

A

METHODIST

DISSECTED;

OR, A

DESCRIPTION

OF THEIR

ERRORS.

By *NATH. FLETCHER*, a Lay-Man:



F O R K :

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

I Expect some nice Critics, and scholastic Students, will scorn my Performance, because it cometh forth in a plain Dress: But let it be considered, that this Book is design'd for the Use of the most vulgar and unlearned; if possible to convince them of the Errors that are taught among the Methodists: And though it be penn'd in a plain Style, yet, I hope, the Language is so just, that those who read it may understand my Meaning, which is sufficient.

Because I publish this Treatise, I expect the Methodists will account me their Enemy; but herein they

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will be widely mistaken; for I declare before God and Man, that I have no more Malice or Ill-Will to any of them than they have to one another; and do as sincerely love them, as any of the rest of Mankind; yet I hate their Errors, and I pity those that are deceived by them; and it is for the Sake of those honest, well-meaning Christians, that are deluded by Doctrines, contrary to the Holy Scriptures, that I have published this Treatise: And all I desire from them is only this, that they would read it carefully, and consider it impartially, and not deceive themselves in Things of such vast Importance.

I expect their illiterate Preachers, according to their old Custom, will read their public Verdict against me, and condemn me as a damn'd Infidel. Though I have little Hopes of them, as they are generally too

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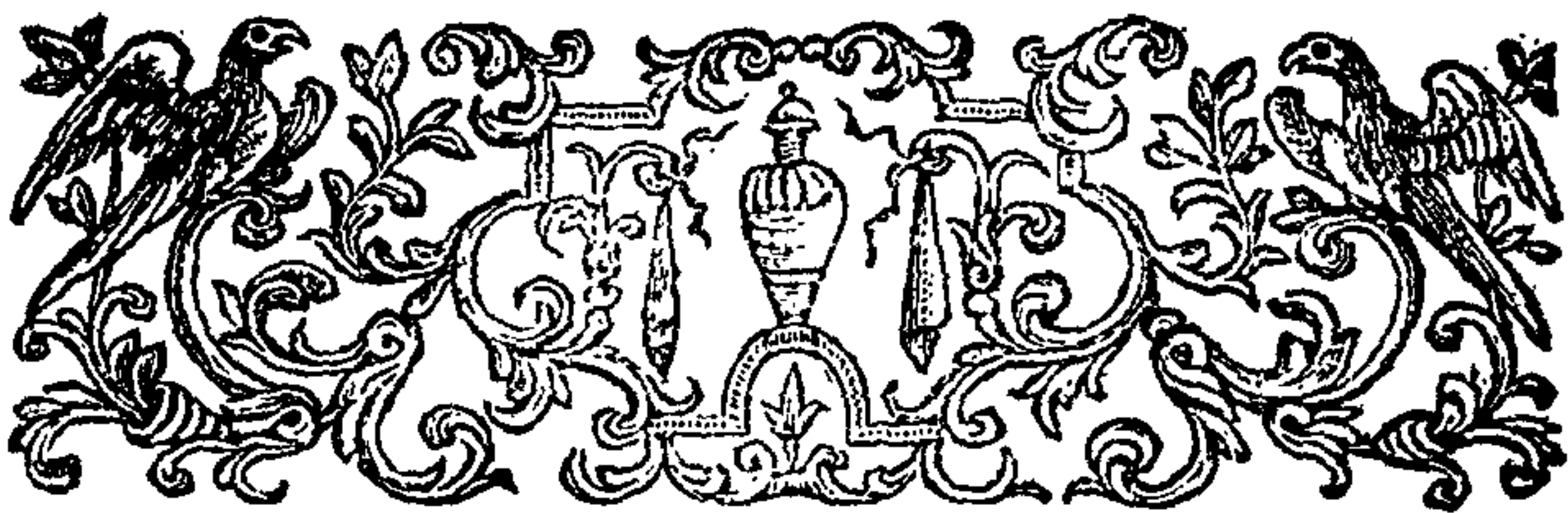
obstinate and conceited to bear any Reason; yet if they be resolved to abuse me, I desire them to consider that there is not one Error here mentioned, but what I have heard some of them advance and defend.

God forbid that I should blame any of them for their Diligence about their precious Souls, or for any of their Good Works. And though I must own, that they have, by their Labour, been instrumental to civilize some of the rakish Sort of People; yet this doth not tolerate them to preach false Doctrine, since they may soon do as much Hurt the one Way, as they do Good the other.

I heartily wish that those Persons, to whom I have recommended my Book, would better examine the Doctrine they have been deceived with, and try it impartially by the New Testament.

I as heartily wish that those conceited, bigoted, uncharitable, and illiterate Teachers, among them, may be ashamed out of their Prejudices; and out of their vain and foolish Pretences to Perfection and sinless Obedience; and out of their Uncharitableness, and fond and ignorant Zeal; for I have little Hopes that ever they will be reformed any other Way, so long as they can receive their Penny Pensions.

And may the God of Infinite Wisdom, Love and Goodness, send down his Spirit into the Hearts of all Men, to guide them into the Truth as it is in JESUS. Amen.

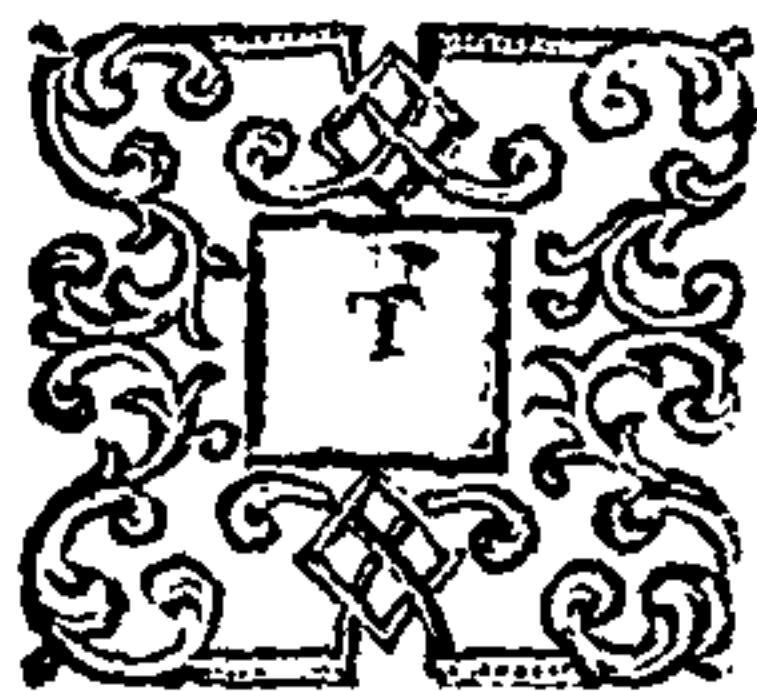


A

METHODIST

Dissected, &c.

Of the Methodists in general.



THE People that go under *this* Denomination are of so many Sorts, it is almost impossible to mention them all : Some are called *Inghamites*, some *Moravians*, and some *Wesleyans* : Some hold one Sort of Principles, and some another ; and a great Part of the illiterate Sort of them know not what they hold, being ignorant of all Rational Principles ; but having learned some Sort of nonsensical Harangue, they repeat it, with a little Variation, almost as often as they change their Cloaths, to an ignorant Audience ; and among these they pass for brave Men, though they scarce can read a Chapter in the Bible, or write one Page of *true English*.

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How they come to bear the Name of *Methodists* is hard to determine ; yet sure I am it is a very improper Name, for *Order* or *Method* is wholly disregarded amongst them : Their Teachers are not orderly set apart for that sacred Function ; neither is there any Thing like Church-Discipline amongst them : Their Prayers and Preaching are also *without any Method*, and all Things belonging to their Way of Worship is in utter Confusion. But I think the Truth of the Matter is, They, affecting Singularity, would chuse a *Method of their own* ; and therefore have given themselves *that Name*.

In general, they are made up of the ignorant Part of Mankind, and are commonly a peevish, morose, conceited People, babbling their Nonsense almost in every obscure Corner, and are found diligently to shun the Company of Men of Learning and Knowledge ; they creep into obscure Places among the Ignorant and Illiterate, that scarce know any Thing of Religion. — It must be a mighty Disgrace and Scandal to the *Methodists*, that they dare not face a learned Audience : Though some of them, it must be granted, have such a Share of Confidence, or rather Impudence, that they will not fail to babble their Nonsense in the Streets, or Fields ; to the Scandal and Disgrace of the Gospel, which ought to be used with more Reverence than to be exposed to Ridicule, among a lawless Mob of unthinking People, which seems to resemble *casting Pearls before Swine*.

Now I shall endeavour to describe and expose some of their Errors, that they commonly are guilty of.

TH E First Error may be their false Notions concerning Faith, and unnecessary Divisions of it. The Faith, which they contend for, is a confident Belief that Christ will save them, *without any Regard* at all to their *Works* : Some of them boldly declare, that a Man's Bad Works will save him as soon as his Good. — Faith, in the New Testament, is a plain Thing.

The greatest Part of Christians do acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, to be the Rule of Faith and Manners, and to contain the whole Will of God, which might easily be proved. — To believe then any Thing that is contrary to the plain Truths of the Gospel, must be a false Faith. The plain Truths of the Gospel are (the greatest Part of them, at least) contained in the *Creed* called the *Apostles*, or in other Words, we must believe, That *there is ONE GOD, self-existent, independent, and infinite in all Perfections*: That *JESUS CHRIST is his only begotten Son, and came to die for Mankind; was buried, and rose again the third Day; ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the Right Hand of God; and will come again, at the Great Day, to judge all Men according to their Works.* That *there is a HOLY GHOST that was poured out upon the Apostles, in an extraordinary Measure; and in, these Times, sanctifieth our Hearts, and helpeth our Infirmitics.*

The GOSPEL requireth us to deny Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly; and plainly declareth, That if the Wicked forsake his Ways, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and turn unto the Lord, he will have Mercy upon him, and abundantly pardon him: But, withal, it assureth us, That except we repent, we shall all perish: That all Fornicators, Adulterers, Effeminate, Abusers of themselves with Mankind, all Thieves, Covetous Persons, Lyars, and Swearers, shall have their Portion in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone: That the Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God: That JESUS will come again at the Day of Judgment, and will raise the Bodies both of the Just and Unjust, and will cause the Righteous to inherit Everlasting Life, but will condemn the Wicked to Eternal Punishment.

Now these, and several others, are plain Truths, declared in the Gospel, and must not be sacrificed to the vain Humours, and foolish Opinions of fallible Men; and every one, that believeth any Thing contrary to these Doctrines, is deceived, and entertaineth a false Faith.

Methodists divide *Faith* into *three*, and some of them into *four*, Kinds : They have their *Common Faith*, their *Damning Faith*, their *Faith of Adherence*, and their *Saving Faith*. He that believeth that *Jesus Christ* is come to die for Sinners, and that, *through him*, upon true Repentance, he may have Pardon of all the Sins that he hath committed, if his Endeavours be answerable to his Faith : I think this Man hath a *true Faith* in *Jesus Christ*.—What Occasion therefore is there for so many vain and ridiculous *Divisions* of *Faith* ? For all that they mean by all these (as far as I can understand them) is contain'd in this short Definition of Faith in *Christ*; except their *Damning Faith*, the Meaning of which is not easy to determine : However, it is a very odd and strange Way of expressing themselves, for certainly they would not have People to believe they are at present damned, for that would be a downright Lye ; neither to believe that they shall certainly be damned for ever, without any Hopes of Mercy, for that would be Despair.—But if they mean that the Sins they have committed, and the Guilt they have contracted, deserve Damnation ; this is nothing but what every one, that hath a true Faith in *Christ*, acknowledgeth ; and a true Sense of Sin and Guilt must be a good Step towards *Saving Faith*.

They multiply Texts of Scripture to prove, that a strong, presumptive Faith, or Belief that *Christ* will save them, is sufficient, without any Regard to their Qualifications ; but this is trifling and false Arguing, and they must be foolish, to a shameful Degree, who do not understand that the most of those Scriptures they alledge for *this Faith*, takes in the *whole* of *Religion* ; and is spoken in Conformity to a Form of Speech much used among the *Jews*. The *Jews* commonly said, they believed in *Moses*, *i. e.* they followed the Law given by *Moses* ; so the *Christians* are said to turn from the Law of *Moses* and to believe in *Christ*, *i. e.* they chuse *his* Law, Doctrine, and Example, for their Rule.

The whole *New Testament* is full of Commands to several necessary Duties, and it is also full of Exhortations

tions to the Practice of these Commands, with great and precious Promises to the Obedient, and terrible Threatenings against the Disobedient: Why should Purity of Heart and Life towards God, and Justice, Honesty, Love, Benevolence and Charity towards Man, be so strictly commanded, if Men were not carefully to obey? Neither hath any Man Reason to believe, that he shall be saved in any Way inconsistent with the Glory and Honour of God's Attributes; or in any Way disagreeable to the Will of God declared plainly in his Word; which he certainly must do, if he save Men upon a *bare Belief* in *Christ*, without any Regard to *their Works*.

Methodists say that what they treat of is Divine, and therefore above Reason; and that the Man who draws his Arguments from Reason, deserveth no Regard.

I admire that any reasonable Creature should be so deluded, by a Company of foolish and illiterate Men, as ever to think of casting Reason out of Religion; to pretend to believe what we have no Reason to believe is Nonsense: For Faith, without Reason, is no Faith at all; 'tis Folly, Presumption, and vain Confidence.

In order to a strong and well-grounded Faith in *Christ*, three Things are absolutely necessary:

I. A Man must honestly examine his own Heart and Life, and search the Scriptures diligently, in order to find out whether or no he be the Person that hath a Covenant-Right to Justification and Salvation, thro' *Christ*: It must be a terrible Thing for any Person to be deceived in a Matter of such vast Importance; and unless a Man can, in some good Measure, prove his Title to those great Blessings purchased by *Christ*, he cannot have a well-grounded Faith, or full Hope, that *Christ* will save him.

II. This Faith or strong Confidence, must be joined or mixt with Charity, or I must make bold to say it is a false Faith. *St Paul* shews how false and ungrounded Faith without Charity is, *1 Corinthians*, Chap. xiii, Verse 1. *Though I speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels,*

Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal. And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains and have not Charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.

But where is the Charity of those Men that condemn, to everlasting Damnation, all Infants, and all Persons of what Sect and Party soever that differ from them; and condemn all Doctrine but their own as damnable, and openly declare that a Person can never be saved that followeth any other Persuasion: It is well if they be not judged with the Judgment that they judge, and have not that Measure meted to them, that they so freely measure to others.

III. This strong Faith and Confidence, if it be right, must be attended with suitable Practice: A Person must not only believe the Existence of God, and that *Christ* came into the World to save Sinners, and the Truth of the Promises and Threatnings; but he must obey his Laws, and not think to be saved by *Christ* if he refuse to put himself under his Government; to have him to be his Priest and not his King.

In all Scriptures where *Faith* is mentioned as the *whole Condition* of our Salvation, it must signify the whole of Religion, and must take in Repentance and Obedience; or otherwise one Part of the New Testament would not agree with another: As sometimes Love to God, and sometimes the Fear of God, is taken for the whole of Religion in Scripture Language, as well as Faith.

A second Error of the *Methodists* is their Antipathy to Learning and Study. Some of them argue against Learning, as if it was hurtful to Divinity; and what is this like, but the known Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion.

I don't here reflect upon those learned Men, that have been educated for, and regularly brought into the Ministry, except their giving too much Encouragement to those unlearned Teachers that go up and down the Land spreading false Doctrine; hereby they very powerfully discourage Learning, and very effectually promote Ignorance and Error.

I do not think that those unlearned Teachers have such Aversion to Learning as they pretend; but because they have it not, nor are able to obtain it, they will argue against it; like the Fox in the Fable that could not endure to eat Grapes, and the Reason was because he could not reach them.

It is evident both from Reason and the Holy Scriptures, that God loves his Creatures more or less, as they more or less resemble his Perfections; and his infinite Knowledge is one of his glorious Perfections; but they would represent God as one in Love with Nonsense and Ignorance, which is utterly impossible.

It is true that the wisest of Men are very imperfect in Knowledge; yet their Attainments are much greater that make Learning and Study their Business, than those that never regard it.—The wise Preacher directs his Son to get Wisdom and Understanding.

The Disciples of *Christ*, though at the first plain Fisher-Men, yet they had the Benefit many Years of *Christ's* Instructions; and after the Resurrection of their Master, they were not allow'd to preach till they were endued with Power from above; a Power which our *Methodists* can never prove themselves to have!

St Paul exhorts *Timothy* to apply himself to Reading and Study; that he might make himself more fit for that sacred Function. It is plain that neither *Christ* nor his Apostles were any Friends to ignorant Teachers.

A Third Error is, that they generally, *Pharisee-like*, condemn all but themselves. Some of them have been
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so unmannerly as to affirm, that those that preach any other Doctrine than they do, are Preachers of the Devil : This shews their Pride as well as Uncharitableness ; should a Company of illiterate Men pretend to know more than all the learned Philosophers, grave Divines, and studious Scholars in the Universe ? Our Saviour spake a Parable to those that trusted in themselves, and despised others, wherein he shews, That the Proud shall be despised, and the Humble exalted. These Men do herein very much resemble the *Papists*, who condemn all by the Lump as Hereticks but themselves. We may well say to them as *Job* ironically to his three Friends, *Surely ye are the Men, and Wisdom shall die with you* ; but it behoveth them honestly and seriously to examine themselves, whether they be not of the Number of the Proud, that are declared to be *an Abomination to the Lord*.

Perhaps they will recoil upon us, and say ‘ Are not you to be numbered among the Proud, that think to be justified by your own Self-Righteousness ? ’ I answer, I do not know of any Sect or Party of Men in *England*, that doth pretend to merit by their Works, except the *Papists* ; yet since God requireth them, we cannot be justified without them ; though they be not the meritorious Cause, yet they are the Conditions of our Justification.

I wonder what Thoughts these Men have of themselves, when they are uncharitably condemning all about them. Our Saviour saith *Judge not that ye be not judged ; condemn not that ye be not condemned* ; but they seem to pay very little Regard to *his* Instructions.

A Fourth Error is their Pretence to live without Sin after they are made new Creatures ; Though this be not the idle Conceit of all that are called *Methodists*, yet many of them have pretended it ; but I fear those Persons want that Humility which is necessary to constitute a true Christian.

The Word of God informeth us that *There is not a just Man upon Earth, no not one* ; And if a Man say that
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he hath no Sin, he deceiveth himself, and the Truth is not in him.

An humble Christian will sometimes find vain Thoughts to lodge within him, although he endeavour to keep his Heart with all Diligence. He may sometimes offend with his Tongue, although he keep his Mouth with Bit and Bridle. He may sometimes, through Temptation, or Surprize, turn aside to Vanity, although he resolve to watch over all his Ways, so that he may find little Occasion to boast of his Obedience. It seems to every thinking and humble Man, a vain Thing to pretend to live without Sin, in the Midst of strong Temptations and powerful Allurements: The Angels that were manifold superior to us in Powers, many of them fell by Sinning against God; and of pure and holy Spirits, were made foul and hellish Fiends; then well may Man sin, that hath not half the Strength, and (for any Thing we know) a hundred Times more Temptations:

A Fifth Error is, they affirm, that no Man can perform any good or acceptable Action, until he be in *Christ* or a *new Creature*.

I answer, I account it a good Action to obey a Command of God. Is it not good to obey the King in lawful Things, when God commands us to be *subject to the higher Powers*, Rom. xiii, 1. Is it not good that a Man provide for himself and his Household, since the Apostle Paul saith that, *He that provideth not for himself and them of his own House hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel?*

Surely every Christian will own, that it is good for Husbands to love their Wives; and for Wives to reverence their Husbands; for Children to obey their Parents; for a Man to relieve the Oppressed, to give to the Poor, to save those who are in imminent Danger; to read the Scriptures; to go to Church; to improve in useful Learning; to abstain from Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Swearing and Lying, and every gross scandalous Sin; if these and many others be not good Actions;

tions, why did God so strictly command them ? and yet a Man, whose Heart is not altogether right with God, may perform them.

We find that God rewarded some wicked Men for some of their Actions, which must be good, for it would not agree with his Perfections to shew his Approbation of bad ones.

For Instance, *Ahab*, because he humbled himself when the Prophet *Elijah* had told him, what Judgments God would bring upon him and his House ; and God promised he would not bring the Evil in his Days.

Jehu was rewarded for performing the Will of God in destroying *Baal* out of *Israel*, although he was an Idolater still. This shews that the good Actions of wicked Men are pleasing to the Lord. We must own, we have all our Powers and Faculties from God ; He is the Maker of our Bodies, and the Former of our Spirits ; but he hath made us reasonable Creatures and free Agents, and he dealeth with us as such. If we were altogether unable to do any Thing, it would have been vain for God to have commanded us ; and Injustice to condemn any to Eternal Punishment for their Neglect ; neither would there be any Sin or Guilt, or any Occasion for Conscience ; for we could not be brought in guilty, unless we were made able to do something.

VI. They affirm that good and bad Works are alike useless, and unprofitable, in the Affairs of our Justification and Salvation : But, undoubtedly, there is an essential Difference between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice ; and God, who is infinite in all Perfections, must value Creatures more or less as they resemble him. The Man that endeavours to answer the End of his Creation, according to the Abilities he hath received of God, must be more acceptable to him, than he that, in almost every Action he performeth, contradicts the End of his Existence, and makes himself an Abomination to the Lord.

I wonder what Ideas these Men have of the Self-existent and Independent Being, who can imagine that he
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will justify any wicked Man as such. But to take away all Disputes of this Nature, he hath declar'd, in the Sacred Oracles, his Royal Determination to reward the Good and punish the Wicked.

The Divine Psalmist saith, *God is angry with the Wicked every Day. Also, the Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God. Again, upon the Wicked the Lord will rain Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest ; this shall be the Portion of their Cup.*

As to the Righteous, the Holy Psalmist saith, *Psal. iv. 3. Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself ; and Christ, in his Beatitudes, Matth. v. 8. saith, Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God. And, at the General Judgment, the Wicked are said to go away into Everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal. So the Wicked is condemned, and the Righteous acquitted and justified, both in this Life and at the General Judgment, at the Great Day of Accounts.*

VII. They are generally against Morality ; and commonly call Preachers of Morality, Legal Preachers.

Morality is very earnestly recommended almost in every Part of the *New Testament*. Very much Morality is contain'd in *Christ's* excellent Sermon on the *Mount* ; and a Multitude of the Instructions and Exhortations, recorded in the Evangelists, is to the Performance of the Duties of Morality ; and when one desired to know what he must do to be *saved*, our Lord directs him to the Observation of the *Moral Part* of the Law ; and the Apostles, in all their Epistles, treat very frequently on the Duties of Morality. All which plainly shew that a Man cannot be a good Christian without the Practice of them.

VIII. Another of their Errors is their Doctrine of *Assurance*.

Many of them pretend they are in *Christ*, and are as sure of Heaven as if they were there already.

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This Doctrine is plainly ill-grounded, so long as we cannot live without Sin ; we have the Promise of Pardon upon our sincere Repentance ; if (according to their own Principles) Repentance be the Gift of God, can we be sure it shall be given us ? Can we certainly tell what Sins we may commit, or what Duties we may omit ? and all these are to be forgiven before our Salvation be secured. The Promise of Pardon, Justification, and Eternal Life, is only made to those that repent, believe and obey the Gospel ; and so long as we are liable to fall, we may miss of Salvation : But, if a Man sincerely do his Duty both to God and Man, according to the Bower he hath received, he may have strong Hopes, that thro' the Merits of *Christ* he may obtain Mercy ; and this is as much as any, upon good Grounds, can attain to in this Life.

The Gospel cautions him *that standeth, to take heed lest he fall.*

We are frequently exhorted, in *St. Paul's* Epistles, to press forward, to strive, to wrestle, to run, to fight, and to fear, seeing a Promise is left of entering into Rest, lest any should fall short. And *St. Paul* himself sheweth us, that he used his best Endeavours, lest, *after he had preached to others, himself should be a Castaway.* It is very uncommon to strive, and use such earnest Endeavours to obtain a Thing we are sure of before ; and unless these Men be resolved to defend their Opinions, in spite of the Holy Scriptures, they must own, that there is but little Ground for that Assurance they contend for ; it is very dangerous to trust to that confident Assurance, till they have done sinning.

IX. Another of their Errors is, their *false Pretensions to Inspiration.*

Inspired Men, which we read of in the Holy Scriptures, always shew'd some Miracles to confirm their Doctrine, and prove that they were sent of God ; and were endued with Power from above. Some healed the Sick, some cast out Devils, some gave Sight to the Blind, some raised

raised the Dead to Life, and some spake with Tongues they had never learn'd : All shew'd something supernatural, to prove their Inspiration ; but, I never heard of any Miracles the *Methodists* wrought.

If they be *inspired*, as they pretend, *their Discourses* must bear *equal Authority* with the *Holy Scriptures* ; and they would do well to get them printed and added to our Bible. But, alas ! what confused, blundering, incoherent Stuff would their Sermons be, if published as delivered ?

They might be expected to speak better than the most eloquent Orator, or most learned Philosopher in the World ; but, instead of that, they make it appear, they have all the Frailties of Human Nature ; a slippery Memory, and a dark and confused Understanding, that suffereth them often to make needless Tautologies, and utter Contradictions, and sometimes to tell downright Lies.

If the *Word of God* contain the *whole Will of God*, they ought to speak agreeable thereto ; but, it is plain, they contradict both Reason and the Holy Scriptures ; therefore cannot be inspir'd by the *Spirit of God*.

It must be very shocking to any thinking Man, to hear them declare, that their Nonsense and broken Stuff is given them by Inspiration. I wonder they are not afraid of being struck down dead, like *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, for lying against the Holy Ghost and their own Conscience.

X. They affirm the *New-Birth*, as well as Justification by *Christ*, to be *instantaneous* ; when it is plain to any who consulteth himself, that it is gradual. That Man is born again, who, by the Grace of God, and his own diligent Endeavours, hath conquer'd his vicious Habits, and obtained a settled Hatred against all Sin ; and a Principle of Holiness being planted in him, he endeavours sincerely to perform his Duty both to God and Man.

A Man who hath accustomed himself to any Sin a long Time, hath thereby contracted such evil and strong Habits as cannot be rooted out in an Instant. The Prophet saith, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots, then may they do well that are accustomed to do evil.* Tho' this doth not mean that it is utterly impossible, but extremely difficult; therefore cannot be done in an Instant.

A Man, who hath contracted a Habit of Drinking, cannot be thought to lay it aside all at once; it may be some Months, or Years, before he can entirely conquer his Desires after Drink.

The lascivious Man cannot leave off his lustful Desires, 'till he have strongly resolved against them, and have Time to persuade himself out of the Love of them; the like may be considered of every other vitious Habit.

There are several *Steps* or *Gradations* in the *New-Birth*, that one that is born again cannot be ignorant of; and, I think, the first Step is serious Consideration. When a wicked Man reflects upon his past Conduct, how, by his Extravagances, he hath impair'd his Health, spent his Estate, lost his Reputation, offended God, and endanger'd his Soul; he cannot but know that he hath brought himself to the Brink of Ruin, both in respect of Body and Soul; then it will be natural for him to enquire, whether there be any Remedy for him? And by reading the Gospel he may find that if he repent, and forsake his Sin, he may find Mercy; then he must take himself to Task, and try to conquer his base Habits; and if his Resolutions be firm, and his Endeavours proportionable, he may at last conquer himself, and become a good Christian.—But this must require a considerable Time; Therefore it is plain the *New-Birth* is *gradual*.

XI. Another Error is their permitting unlearned Men without Ordination, to go about preaching the Gospel.

The Apostle *Paul* advertiseth *Timothy* of the Character that every Minister of the Gospel should bear, *Tim. i, 3.* and also *Titus i, 3.* and it would do well if the illiterate Teachers, among them, could have the Patience to examine themselves whether they answer that Character : Whether they be such as the Apostle accounteth fit to teach, Sober, Vigilant, sound in the Faith, and regularly set apart after the Examination and Approbation of learned Men, by Prayer, Prophecy, Fasting, and laying on of Hands. Are they not rather such as St *Paul* calleth *Novices*, pick'd out of the ignorant Part of Mankind ? They not only contradict the Precepts of the most eminent Apostle St *Paul*, but they bring the most noble Religion in the World, and the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, into Contempt, and are in Danger of running Church and State into Confusion. On this Footing every conceited Novice, that hath Pride and Impudence enough, must begin to preach ; and must not be censured or controuled by either Bishop or Elder, though perhaps Thousands may hazard their precious and immortal Souls by their Foolishness ; they leading them away from the Truth of the Gospel, deceiving them by false Doctrine, and thereby causing them to trust in a Lye.

XII. Another Fault of the *Methodists* is their fiery Zeal without Knowledge. A Zeal for any Sect or Party, unless mixed with a great deal of Meekness, Love, Mercy and Forbearance, is very dangerous ; and often degenerates into Malice, Envy, Moroseness, and ill Temper ; which is far from the true Spirit of Christianity. Those that are fired with this Zeal, are commonly *Proud, Boasters, unthankful, unholy, without natural Affections, false Accusers, Despisers of those that are good, heady, high-minded, having a Form of Godliness and denying the Power.* But the true Spirit of Christianity is to love God supremely, and his Neighbour as himself ; to be kind, loving, and benevolent to all Men ; to be merciful, and charitable ; to be meek, and humble ; to do unto all Men as they would they should do to them ; and they seem to have little of the Spirit of a true Christian, that are fired with such a Zeal for their Party, as uncharitably to condemn all that differ from them.

XIII. Another Error is, their Doctrine of absolute Election and Reprobation. Tho' this may not be the Opinion of all, yet many of them have espoused it; and their Doctrine of Justification, without Regard to their Works, cometh almost to the same Thing.

I account this a foolish and absurd Opinion, (tho' it hath been defended by many worthy and grave Divines) that God should create reasonable Beings, and make them free Agents, and lay down Precepts for them to obey, and promise great Rewards to the Obedient, and threaten the Disobedient with most severe Punishment; yet after all prove such an arbitrary Governor, as only for his own Humour, contrary to his own Declaration, damn a great Part of them; and from a fond Love to some of them, for no Reason at all, heap upon them a great and eternal Weight of Glory.

This is such an odd Way of Proceeding, as doth not agree with the Perfections of God.

There are many Texts of Scripture, especially in *St Paul's Epistles*, that are produced to prove this Doctrine; yet these ought not to be so expounded, as to contradict other Parts of the Word of God. Though God is said, in many Places, to harden the Hearts of some Men, we must not hence conclude, that God is the Author of Sin, and the Obstinacy of Men's Hearts; when they go on to such a Length in Sin, 'till they have quenched the Spirit of God, and provok'd him to withdraw from them. We must not think that God mocks his Creatures, when he makes an Offer of Pardon, and eternal Salvation to all. If they sin away their Day of Grace, the Fault must be their own. *As I live saith the Lord; I have no Pleasure in the Death of a Sinner, but rather they would turn and live.* God never forsakes any, 'till they first forsake him. God continued to strive with the old World, 'till the Imagination of their Hearts was evil continually. God rained down Blessings plentifully upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, 'till the Cry of their Wickedness ascended up to Heaven. God departed not from *Saul*, 'till he had disobey'd his Command. Hence it is plain

plain the Offer of Salvation is made to all, and Man's Damnation is procured by himself.

Many more Errors might be named, but these are the most gross ; and sufficient to move any thinking Man to examine their Doctrine better, and compare it with the Word of God.

And may all that read this Book, be moved to read all Parts of the New Testament, and diligently study them, that they may know *Jesus Christ* and him crucified, whom to know is Life eternal. And may that God, that is possessed of all possible Perfections, send down his Holy Spirit, to help our Infirmities, and guide us into all Truth, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

