors? Is not his Love, and is not his Power still the same, as they were in the antient Days? Know we not, that *Jesus Christ is the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever!* Why then may not you be as *burning and as shining Lights*, as those that shone seventeen hundred Years ago? Do you desire to partake of the same burning Love, of the same shining Holiness? Surely you do. You cannot but be sensible, it is the greatest Blessing which can be bestowed on any Child of Man. Do you design it? Aim at it? *Press on to this Mark of the Prize of the high Calling of GOD in Christ Jesus?* Do you constantly and earnestly pray for it? Then, as the LORD liveth, ye shall attain. Only let us pray on, and *tarry at Jerusalems 'till we be endued with Power from on high.* Let us continue in all the Ordinances of GOD, particularly in meditating on his Word, in *denying ourselves, and taking up our Cross daily, and as we have Time doing Good to all Men:* And then assuredly the great Shepherd of us and our Flocks, will make us perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, and work in us all that is well pleasing in his Sight! This is the Desire and Prayer of

Your Brother and Servant

LONDON,
Feb. 6, 1756.

in our Common LORD,

JOHN WESLEY,