
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>



7
James Evered.

AN
ANSWER TO A SERMON,

Lately Published against

THE METHODISTS

BY THE

REV. GEORGE WHITE, A. M.

MINISTER OF COLNE AND MARSDEN, IN LANCASHIRE.



BY

MR. WILLIAM GRIMSHAW, B.A.

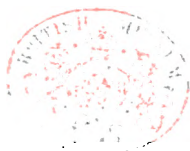
Minister of Haworth, in Yorkshire.

Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil, more than good: and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever. He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. The righteous also shall see and fear, and laugh at him.—PSALM LII. 1—6.

Semper ego Auditor tantum? Nunquamne reponam?—Juv.

Published in 1749. Printed at Boston
by James Stanley, & John Moore.

See Dr. Fawcett's copy, from whence
the date, &c. has been taken.



AN

ANSWER, &c.

REVEREND SIR,

IN the first advertisement of the sermon you have lately published against the *Methodists*, you would needs give the *world* some reason to expect a *non-pareil*, something so elaborate and accomplished, as to be altogether *unanswerable*: but, upon its appearing, how are we disappointed! How far is the performance short of the promise! For my part, I can in no wise see how it is *unanswerable*, except it be, that it deserves not any answer at all. It is so full of palpable *contradictions*, *absurdities*, *falsities*, *groundless suggestions*, and *malicious surmises*, &c. that it in some sort *vindicates* the people it was intended to *asperse*; and flirts back the dirt it should have cast upon *them*, upon its own *author*. Pray, what have you said more than any poor, petulant wretch, dares to say? The very tinkers and colliers of your parish have of late acted the *parson*, as well as you have done; and with as much regard to truth, and the honour of God. The dangers, for an hint of it, which you would unjustly insinuate, from the conduct of the *Methodists* to your *trade*, it is probable, proceed rather from the malevolent suggestions of such a banditti, than from any, even plausible, observations, that you are able to make of the matter. You and I know little more of the nature of *trade*, than of the *philosopher's stone*. Herein, therefore, we may take

it for granted, that these men have been your teachers.

The reasons that have induced me to answer your sermon, though otherwise not worth answering, are chiefly these: a just and ingenuous vindication of the principles and proceedings of those people whom you have endeavoured so industriously to traduce and vilify; likewise the conviction of such, who, as common enemies of all true religion, or the very appearance of it, are prone enough to swallow down any thing, that may tend to the *detriment* of the truth as it is in *JESUS*, and the *scandal, misrepresentation, and prejudice*, of its avowed and faithful *friends*: and, lastly, for the encouragement of those that are about, and the confirmation of those that already have embraced the *principles* of the *Methodists*, despicable indeed upon their account and name; but, nevertheless, to every sincere inquirer after truth and happiness, evidently, and every way agreeable to the gospel of our *LORD*, and, consequently, to the principles of our *Established Church*; nor in any wise, that I can find, materially different from those of any *denomination* of our *dissenting brethren*.

And as these are the chief reasons that prevailed on me to make any reply at all, so it is my desire also, therewith, honestly and impartially to take notice of each paragraph, as they stand. To pursue this method will, indeed, be attended with some difficulties, by reason of the looseness of the connection in many places. I must likewise be obliged sometimes to range your straggled sentences into a proper system; or must answer several tautological pieces of paragraphs in one place, and the remaining scraps of such paragraphs respectively, in as many other places. These inconveniences, however, shall be dispensed with as well as I can. To proceed therefore.

Your first and second paragraphs, intended for

an introduction, are taken up with what may be granted, asserting the necessity mankind found themselves under of superiority and subordination, in the ordering, governing, and well-being, of human society. This necessity is allowed also in ecclesiastical, as well as civil, oeconomy. But how improper such an introduction is to the following subject, will all along obviously appear. The text also is as foreign to the design it is intended to serve, as the introduction. What you say concerning the inspection or government of the church by a succession of bishops, priests, and deacons, in every century almost down to this very day, &c. though many may undertake to disprove it, (it being a controverted point) yet I shall not altogether deny: though when you proceed so far as to affirm, in the next words of this paragraph, 'That other pretenders to ministerial powers (*if you mean hereby to preaching*) were treated as insolent encroachers, and as enemies to the unanimous practice and peace of all churches.' This is utterly false, as I shall by and by, I hope, in a more proper place, clearly prove.

Nor will it appear, that I can discern, sufficiently evident, that St. Paul, "whatever he perceived of this kind growing in the church of Corinth," i. e. of pretenders to ministerial powers, saw this, "with some degree of indignation, to create (as you term it) the utmost confusion;" and that this, as you would have us believe, gave occasion for the words of the text, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace," 1 Cor. xiv. 33. If it does, the context must prove it. The beginning of this we may fix at the 26th verse, where the Apostle begins thus, "How is it then, brethren, when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue," &c. that is, every one of the gifted men exercised his own gift promiscuously, at the same time, in the congregation. This

seems to be one, and that no small cause, of disorder and confusion. Another was several *speaking together* in an unknown tongue, without an interpreter, ver. 27, 28. Another, several prophets *prophesying* (or preaching) at once: one also beginning before another had done; or not ceasing when another, having a revelation, began. Moreover, this they did without one to judge of what was delivered, ver. 29, 30, &c. These disorders, of no small consequence, seem to me to be the occasion of the text, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." God, that is to say, will by no means warrant such irregularities in the church. Now, which way the occasion of the text, and the conduct of the Methodists, can be brought, without violence, to tally, I see not, except they be guilty of the same, or the like disorders. Doth one of their teachers sing psalms, and another pray in your church, while you are preaching? Or, do they start up, two or three at once, and preach there? Or, do you hear that they do any such things in their own meetings?

Should you say, it is evident such pretenders to spiritual, or ministerial gifts, did intrude themselves into the church of Corinth, as were not qualified, from verse the 29th, because one must judge of what another prophesied. But, Sir, how not qualified? By the authority of God or man? If this be the meaning of the words, and the term judge denotes one, who is to judge of the prophet's qualification or mission, as well as of what he speaks, it must be of that by God, as is evident from the verse before the text; the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. To bring this case home, then, to the call of these Methodist preachers, who must judge whether theirs be of God? Not you, I think: mind, Sir, the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Your sermon, and late conduct, demonstrate, that you are

void of such a *discerning spirit*. The Methodist preachers, therefore, may be right in this respect also, for ought you can object; and the text as far from making against them in this view, as the other.

But if it be for want of a qualification from man only, that they, who attempted to take upon them the ministerial office in any wise in the church of Corinth, were *insolent encroachers* and *enemies* to that church's peace; and that the Apostle, therefore, perceiving this, *with some degree of indignation*, took occasion to utter the words of the text: this, indeed, seems to be your notion, oftener than once, in your sermon, of an encroacher, whether it be the Apostle's or not. But, sir, if this be admitted, then all these gifted men were *insolent encroachers*, and *enemies to the unanimous practice and peace, at least, of this church*. For it cannot be easily proved, that they were qualified by men in public authority, or by the imposition of hands. There seems to be very small grounds to suppose, that there was either bishop, priest, or deacon, in the church of Corinth at that time; if there were, it is strange that the family of Clœ should be the first and only persons that we read of, and not one or other of these ecclesiastics, to inform the Apostle of the errors that were crept into, and the contentions arisen in that church. Why writes he this epistle to that church, and not rather to such governors as he did, on other occasions, as to Timothy and Titus, if there were any such? Yea, the Apostle's ordering the excommunication, 1 Cor. v. 3, 4, 5. 2 Epist. chap. ii, and afterwards the absolution of the incestuous person, is no very bad argument to prove this. Will you dare to say, then, that the text is levelled at such as were not outwardly qualified, as it is probable these gifted men were not? And if not, which way does it reflect upon these *itinerants*?

Nor is the forbidding women to speak in the church, a clear argument for your purpose, however you may take upon you to affirm, that the Apostle saw, 'with some degree of indignation, how the notion of *prophesying* or *preaching* created the utmost confusion, and even gave occasion to *women* to utter their exhortations in public.' Their fault, as I think, think you and others as you will, seems to be rather speaking in the church, for learning than teaching's sake; as appears from those words, "if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church," ver. 35. What confusion such behaviour must occasion in their public devotion; what interruption to both preachers and hearers, at such a season, is no difficulty to conjecture: and, indeed, how needless, seeing their inquiries might be as well answered *by asking their husbands at home*. This, therefore, is no sufficient argument to prove, that the Apostle was suspicious of any such outwardly qualified *pretenders to ministerial powers encroaching thereon*, or that such were prejudicial to *the unanimous practice and peace of the church of Corinth*, and that the women, on this account, gave occasion for the words of the text; consequently, the text can have nothing in this light against the Methodist preachers, for want of an outward qualification to preach; nor does it make such the authors of confusion in the church on that account, at this day.

You proceed, (page 10) "And whereas it was matter of fact, that these irregular practices were contrary to order and peace." Sir, with your leave, let us dash out this paragraph, seeing you have so widely mistaken, or basely perverted, the sense and design of the text.

Yet, again, in the next clause, "I shall take occasion from these words;" (why, indeed, a man must needs have a text in the front of this sermon;

or else ——) but, Sir, bethink you. Do you consider what you are about? Doth the Apostle authorise you to divert his words to the intended use? What the Apostle meant by them we have already seen; what you mean by them, we are to learn in the next words: “First to point out such practices, as create a shameful confusion amongst us, and are directly contrary to peace, and the decent customs of all the churches of the faithful. And, secondly, to mention such persuasive inferences or observations, as may possibly, for the future, prevent the said confusion, and many other notorious consequences.” It might have been wished, for your own credit, that out of love for the truth, and a due reverence and regard for the Apostle, or rather for the Holy Spirit, who gave him utterance, that you had stuck close to your text, as every gospel divine doth. But I am afraid it will appear you are but too like many a priest more, who, so soon as they have taken their text, fall on to quite another subject, and never own it more so long as they stay in the pulpit.

Under the former proposition you begin thus, “If fact did not demonstrate to us what a system of uncommon notions, ignorance, and superstition, hath lately introduced, we could scarcely believe any such thing within the limits of Christianity, much less in these our kingdoms.” Whether you begin like a Christian, I question; you might seem rather to affect the method of the old Heathen orators, artfully and invidiously labouring, the first thing you do, to inspirit the breasts of your hearers with prejudice and resentment against their neighbours, before you either prove or relate any thing against them. But what is this system of uncommon notions? And how doth it appear that ignorance and superstition have lately introduced it? Have you informed yourself? There is very little appearance of it in any part of your sermon. And would

you have every body believe you, because you have said it, and pay an *implicit faith* to your *ipsedixits*? I wonder not at it: this is *mother-church* right; a *mode* of the whore of Babylon. But, Sir, permit me to inform both yourself and your audience, what the *notions* of the Methodists are, which you tell them are *uncommon, and lately introduced by ignorance and superstition.*

The Methodists' notions, or principles, and doctrines.

They believe and teach, that God created man in HIS OWN *image and likeness*, Gen. i. 27; a perfect creature, into whom God inspired HIS OWN *likeness*, that is, HIS OWN *love and holiness*, and herein consisted man's primeval happiness in Eden, which, so long as he kept it, made all things, all created things around him, animate and inanimate, happy to him, and happy in themselves. Love then was, as it now again in Christ is, the one sole, simple, sufficient, catholic, motive to holiness, divine obedience, or doing the Creator's will; (by some called HIS law) and man was furnished with abilities competent of a perfect unerring obedience to his Lord. This will, or law, of the Creator, was either emblematically couched under the prohibition of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as some think; or this was one notorious prohibition comprised in, or annexed positively to, HIS law, and sensibly placed before Adam's eyes for his observance. Whether way it was, it is all one in the main; "in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Rom. v. 12. 14, 15, said God. The violation of this prohibition, simply considered as such, or of any other precept of HIS will, couched under it, is threatened with death; a deprivation of the divine favour; love and primeval happiness in and with the Creator in paradise; an alienation from, or being without, God in the world. This death, furthermore, the Methodists

teach, extended to all the race of Adam, as daily experience proves; and it is a threefold death say they; corporal, Gen. iii. 19, 1 Cor. xv. 22, Heb. ix. 27: spiritual, Rom. v. 18, Ephes. ii. 1, 2, 5, 12. Col. ii. 13: eternal, Rom. v. ult. In the first consists the separation of soul and body, with the dissolution of the latter. In the second, an alienation from God, with a deprivation of our original faculties; our understanding darkened, our wills perverse, and our affections vitiated. And, in the last, the eternal damnation of soul and body.

They believe and teach, that by reason of this second death, man can neither will nor do any thing but what is evil before God; and though never so seemingly good and virtuous, is nevertheless deserving of nothing but HIS eternal wrath. "There is none that doth good, no not one." Rom. vii. "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves," 2' Cor. iii. 5; Psal. xiv. 1, 3; and so says our church: "The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God," Art. x.

That notwithstanding this deplorable condition, or inability, of man, whilst he remains in this natural state, or rather under the condition of the fall, that will, or law, of God aforesaid, (or old covenant, the covenant of works, as many truly call it) still stands against him in full force and virtue, and indispensably insists upon the very same perfect obedience thereto, as if man still enjoyed his primitive powers and abilities.

From this doctrine of man's fallen estate, these Methodists, like true Christians, sound *churchmen*, and *orthodox divines*, believe and preach up these consequences. 1st. That every natural man, if he is determined to live and die, as he came out of Adam's loins, is bound, though without strength, to

perform an all-perfect sinless obedience to this will, or law of God, for to regain the favour, love, and felicity of God, from which Adam, by transgression fell. 2dly. That suppose a man did actually live up to such an obedience, it would still be impossible to regain that happiness; because of original sin, wherein he is both born and conceived, (Psal. li. 5): actual obedience being no atonement or satisfaction for the original offence. 3ly. That much less then can man's actual obedience to the divine law atone for, or pacify God for actual transgression. 4thly. That supposing therefore a natural man after the commission of but one single sin, (and that perchance, but an evil word, jest, or thought, Matt. v. 28, Matt. xii. 37, Ephes. v. 4) a million of which offences, in the apprehension of the world, will scarcely make one sin, though it appears otherwise in the gospel. I say, supposing such a man should live as holy and sinless a life all his days, as the Son of God did, in whom was no sin, as the apostle truly affirms, neither was guile found in his mouth, (1 Pet. ii. 22,) he could never retrieve God's favour thereby, nor eternal glory; but must inevitably perish for ever, (Deut. xxvii. 26, Gal. iii. 10, Jam. ii. 10.) 5th. That therefore, a virtuous life, however strictly and circumspectly such, can no more save such a man's soul, than a vicious and wicked one. And, lastly, That the only difference between a virtuous and vicious man is merely this, that the all-righteous and just God will punish the former less than the latter in the bottomless pit. As to the certainty and eternity of their punishment there, they are both upon a par: the difference only lies in the different degrees of their virtue or vice. The best man is but the least sinner.

And here it may not be amiss to ask, *what man*, that seriously considers and lays to heart, as he ought to do, this most certain truth, will repose his

confidence any longer, merely in a good and virtuous life, when it is not a *heaven*, as he might vainly hope; but an *hell*, though the pains of it may be never so small, that must be his everlasting, miserable portion? The least torment there, for the best life here, will prove, without doubt, an intolerable punishment.

The premises, sir, if I may make this further, but pertinent digression, may serve to let every one see, especially such as Cornelius (Acts x. 2, Acts xvi. 14,) or Lydia like, are sincerely seeking the salvation of their souls, what a dangerous mistake those people are under, who believe and are taught, as the *modern language* of but too many of our pulpits, that *conversion* is nothing more than turning from a *bad* to a *good* life: and that if they do their best, striving to *live as well as they can*, the Lord will forgive their sins, and save their souls. This notion or doctrine, in as much as it is placing the hope and assurance of a man's salvation upon the *dint of his own well-doing*, is not only already demonstrated to be false, but utterly contrary to all the Holy Bible, the Homilies, 39 Articles, Catechism, and Liturgy of the Church of England; and the *principles* of all our *dissenting brethren*. It is not only a *gross popish tenet*, but more deceitful, dangerous, and damnable, than all the 12 *articles of Trent*, horrid as they are, put together. We may truly say of this *free-will merit-monging heresy*, when compared will all the abominable errors of popedom, as the women of Israel played and said of David and Saul, (1 Sam. xviii. 7,) "Those have slain their thousands; but this, its ten thousands." All such as preach this doctrine, and all such as believe, and profess it, pretend what they will to *protestancy* or *reformation principles*, are as *rank papists* as ever were. And if you preach it, you might as well have continued in the *church of Rome* still. You have only left the *name*, but not the

church itself. This very doctrine, however, the *Methodists* as true christians and *protestants* indeed, being determined to stand by the pure gospel of the Son of God, our dear Saviour, and which is but still the same thing, by the principles also of our Established Church, explode, disclaim, and preach down in the manner already shewn.

And indeed I refuse not to declare it to be my own opinion, that as it is very certain, that this doctrine of the devil has well nigh filled all the churches in the nation within these few years, to the almost utter extirpation of our truly orthodox establishment, God, who would not the death of sinners, nor the kingdom and gospel of his dear Son, our Saviour, to be totally abolished amongst us, raised up the Methodists on purpose to reclaim and preach up the same; to restore the church to her primitive purity, and revive her Homilies and Articles, &c. out of the dust, and to purge her of that epidemical vice and wickedness, which, as is every where observable, where the *free-will heresy* prevaleth, has most shamefully abounded.

It may seem very strange, indeed, at first sight, to find that where man's righteousness, or a strictly holy life is preached up and professed by a people for eternal life and happiness; and obedience to God's law made the condition of obtaining heaven, where *do this and live; adding and having* is the way to please God and be happy; and consequently their hope and dependence are only in their holiness. I say, it may well seem very strange, that there iniquity should abound. But if we observe, so it is in fact; I have made many observations of it, and never that I remember yet found it otherwise. And what think we, can be the reason? Now this to me is very obvious; because this doctrine, this scheme of religion is not of God;

the Holy Ghost hath no part in it : it is a compound of *devilish, worldly, and fleshly reason*, and therefore it cannot subsist of itself, nor maintain its own purity ; it can neither purge nor refine the hearts of its votaries ; nor greatly influence the observation or lives of others : its neighbours must in course remain, for the most part, as they were ; or still more prone to iniquity.

The Methodists, indeed, look upon *morality* to be the product of *man's free-will*, and to be Satan's second, surer, securer way of holding his slaves off from God, and heaven, and happiness ; and of killing, destroying, and damning their souls. The *enemy's* desire, to be sure is, that his servants may tamely live in all manner of sin, as being that wherein he takes the most pleasure, and whereby they become most like himself ; but when any of them, through terror of conscience, or some other scare or dread, or some dangerous sickness or great misfortune, (which probably be the awakenings of God's Holy Spirit) is prevailed with to renounce and forsake his wicked courses, Satan's next step to take, in order to prevent the poor wretch's conversion and turning to the Lord, is to persuade him to live a good life, and to strive all he can to live according to the law of God. And for this purpose the guileful serpent, well accustomed to the craft he used with *our mother Eve in Paradise*, and transforming himself, as he very well knows how, into an angel of light, (2 Cor. xi. 14,) and very well acquainted with the proud nature, and self-righteous disposition of man, accosts his heart in artful suggestion after this manner : " Yea, hath the Son of God said, believe in Him and thy sin's shall be forgiven thee, and thou shalt be saved. Can faith save thee ? No, no ; do thy best, and thou shalt be saved. Thou hast been these many years a very vicious, vain, and wicked liver ; but now

thou art wonderfully reformed. Hadst thou lived and died in thy evil course, thou hadst certainly been damned; but now thou shalt be saved. Go on man, press forward; strive to fulfil the law of God, and live as holily as ever thou canst. Hold it out to the end, and then God will forgive thee all thy sins; and happy shalt thou be for ever. Yea, the holier thy life is, the happier shalt thou be."

Thus the devil unsuspected, (for the man all the while thinks it is his own right reason that tells him this) puffs these insinuations into his heart. He perceives no delusion at all in them. His parson preaches to the same effect; and his friends and neighbours, as blind as himself, applaud his change. Thus the man is tied up to all the strictest rules, modes, and forms of religion: liturgies, rubricks, Sabbaths, prayer-days, ordinances, sacraments, fasts, festivals, alms-givings, hours of family and closet devotion, &c. are all carefully observed. These, though good in themselves, he miserably founds his hope of God's favour and heaven upon. And the more he persists, and the longer he perseveres in this way, the more tenacious of it, stiff, selfish, hypocritical, proud, and supercilious, like the Pharisees of old, he grows. Before, he was a *filthy*, and now, he is become a *whited* sepulchre. Before, his conscience frequently reprov'd him for his evil deeds, having some light and sight, but now, *Laodicean-like*, he can see no fault in himself, no need of repentance; no cleansing; he is stark blind. Thus it comes to pass that the devil has him faster than ever in his claws. Before, conscience often condemned him, declaring against both the devil and his sins, now it approves. And so *conscience* and the devil, both at variance aforetime, like Herod and Pontius Pilate, are now made friends: are both agreed upon his dam-

nation. His case is now become so much the more dangerous than it was before, as that even "publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before him," (Matt. xxi. 31.) This kind of religion likewise is so rational, so agreeable to flesh and blood, and the corrupted reason of mankind, that the generality of men are devoted to it, and this still adds to the power of it to do mischief. It is the religion of the Heathens, of the Turks, of the Papists, and but too much among us, that call ourselves Christians; and therefore not only, as I said before, has the devil for its founder; but by it, I fear, he destroys as afore recited, as many, if not more souls, than by all sorts of vice and wickedness besides.

What do these Methodists preach in the next place? Why, sir, that God foreseeing, before the foundation of the world, the fall of man, that in consequence thereof his divine justice must needs take cognizance and punish the same, and that his mercy would by no means interpose for his redemption, without a previous and adequate satisfaction made to his justice for man's transgression, graciously sent his only begotten Son, co-equal with himself, (John i. 14. 18, Ch. iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9;) "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," (Heb. i. 3, 9,) "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; of the same substance with the Father."* And he as willingly came, (Heb. x. 7, 9,) and assumed our nature in the *Virgin's womb*, by the "miraculous overshadowing of the Holy Ghost." (Luke i. 35.) Thus was our Saviour, begotten and born, not only free from original sin, but also in the same nature which had *transgressed*. Thus he was our Emmanuel, (Isa. vii. 14, Matt. i. 23,) that is God *among us*, God *with us*,

* Nicene Creed.

God in us, God in our nature, God made manifest in the flesh, (1 Tim. iii. 16,) or made flesh, and dwelling among us; that by him, thus incarnate, the nature that had sinned might make satisfaction. He fulfilled the law in our stead; he satisfied divine justice for us; he reconciled the Father to us; he ransomed us from eternal death; he procured everlasting life for us: and all this he did, which he alone could, by living up to the law, or (which is all one) a *sinless, god-equal, holy life*, (1 Pet. ii. 22, Gal. iv. 4, Rom. v. 18, 19,) the very life which we, in our fallen estate should, but could not live; and therefore must have inevitably and universally perished. He suffered also, and died for us upon the cross; and shed his divine and most precious blood, each drop of which is worth infinitely more than ten thousand worlds, to accomplish this redemption.

These men, therefore, believe and preach that this Jesus is our only Saviour, *Surety, Mediator, Redeemer*, and no other person or thing: "He is the only way, truth, and life: no man can come to the Father but by him," (John xiv. 6,) "neither is there salvation in any other" (person, thing, opinion, way, or means,) "for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," (Acts iv. 12,) "no; he alone of God is made unto us, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption," (1 Cor. i. 30.) He of himself, therefore, has graciously done all for us, and is become our "all in all;" that according as it is written, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," (1 Cor. i. 31.)

And as this, and immensely more than this, is the declaration of divine revelation, so is it the doctrine of our excellent church: "Above all things, ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the

death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man, who did humble himself, even to the death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners, who lay in darkness, and the shadow of death, that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life.”* “Who made there (i. e. upon the cross) by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ”†

“God hath so tempered his justice and mercy together, that he would neither by his justice condemn us into the everlasting captivity of the devil, and his prison of hell, remediless for ever without mercy; nor by his mercy deliver us clearly without justice, or payment of a just ransom: but with his endless mercy he joined his most upright and equal justice. His great mercy he shewed unto us in delivering us from our former captivity, without requiring of any ransom to be paid, or amends to be made upon our parts, which thing by us had been impossible to be done. And whereas [mark the words] it lay not in us to do that, he provided a ransom for us, that was the most precious body and blood of his own most dear and best beloved Son Jesus Christ, who besides this ransom, fulfilled the law for us perfectly; and so the justice of God and his mercy did embrace together, and fulfilled the mystery of our redemption.”‡

The next thing these men teach in their *system* is that, as man in his natural estate can do nothing (however virtuous and holy he be) towards obtaining his reconciliation with, and his salvation of, God: no more can he do any thing in a secondary way (as we may term it) towards obtaining it of

* Exhortation in the Com. Office.

† Prayer of consecration in the Com. Office.

‡ Hom. of Salvation, first part.

our Saviour. This, they affirm, is equally as impossible as the other. Here, therefore, they think it expedient to teach men how they must be interested so in the merits of our Saviour's life and death, as to enjoy remission of sins and eternal life; and this, say they, is only by believing. Only believe, this is all that is needful; nothing else is required: no sort of good works whatsoever before this faith, or with it, or after it, in point of justification, or (which is the same thing) remission of sins, and peace with God, (Act. iii. 39; Rom. v. 1.) The very instant a man believes (though he was never so old, so odious and vile a sinner before) in the wounds, blood-shedding, and righteousness of Christ, he is justified, *i. e.* as I just now hinted, is pardoned; is as fully and perfectly, to all intents and purposes, absolved and acquitted from the guilt, and consequently from the damnation due to all and each of his sins, as if he had never sinned, originally or actually, any more than our Saviour Jesus Christ himself; and is that moment as thoroughly restored to the favour and love of God, and entitled to the glories of heaven, as if he were as perfectly divine and holy as his Redeemer, and had actually merited the same by his own works of obedience and righteousness to the law of God: and this surely is the doctrine of the Gospel and the Church of England. "By him, (this man, Christ Jesus,) all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses, (Acts xiii. 39.) We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood: therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, (Rom. iii. 24, 25, 28.) Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have be-

believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the the law shall no flesh be justified, (Gal. ii. 16.) Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, (Rom. v. 1.) Whoever (therefore) believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," (John iii. 15, 16, 36. The Gospel abounds with passages almost innumerable, to the same effect; and indeed no wonder, since one main design of it is to set forth *a sinner's justification in Christ by faith only.*

As express and clear also upon this momentous point is our Church:—"We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith; and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore that we are *justified by faith only* is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.*"

"This is the ordinance of God, that they which believe in Christ should be saved without works, by *faith only*; freely receiving remission of their sins. Consider diligently these words, *without works, by faith only*, freely we receive remission of our sins. What can be spoken more plainly, than to say that freely, without works, by *faith only*, we obtain remission of our sins?"†

"Because all men be sinners and offenders against God, and breakers of his law and commandments; therefore can no man by his own acts, works, and deeds, (seem they never so good) be justified and made righteous before God; but every man, of necessity, is constrained to seek for

* Article 11th.

† Hom. of Salvation, 2^d part.

another righteousness of justification, to be received at God's own hands; that is, the forgiveness of his sins and trespasses, in such things as he hath offended. And this justification or righteousness, which we so receive of God's mercy and Christ's merits embraced by *faith*, is taken, accepted, and allowed of God for *our perfect and full justification.*"*

"The first coming to God (good Christian people) is *through faith*, whereby we be justified before God."†

Summing up and recapitulating what had been discoursed in the foregoing Homilies of Salvation, the Church does it thus:—"It hath been manifestly declared unto you, that no man can fulfil the law of God, and therefore, by the law, *all men are condemned*; whereupon it followeth necessarily, that some *other thing* should be required for our salvation than the *law*;" and that is a true and lively *faith* in Christ, bringing forth (that is, afterwards, from that time forth, that we are justified) good works and a life according to God's commandments. And also you have heard the account of the authors' minds (*i. e.* the minds of St. Hilary, Basil, Ambrose; to which are added, St. Chrysostom, St. Cyprian, St. Austin, Prosper, Oecumenius, Proclus, Bernard, Anselm, many other authors, Greek and Latin) of this saying, *Faith in Christ only justifieth man*, so plainly declared, "that you see, that the very true meaning of this proposition or saying, *We be justified by faith in Christ only* (according to the meaning of the old ancient authors,) is this, 'We put our faith in Christ, that we be justified by him only, that we be justified by God's free mercy, and the merits of our Saviour Christ only;' and by no virtue or good works, that is in us, or that

* Hom. of Salvation, 1st part.

† Hom. of Faith, 1st part.

we can be able to have, or to do, for to deserve the same: Christ himself only being the cause meritorious thereof."* All the Homilies of Faith and Salvation (being for that reason nearly the first in the book of Homilies) aim chiefly at the establishment of this one thing.

From the first instant of receiving this faith, the Methodists *maintain*, that *we are born again*, are *ingrafted into Christ*; are *initiated* into the state of regeneration, or, which is all one, commence Christians. Whosoever therefore have "this faith," and "hold fast the profession of it without wavering, (Heb. x. 23,) shall receive the end of (this) their faith, even the salvation of their souls," (1 Pet. i. 9.)

But seeing many people are apt to lay hold of this assertion, and profess they believe, therefore persuade themselves, that they shall be saved; when the most they mean, is but an historical faith, or notion of the truth: true faith being a reality, and not a fancy, or bare assent or consent to the truth: therefore, these *Methodist preachers* expressly assert, in order to prevent such a dangerous error, as well as to shew aright what this faith is, that a man may indeed believe what has been said, and all that is in the Gospel besides, and yet *perish for ever*. This *faith* may differ nothing from *that of devils*, who have faith, (Jam. ii. 19,) and acknowledge *Jesus to be the Son of God*, (Luke iv. 41,) and the only Saviour of mankind, and that we are justified by faith, (the very thing which they mortally hate, and have always laboured, and that too but too often with great success to destroy) knowing immensely more of the mystery of our redemption than we do; and yet, as one of our Homilies saith, "Do nothing well, but all evil:"† and as another, "Are but devils

* Hom. of Salvation, 3d part.

† Hom. of Faith, 1st part.

still." Wicked men also have the like faith, and yet remain wicked still: though therefore both wicked men and devils may believe "we are justified by faith only;" yet this the Methodists teach, is not the *faith* whereby we are *justified*.

And here let me add, that as great a *stir* as you make about the usefulness and necessity of *human learning* in a Christian divine, pages 9, 11, 14, 21, it is not able to help us to a better faith than this. This it can do, nor shall I refuse to own that such a faith is useful and necessary, so far as it reaches; but still, while alone, it is but a faith in common with wicked men and devils. Such preachers, as lean upon their learning, are generally observed to hold forth this faith only, hmitting thereto an holy life; and are likewise as commonly observed to make them conjunctively the cause or condition of justification. Now, all this is no more than downright, plain, human morality, (the doctrine of devils as aforesaid) more becoming the rostrum of a Heathen philosopher, than the pulpit of a minister of Christ. Though many of our clergy, and those, perhaps, some of the ablest schoolmen, reach not even thus far. The Lord, in mercy; mend them, or end them, for Christ Jesus, and his church's sake, and that no more blind leaders, and blindly led, fall, as it is to be feared multitudes have, into the pit, even the bottomless pit of eternal fire and Brimstone.

Concerning the true faith, whereby we are justified and accounted righteous before God, these men preach that it is the gift of God, that no man can have it by nature or by learning, but is utterly void of it, till the Holy Ghost give it him; and for this they have the clear testimony of the gospel and of our church. "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," Ephes. ii. 8. And we may truly

say of this faith, as our Lord replied to Peter, when he answered to his question, "Whom, say ye, that I am? Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God: flesh and blood," says our Saviour, (that is, all human wisdom and learning) "hath not revealed it unto thee; but my Father which is in heaven," Matth. xvi. 15, 16, 17. *No man can say, (that is, believe, therefore, say, according to that expression of St. Paul: as it is written, viz. Psal. cxvi. 10,) "I believed, therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore we speak, 2 Cor. iv. 13, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3.*

And our church thus, "Three things go together in justification. On God's part, his great mercy and grace; on Christ's part, justice, that is, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption by the offering of his body, and shedding of his blood, with fulfilling of the law perfectly and thoroughly; and, upon our part, true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which, (mark the next words) yet is not ours, but by God's working in us."*

And as this faith is the gift of God, so is it a faith of application; a faith, whereby the Saviour's merits, his wounds, blood, and righteousness, are not merely imputed, but the virtue thereof really applied to the heart of every such believer: whereby it comes to pass, by the special grace of God, that such have a full assurance of the remission of their sins, or justification, union with our Saviour, sonship of God, and a well-grounded, comfortable hope, of eternal glory. All this they experience and feel in the heart, not daring (as counting it the most shameful enthusiasm, and the grossest presumption) to call themselves Christians, before they clearly feel these things in them. But so soon

* Hom. of Salvation, 1st part.

as they *feel* this, then they are sure, but not before this, that they are *Christians*.

For this they are satisfied that they have the gospel and our church on their side. "Being justified by faith," says St. Paul, "we have (speaking in the preter tense) peace (i. e. pardon and reconciliation) with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, Rom. v. 12. There is no condemnation (no guilt, or fear for sin, all is gone) to them which are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, Ephes. i. 7. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, Rom. viii. 16, even the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15, whose temple our body, as well as soul is, 1 Cor. vi. 19. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake," 1 John ii. 12.

And thus our church: "The right and true Christian faith, is not only to believe all the holy Scriptures, &c. to be true; but also to have a *sure trust and confidence in God's merciful promises to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ*. How can a man, supposing this truth, have this true faith, *this sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins be forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God, and to be partaker of the kingdom of heaven by Christ, when he liveth ungodly, and denieth Christ in his deeds?*"*

* Hom. of Salvation, 3d part.

"If, after contrition, we feel our consciences at peace with God, through remission of sins, and so be reconciled again to his favour;* if you feel and perceive such a faith in you, rejoice in it."†

Possessed through grace of this faith, and by it of the blessings aforesaid, these Methodists main-

* Hom. for Rogation Week, 2d part. † Hom. of Faith, 2d part. This truly gospel doctrine of *faith of assurance*, denied, indeed, by the generality, even of *serious professors*, though clearly, either expressly, or implicitly, taught in almost every page of the New Testament, as also in the Psalms and Prophets, the miracles of our Saviour are, as I think, intended to typify. In many of them there is a lively representation, not only of this *truth*, but of the whole work of *conversion* or *regeneration*. Our Lord, if we are persuaded, think other men as they please, did not only intend the *miraculous cures* that he wrought upon men's bodies, merely for the *credentials* of his *messiahship*, but to be *lively emblems* also of the cures he works upon our souls; so that what we find in the one, the like corresponding elsewhere, we shall discover in the other. I shall only instance in two miracles, that of the *man with the bloody flux*, Mark, 5th chap. and of the *man sick of the palsy*, chap. ii. designing to take little more notice of them, than what concerns my present purpose.

The woman having spent "all that she had to gether fountain stopt, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse," ver. 36, (a lively representation this of an unrepented sinner's using all self-endeavours to obtain pardon of his sins, and eternal life of God) "when she heard of Jesus," (a last shift; so sinners, or self-righteous men, never come to Jesus, neither will they hear of it, till they are happily brought to see, that all their other means and attempts are ineffectual) "came behind him in the press, saying," (within herself) "if I may but touch his clothes," (if I have faith to believe) "I shall be made whole;" (so sinners, convinced that all their righteousness will not secure them from eternal death, hearing of Jesus, and convinced that nothing but Jesus only can pardon and save them, by faith, come and touch him;) "and having touched his garment, straightway" (that very moment) "the fountain of her blood was dried up," (that very instant a sinner comes by faith and touches Jesus, he is pardoned; justification being an instantaneous work) "and she felt in her body," (mark the next words;) "that she was healed of her plague." She was sensible of a perfect cure. Sinners in like manner, touching Jesus by faith, (who is the true physician of the soul also) clearly experience the healing of their souls, the pardon of their sins; sin being the soul's bloody issue. What is true in one case, is equally and every way so in the other.

In like manner, the paralytic was so helpless as to be home-ach'd by fear, (an argument of his extreme weakness,) and not

tain, that we receive the Holy Ghost, and he dwells *in us*, as really as he does in Christ Jesus. They maintain, that he enlightens our understandings; teaches us the will of God, and all divine truths; regulates our will; purges away our corruptions; purifies and enflames our affections; impowers us

only so, but sensible of his incurable condition, and confident that Jesus alone, and no other could, and would cure him, was resolved, at all hazards, as appears from the circumstances of the story, to be set before him; (another plain indication of a convinced sinner's faith, that he must either come to Jesus alone for mercy and forgiveness, or perish for ever.) "Jesus seeing their faith," (O what a powerful thing is faith,) "says, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," (ver. 5,) and then "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thy house," (ver. 11,) upon which words, "he immediately arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, (ver. 12.) *His cure was instantaneous and sensible.* "He immediately arose," who could scarcely, it is probable, stir hand or foot before; and as a further proof of it, bore back the bed to his house, which had borne him to Christ. Moreover, *he had his sins forgiven him* in express words; he had therefore the fullest assurance of his cure and pardon. As certain, sudden, and spiritually sensible, is the remission of sins, the cure of the sin-sick souls, who come by faith, as this man did, to Jesus.

I know it is as great a *paradox*, and counted as gross *blasphemy* by the *letter-learned* wisemen of this day, to hear men affirm, that they know their sins are forgiven by that same Jesus; who, they ought to consider, hath still power on earth to forgive sins, ver. 10, as it was to the Scribes, in our Saviour's days to hear him, *viva voce*, to pronounce the same then. But where is the absurdity or unreasonableness of it? It is not only equally as easy a matter to our Saviour to pardon our souls, as to heal our bodies, ver. 9, or as possible with him, to manifest the one as the other to us; but, methinks, the former is of infinitely greater consequence to be known than the latter; and that for the following most important reasons: 1st. Because it is impossible for a man to know himself to be a Christian, till he is assured that his sins are forgiven him, (forgiveness of sins, being but another name for a christian;) and, 2dly, Because upon this knowledge of remission, indispensably depends the love of God, and the obedience and worship of God. This also we may clearly learn from the miracles of our Lord, and particularly from this of the paralytic: when he was cured, he arose, "took up that whereon he lay, and departed, glorifying God," (Luke v. 25.) This glory that he gave to God, was out of a clear sense that he had of this mercy: the want of this sense, which to him would have been the very same as no cure at all, would have prevented all praise of God. The man was not only cured, but he knew he was

to resist and overcome all temptations of the world, flesh, or devil, and enables us to live without sin. All which is a real, inherent work, and called sanctification: all this we continue, say they, grow up and persevere in, to the end, until mortality is swallowed up of life.

All this the gospel and our church teach also. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, (to what end?) that we might know the things that are freely given of God, 1 Cor. ii. 12. If any man have not the spirit of Christ in him, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, 2 Cor. iv. 6. The Spirit of Truth, which will guide you into all truth, John xvi. 13. If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live, Rom. viii. 13. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. vi. 11. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. x. 13. Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace,

cured; and therefore it was not only that mercy, but the knowledge of that mercy, that caused him to glorify God. In like manner, it is not remission of sins, but the knowledge of this remission, that not only discovers us to be christians, but causes us to love, and praise, and serve our Lord Jesus. So far ought we therefore to be from opposing this most necessary, gracious, and soul solacing gospel truth, that we ought by all means to esteem it our chiefest wisdom, care, comfort, and happiness, on this side eternity, with all speed to secure ourselves of this witness, which, says St. John, "he that believeth on the Son of God hath in himself." (1 Epist. Ch. v. 11.)

John i. 16. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me, Phil. iv. 13. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure;" 1 John iii. 5.

In like manner teaches our church: "O what comfort is this to the heart of a true Christian, to think, that the Holy Ghost dwelleth within you. Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to regenerate men, and, as it were, to bring them forth anew, so that they shall be nothing like the men that they were before. Neither doth he think it sufficient inwardly to work the spiritual or new birth of man, unless he do also dwell and abide in them.* The Holy Ghost doth always declare himself by his fruitful and gracious gifts, namely, by the word of wisdom, by the word of knowledge, which is the understanding the Scriptures by faith.† And in our liturgy is much more to the same purpose: "Grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort.‡ ¶ O God, soasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts.¶ Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name.¶ Let us beseech him to grant us his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life may be pure and holy.¶"

From the other part of these men's doctrine concerning faith, &c. they allow the following inferences:—

1st, That true Christian faith, properly so called, is not to be obtained by any human means, but the mere gift of God, and an operation of the Holy Ghost in our hearts.

* Hom. for Whitsunday, 1st part.

† Ibid.

‡ Coll. for Whitsunday. ¶ Coll. for 10th Sunday after Trinity.

§ Coll. in Com. Service.

¶ Absolution.

2dly, That by this faith only we are justified, or pardoned all our sins, born again, or regenerated, united to Christ, made thereby the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life.

3dly, That this faith is the root in consequence, from whence true sanctification of life proceeds.

4thly, That no man, how religiously soever he might live before, knows what a Christian life is, till he has received this faith, and thereby knows and feels that his sins are forgiven him.

5thly, That as by this faith a man receives and experiences the remission of his sins, and can safely, for the first time, call himself a Christian; so he then begins to discover, in reality, what he but erroneously imagined himself to know before, namely, the exceeding great love of God the Father towards us through Christ Jesus, our Saviour, and that from hence also arises that one only, true, recipocal, superlative love of us to God again, which necessarily begets in us a life of universal, inward, and outward holiness.

And, 6thly, and lastly, That though in charity we ought to hope, from a man's outwardly virtuous conversation, that his state may be truly christian; or another man, upon the same appearance of behaviour, may hope the same of us; yet an affirmative answer to this blunt, but plain question, is nevertheless needful. Do you know your sins are forgiven you? Have you peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ? Have you no condemnation, as being in Christ Jesus? Know you that Jesus Christ is in you? These are, in a manner, scriptural queries, Prov. xvi. 1. And the Apostle's injunction is, that we should be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us; with meekness and fear, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Such a positive reply alone can confirm his opinion of us; for all our outward sanctity can be no certainty to another man, that

we are real Christians; so far from that, that we are therewith but too often deceived ourselves.

These, Sir, are the doctrines which the Methodists, in general, maintain and preach, which you are maliciously pleased to call *a system of uncommon notions*. How uncommon they are, (a term you use, I suppose, for *unsound or corrupt*) and whether introduced by ignorance and superstition or not, I submit to the judgment of every true Christian and churchman. If they are uncommon, as you say of late, it is not because they are contrary to the truth of the gospel, or the principles of our church, but because you, and the generality of our clergy, have, for these many years, disused or apostatized from them.

There are some other things which the Methodists hold, and may occasionally preach, and which I cannot but acquaint you with: they are chiefly the manner in which, or means whereby, the Holy Ghost begins the work of conversion, or regeneration, in our hearts.

He first prepares the heart by *conviction of sin*, or, which is the same thing, by *repentance*. In doing this he works indifferently upon the hearts of the *virtuous* and the *vicious*. I say, of the *virtuous* and the *vicious*. For the former, as far as they may be from believing it, I have already shewn, stand in equal, if not in much greater need of conversion, by reason they stand in far greater danger of being damned than the other. Because self-love, a good opinion of their own virtues, and that mistaken notion of doing well, and then God will forgive their sins and save their souls, fatally blind and harden their hearts: therefore this is the common cry of such; "Say these preachers what they please, I am a strictly religious and virtuous man; Christ said to the lawyer, "Do this and live?" (Luke x. 28.) Therefore if I hold on as I do, I shall never perish, I shall certainly go to

heaven. My reason tells me so. Our parson likewise preaches so. And are these bubbleers like to know better?" By this means, among others, it comes to pass that few of these will hear the gospel, and fewer still, become Christians, that is, embrace the aforesaid true saving faith: No, "They are whole, and need no physician." (Matt. ix. 12; Luke. v. 31.) They think themselves "the children of the kingdom already, and have no fears of being cast out," (Matt. viii. 12.) "They are right Laodiceans; are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.)

But the other sort, the vicious and wicked are more easily wrought upon and convinced; the reason is obvious: they hear the law preached, as it should be, for their curse and condemnation. By this means they are brought to see, as the apostle expresses it, "the exceeding sinfulness of their sins;" (Rom. vii. 13,) and to feel the deadly weight of its guilt upon their consciences, and the wrath of God consequent thereupon. A condition this, which few, but such, are ever brought to experience. And why? Because, which is well for them, they have no holiness of their own, like the others, no supposed virtues nor good habits to boast of and blind them with: they have no imaginary helm, as aforesaid, to run under, no fig-leaf aprons to hide their nakedness from the eye of God. Hence it is that multitudes of such among us, hearing the gospel preached also, are by the power of the Holy Ghost prevailed with to embrace the overtures of grace, mercy, pardon and salvation through Christ Jesus only to their wounded consciences, and are converted. And that this is no new or strange observation, is evident from our dear Saviour's assertion; "Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God be-

fore you." (Matt. xxi. 31.) These words he spoke to the self-righteous chief priests and elders of the people. (Ver. 23.)

Another thing these men take notice of, and I think it concerns all people to do the same, is, that the Holy Ghost begins with us in our infancy to draw us by his convictive influences towards conversion. This I can bear witness to, and am persuaded, that if any man will but carefully recollect himself, he can date, as far back as his infancy, the remembrance of many sharp rebukes and upbraidings, checks and terrors of conscience, for having done amiss. He can very well remember several awful and heart-affecting thoughts about a God, and judgment, death, and eternity, &c. in those tender years; which, whatever men may talk about natural conscience, I am of the same sentiments about this matter with the Methodists, that these repartees and reflections, are (for what can we suggest to ourselves, who are by nature dead, dead in trespasses and sins,) nothing else but the suggestions and drawings, or convictions of the Holy Spirit. So that, here I may add, for this reason, amongst others, it is, that if we perish at last we are left without excuse. God will be clear of our blood, and at the last day, as David says, "He will be justified when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth." (Psal. li. 4.)

Those, it is very remarkable, that are effectually convinced and converted in this our gospel-day, are mostly persons of all ages from fifteen to fifty years of age; few younger, and but few older: some perhaps at sixty, but very rarely; and the more so the more they exceed this age. Such, according to the old proverb, "As they have lived their lives, generally take their end."

And as the Holy Ghost effects the preparation of the heart at different ages, so by different means:

by dreams, misfortunes, losses, death of friends or children, conversing with spiritual people, and frequently by fits of the mother to women in child-bed, &c. But these, with almost innumerable other means, may be called irregular. And, it is observable that the Holy Ghost generally uses them in such cases and places, where people have not the opportunity of hearing the gospel: otherwise his common method of convincing sinners, or preparing their hearts for receiving the gospel, is by preaching it. And this again two ways; either by preaching the law in its right manner, for their terror, curse, and condemnation, as seems to have been John Baptist's method: (Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10, Luke iii. 7—14,) or the life, death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ, as he directed St. Peter and St. Paul. (Acts ii. 22—28. Chap. xiii.)

In the next place this conviction, or preparation of a sinner's heart to believe savingly in Jesus, is observed to be effected in some in a shorter, in others in a longer, time: but in all it may be looked upon to be so, when the conscience is so loaden with the guilt of sin, and a clear sense of the insufficiency and vanity of its own goodness, as to doubt whether God will pardon or not. Such are often brought to think, that their day of grace is past, that it is therefore too late to look for mercy, and their eternal damnation is inevitable. Some indeed are more gently dealt with in this case than others: but all, that are converted, are brought at least, to see this first with deep compunction of spirit, that there is no way, but perishing, whatever their lives were before, whether good or bad, if the Lord in mercy spare and save not.

Here it is, and in such convicts only, that faith makes its first appearance. Whoever pretends to believe, that hath never experienced this con-

viction, it is to be very much feared, knows not whereof he speaketh, and whereof he affirmeth. His faith, it is more than morally probable, is false and vain: but the faith of a true convict or penitent appears three ways; 1st, In that Christ can; 2dly, that Christ will; and, lastly, that Christ hath forgiven him. These are the steps, if I may so speak, whereby this faith advances towards the Saviour.

In the first case, the penitent's earnest and constant prayers are, that Christ would forgive him, and that the Father will be reconciled to him through the Son's merits. But such prayer, being attended with a deep sense of guilt and unworthiness, is generally full of diffidence, not in the ability, for this is seldom, if ever, distrusted, but in the willingness of our Saviour to pardon him; his cry is continually like that of the leper; "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," (Matt. viii. 2.)

In the second step, having received a little more strength of faith, his prayer, in course, is bolder. He can lay hold by it of such a promise as this, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," (Matt. xi. 28.) Getting thus much encouragement, his supplication resembles that of the Psalmist, "O satisfy me with thy mercy, and that soon," (Psal. xc. 14.)

In the last, his faith advances to a full assurance of mercy: by it he instantaneously feels his guilt removed, and all his fear of wrath and damnation vanish. His soul enjoys a perfect and comfortable peace and rest. This is the blessed instant of what we call the remission of sins, and the manifestation of it in the heart: and always follows that confidence that Christ will forgive. Now is the happy hour, in which the kingdom of God, which our Saviour says, "is within you," (Luke xvii. 21,) becomes,

in St. Paul's words, *righteousness* (the righteousness of Christ applied, or, which is the same thing, remission of sins revealed in the heart) and (mark the next words) "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xiv. 17,) Peace, that is to say, pardon experienced, and therefore producing "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," or excited in us by this divine Paraclete, out of an inward apprehension and experience of peace already received, and of the inestimable blessings that follow it. With the Psalmist, in the latter part of the verse lately quoted, the happy soul proclaims, "I will rejoice and be glad all the days of my life," (Psal. xc. 14.)

This last particular is an instantaneous work of the Holy Ghost. Now is the happy instant of our *new birth*, which our Lord shewed Nicodemus the nature and necessity of, (John, 3d chap.) The instant in which we commence christians, or 'at least have our first assurance that we are so: and are not only, as our excellent church catechism teaches, "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; but can assuredly affirm and *heartily thank our Heavenly Father*," (for so now we have the confidence and comfort, which we never had before, to call him) *that he hath called us to this state of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour.**

Having endeavoured to give you an account of the system of doctrines which the Methodists maintain and preach, and annexed these further observations upon the manner in which the Holy Spirit begins and carries on the work of conversion, as an appendage thereto; I would ask any one, whether they are not agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and the homilies, articles, &c. &c. of our own church? *If ignorance and superstition*

* Church Catechism.

therefore have introduced them, then the Apostles and penmen of the sacred books, the reformers also and compilers of our Liturgy, &c. were ignorant and superstitious men.

“ We could scarce believe, (you say) any such thing possible within the limits of Christianity:” had the old men of your parish uttered these words, I should not have wondered; for how many of them may have gone to church, perhaps forty, fifty, or sixty years, and have never heard the Homilies or Thirty-nine Articles read in all that time? But for you, or any Clergyman in the kingdom to speak thus, is a burning shame. And, indeed, if we may speak, as the truth is, that very *rationality* you speak of in *religion*, though in its place worthy to be *reverenced*; yet, by being but too much *reverenced* of late years, has been one probable occasion why the reading of them has been so long out of fashion; from which, as one cause among others, proceeds that present most deplorable decay of true religion among us.

What say you in the next paragraph; “ Shall any member of the reformed Church, become so thoughtless, so averse to decency and common behaviour, as to enter into the list of a weak, illiterate crowd, unacquainted with the general tendency of all religion, strangers to the constitution of our particular church!” How weak and illiterate these men may be, is nothing at all to the question; but how much, or rather how little, they are strangers to the constitution of our particular church, is already shewn. I wish, poor man, you knew as much of it. This pitiful strain of admiration, and that of the next paragraph, it shall suffice to observe, serve rather to expose your ignorance, than theirs, in the principles of our religion.

In your margin (page 11th) you affirm that the ‘ Act of Toleration was chiefly calculated for the

‘further improvement of trade.’ I have never seen the act, but am very well informed that there is no such reason intimated either in the body of that act or its preamble; and that the true reason was, which is much more probable, the relief and benefit of scrupulous consciences. The Methodists, therefore, for aught that you have said, may surely claim the benefit of this act, as well as others, if they please; and I hope, when and where they do, they will put it to good use, and evidence to all the world, the wisdom and goodness of God in putting it into the hearts of the legislature to prefer it.

(Page 12) You proceed, “If we take a survey of the different constitutions and establishments of life, we shall find that order and regularity is necessary to their essential preservation, &c.” This is granted in your introduction; and God forbid that this should be denied or interrupted in the œconomy of the church. But how does it appear that the Methodists even so much as attempt any such thing, or that their principles or practices have, in any wise, any such tendency? Their teachers intermeddle not in the administration of the sacraments: they neither disturb you nor any man, that I ever heard of, in your ministerial function; so far from this, that contrarywise, they are exceeding good *subs* to us, if we have but grace to see and acknowledge it. I believe, if we will but speak the truth, as we hope to answer for it at the day of judgment, we must own, that they have, through the divine assistance, who sends by whom he will send, wrought a far greater reformation in our parishes than we have done. Ah, sir, you little know, but I pray God make you sensible and thankful for it too, before you die, how these dear servants of the Lord laboured night and day for you, without a penny from your purse, whilst you boarded at Chester Castle, and

for three years together since, whilst you have been raking about in London, and up and down the country. And now, at your return to your flock, do you find that any amongst them, that follow these good men, who deserve so well at our hands, behave disorderly at Church? Do they live dishonestly or unpeaceably among their neighbours? Or do they wrong or defraud you, or any man, of their dues? Surely, men of their principles, will do no such things, nor occasion any such confusion as your merciless spirit would brand them with.

On the contrary, your own late riotous conduct, heading a lawless rabble of irreligious, dissolute wretches, under the name and title of *Commander in Chief*,* spiriting them up to the perpetration of many grievous outrages, and inhumanly treating and abusing numbers of poor, inoffensive people; I must say, this is a far more shameful violation of order, in both Church and State; done, too, under a zeal for religion, and in defence of the Church of England! You may labour, indeed, (for what base thing is it that ill-will and malice will not prompt a man to?) to make Mr. Whitefield's collections for the Orphan-House in Georgia no better than a veil for the most iniquitous intentions; and wildly, as well as uncharitably, amuse men with consequences as odious as the black examples introduced, are intended to serve. But, sir, does not your own conduct, think you, tally

* Mr. White's Proclamation for inlisting men into the mob raised against the Methodists, in or about the month of August last, ran in words to the following effect:

"Notice is hereby given, that if any men be mindful to enlist into his Majesty's service, under the command of the Rev. Mr. George White, Commander in Chief, and John Banister, Lieut.-General of his Majesty's forces, for the defence of the Church of England, and the support of the manufactory in and about Colne, both which are now in danger, &c. &c. let them now repair to the drum head at the Cross, where each man shall have a pint of ale for advance, and other proper encouragements."

much better with them? Religion, say you, was the excuse for Father Girard, the Rector of a Jesuitical Seminary at Toulon's debaucheries, with Mademoiselle Cadierc; and the overflowing of Paris with Protestant blood on a Bartholomew day, and the stabbing of Henry of France by a Dominican; and so is religion an excuse (the defence of the Church of England!) with you, say I, for your mobbing and rioting, with a little less mischief, but, I fear, with no less malice. Ah, poor blind Pharisee, "First pull the beam out of your own eye:" I wish you be not one of them of whom our Lord prophesies, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service, (John xvi. 2.) Repent, repent of this your wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of your heart may be forgiven you."

"But," say you, "is every bold visionary" (words sooner said than understood) "to be a guide in matters of the highest importance?" Yes, it is highly needful, in such parishes as your's especially, where he that should be, is not such a guide. But what are these matters of highest importance? Why, they pretend to preach. This, indeed, is a matter of the highest importance; none more so, nor so much, in all our sacred office. The administration of the sacraments is indeed reckoned a matter of high importance; but to preach the Gospel is no less so, (1 Cor. i. 17.) God grant you and I, and all our clerical brethren, may lay it duly to heart; and that as we trust we have received a dispensation, I mean, from God, otherwise to receive it from man signifies nothing; we may preach it not only in the letter, but power and purity thereof, "in season and out of season, (2 Tim. iv. 2,) making full proof of our ministry," (2 Tim. iv. 5,) with all unweariedness and diligence; as the Apostles did, and as the Methodists do; and, I bless God, some few of our

Clergy also; otherwise, as St. Paul speaks of himself, *Woe be to us*, (1 Cor. ix. 16.)— God grant also that our lives, inwardly and outwardly, before an all-seeing God, (“from whom no secrets are hid,*”) and a censorious world,) who being as the Apostle speaks, of the contrary part, “may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you,” 1 Pet. iii. 16. may be as becometh the Gospel which we preach, and as the life of that holy Jesus, its author, whose ministers we are. For a clergyman to act otherwise, in any respect whatever, is odious in the eye of all men, and execrable in the presence of God: “Why,” says he, “dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth; whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee,” (Psal. l. 16, 17.)

“But whoever presumes,” you say, “to take upon him that office without the approbation of those superiors who are appointed to inspect into affairs of such serious consequence, he absolutely is an author of confusion, where God has no share, and an open destroyer of the public peace.” Sir, I hope it is as far from my thoughts as your’s, or any clergyman’s in England, to deny or slight the usefulness of episcopal ordination; yet, it seems, the qualification you lay your chief stress upon, is the external one. Strange stuff. “Such as want this, are absolutely (*Te judice scilicet*) authors of confusion, where God has no share, and open destroyers of the public peace.” Our Saviour, *who taught, in the apprehension of the people, as one having authority, and not as the Scribes*, (Matt. vii. ult.) was never thus qualified by the Jewish Church; nor his Apostles, who all preached to that people, and yet were they ever so much as once found fault with on that account? Or were they authors of confusion, or open destroyers of the public peace? It is true indeed, our Saviour bids his Apostles *think not that he came to send*

* Col. in Com. Service.

peace on earth, but a sword, (Matt. x. 34.) But did he mean that his preaching without a human qualification would occasion it? The multitude likewise accused him to Pilate, as one *whom they found perverting the nation,* (Luke xxiii. 2.) But was it on this account? Or dare you for shame take part with his accusers, and allege their example, either as a precedent or an argument in favour of your assertion? Though this I must tell you, which is obvious to every man, your assertion is every way a parallel: there is manifestly the same heart, disposition, and spirit in you that was in them. They traduced and falsely accused the head; and you, which is all one, the members. They, "We found this fellow perverting the nation:" you, They "are open destroyers of the public peace." Beware, *poor man!* what you say: beware what you do; lest you one day hear it said, to your everlasting confusion, "Inasmuch as thou hast done it to the least of these, my brethren, thou hast done it unto me," (Matt. xxv. 40.) The *dispersed converts of Jerusalem,* without an exterior qualification, *went every where preaching the word,* (Acts viii. 1, 4,) and are they any where reported of as "authors of confusion, or open disturbers of the peace?" In like manner, St. Paul, if we compare Acts xiii. 1, with Gal. i. 18, we shall find, preached the Gospel above three years without any such qualification, even from the Apostles; and yet we never find that this was objected against his preaching, either by them, the churches, or those that he preached to: nor was he ever looked upon as an author of confusion, or destroyer of peace. And afterwards, when Barnabas, Silas, and some others of the brethren, had received the outward qualification from Paul, by the *imposition of hands with fasting and prayer,* (Acts xiii. 3,) they were, nevertheless, represented to be *turners of the world upside down,* (Acts xvii. 6.)

So that, whether men be outwardly qualified or not, they may be charged with being authors of confusion, and destroyers of peace: but by whom? By such as the Reverend Commander in Chief and his rioters. Those Jews in Thessalonica, who "believed not, moved with envy, took unto them," as you did, "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar," &c. (ver. 5.)

Mr. Calvin, likewise, and some others of the Reformers, were never ordained, and yet I never heard that this was made an objection against their preaching, by the Church of Rome; nor were they looked upon as authors of confusion on this account. Nay, both that and our own church, as Mr. Wesley clearly proves,* allow of such unqualified men in the Church at this day: but surely they never would suffer it, if such bad consequences did, as you suggest, follow it: no more are the Methodists, say maliciously what you will, for saying it not proving, guilty of the like.

However, these Methodist preachers "are authors of confusion, open destroyers of the public peace, flying in the face of the very Church they may craftily pretend to follow, occasioning many bold insurrections, which threaten our spiritual government; schismatical rebels against the best of churches; authors of a farther breach into our unhappy divisions: contemners of the great command, 'Six days shalt thou labour,' &c. defiers of all laws, civil and ecclesiastical; professed disrespecters of learning and education, causing a visible ruin of your trade and manufactures, and in short, promoters of a shameful progress of enthusiasm and confusion, not to be paralleled in any other Christian dominion."

*Bombalio! Clangor! Stridor! Taratantarat
Murmur!*

* See his Third Appeal.

What a rattle of abominable lies is here !

Juvenal queries.

Quid Romæ faciam? Mentiri nescio.

But you give the world but too good cause to believe, that you did not leave that old harlot, the mother of lies, on this account. Whatever bad consequences the men of your spirit may maliciously presage, that Methodism may, in time, be attended with, no man that has the least respect for truth, or regard for his own reputation, and hates to be called a liar to his face, can charge it at present with any such evils, as your abandoned conscience has had the impudence to do to his Grace of Canterbury. Several have attempted, indeed, both from the pulpit and press, to cast various scandals and reflections upon this *new way*, as they, like Athenians, Acts xvii. 19, call it; but there is none, we may see, for the purpose, like one of Rome's breeding; it is an old, but true saying,

*Quosemel est imbuta recens servabit Odorem
Testa diu.*

One thing I know, and so may you too, that a liar is a *child of the devil*, by the very same argument that the devil is a *liar, and the father of it*, John viii. 44; and for a parson to lie is an horrible shame. I must tell you, that long before your sermon appeared, not only the archbishop of Canterbury, and several of that eminent order, but his Royal Highness, King George, and all the royal family, together with most of the nobility, gentry, &c. of the land, are, I bless God, better informed of the principles and conduct of the Methodists, than to fear any dangers from them to either church or state.

The next thing you would falsely insinuate against these preachers is, that "It is probable they, for

want of knowing how to read, and their followers also, for want of opportunity, understand not what is imported in the 23d article of our religion." Have you examined many, or any, of these preachers about their reading? Or have you been well informed of it? No: "It is only," you say, probable." A plain proof you know nought of the matter, otherwise your probability would have been a certainty; but, as it is, it is only a mere slander. And as to the ignorance of their followers of the contents of the 23d article, I suppose many of them live in your own parish; and, if so, more shame for you to keep them in the dark, not only as to this, but all the other articles, particularly the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 17th, 18th, 31st, 35th, articles, and the Homilies also, especially the first six of them. Holding these from your people (for what is it else when you never read them to the congregation?) is almost like, and almost as bad, as the clergy of the church of Rome's withholding the holy Scriptures from theirs. May I further observe, in this case, you are not alone; for the reading of the Homilies and Articles has been laid aside so long, by the generality of our clergy, till the people scarcely know whether there be any such things. Many who have gone forty, fifty, or sixty years to church, declare they never heard them read. For want of doing this more frequently, (and, indeed, once a year is seldom enough) our members gradually forget their first principles; false doctrines insensibly creep in amongst us; free-will and formal worship, with a train of heretical tenets, such as those of Arius, Arminius, Pelagius, &c. tending to deism, infidelity, and all irreligion and profaneness, are continually increasing, being fostered by both clergy and people, and the good old path is so utterly lost by us, that now, when the Lord is graciously pleased, instead of punishing us as our apostacy

deserved, to revive the religion of our fore-fathers, even the truth as it is in Jesus, by his servants, in reproach, called Methodists, the common cry is, "What means this new way!" "Fy, fy, away with it, (as the Jews once cried against its author) Nonsense! madness! superstition! enthusiasm! and, which is as silly as all, popery! My neighbour was a very good churchman, but now he is turned Methodist, and follows these illiterate praters: well, well, let him go: my father and grandfather were very good churchmen before me. I will stick to their way, and not turn my back on my church and my baptism, as many now a-days do." The priests preach in like manner; they, (at least some of them, and those but too many) as Jeremiah speaks of the prophets in his day, "prophesy falsely, the people love to have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. v. ult. The answer is ready—perish, without doubt, everlastingly. The disuse, I say, of the Homilies and 39 Articles of our religion, is certainly the chief occasion of all this mischief in our church. Had they been constantly read, it is very probable, that all these evils had not only been effectually prevented, but Methodism also, which is nothing else but the revival of the doctrines contained therein, had never appeared, those books, and what the Methodists preach, being all one. This, let me add, some few of our clergy are so well advised of, that they purposely evade the reading them to the people, for fear of increasing Methodism,* a term very likely made use of by the art of the devil, to prevent the true end of their ministry, I mean the making good Christians and churchmen.

* A certain old clergyman, of my acquaintance, lately deceased, being asked by his curate, if he might read the Homilies in the church, answered, no; for, if he should do so, all the congregation would turn Methodists.

But would these people but read this 23d Article, "this they would find puts an end (say you) to any doubt with respect to the qualifications of preachers." If you have said any thing material against the Methodists in all your discourse, you have said it here; and yet this article only relates to the outward qualification of preachers. I think there is an inward one of so much superior consequence and concern, that where it is wanting, the outward signifies nothing. The bishops, perhaps, do all that can possibly be expected in the usual way, for their own and the church's satisfaction, about the inward qualification, or call, of such as desire to be ordained to the ministry. They ask every deacon, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this office and ministration to serve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" And the candidate replies, "I trust so." But is not the true and common motive, the getting a good living, a curacy, or bread? Was it not yours? I confess it was mine. How easily, and how often, the bishops and the church are imposed upon by such pretences, is but too evident from the lucrous, luxurious lives, of but too many of our brethren, who make their sacred function a mere trade, and gain their godliness. Lay what stress, therefore, you please, what confidence can the people repose, upon this outward qualification?

But, allowing all that you would make of this article, it will not follow, that the Methodists reject it, by preaching without it. The truth is, (and shall I be afraid to speak it?) they cannot receive it. Our Saviour has, but man thinks it not proper to qualify them. Many of them want Latin, Greek, and Philosophy; and, therefore, though they have many far more needful accomplishments, "A good stock of plain, practical,

experimental divinity, christian conversation, zeal towards God our Saviour, indefatigable industry in preaching his gospel, and many seals of their ministry, yet cannot be admitted thereto in the outward form." But what then? If God has ordained them, sent them forth, and owned and blessed their labours, shall they desist from their mission, till outwardly appointed thereto? "What are we, that we should withstand God?" Shall he not send by whom he will send? And when he is pleased to work by such instruments as you are displeased with, shall you or I let it? You may, indeed, do so; but I never will.

What you affirm in the next paragraph, will appear, to every unprejudiced reader, as trifling and false as any thing you have said hitherto. The premises will clear them of that monstrous ignorance you would charge them with, in pretending to belong to our church, if their opposing her articles be your argument to prove it by. Fact proves the very reverse: and the truth is, they actually maintain all the articles of our religion, and, consequently, are true members of our church. How they are guilty (as you assert in the next clause) of an excessive, invincible stubbornness also, on the same account, is to me unintelligible.

In the next paragraph you may seem to have recourse to your logic, and to compromise the substance of the two foregoing pages in the compass and form of a syllogism, thus:

"According to the doctrine of the church of England, in the 23d article, it is not lawful for any man to minister or preach in any congregation, except he be called to that office by men who have public authority."

"Now these pretended preachers are not called to that office by men who have public authority."

"Consequently, it is not lawful," &c.

Now although the major and minor propositions be granted, yet, I hope I have sufficiently proved, that the consequence is utterly false. One thing here I cannot but take notice of, which perhaps may have more in it than a mere quibble. It is in the manner of your expression, whether inadvertently or intentionally, you know best. By the 23d article it is not lawful (you twice over say) to minister and preach in *any* congregation. The article says only (and that twice over) in *the* congregation: now *any* and *the*, methinks, are terms that convey a very different idea to the mind; *the* seems to import the congregation assembled in the church, and this seems to be the natural sense of the article; *any*, a congregation in any wise assembled for a religious purpose: if so, I cannot see how these preachers, by preaching or exhorting in their meetings, either break communion with the church, or contemn and violate, or in any wise infringe upon this article, even your own way of speaking.

“But in order to promote (you proceed) this scheme of confusion and irregularity.” Whether such be the methodistical scheme has hitherto been falsely asserted, but not proved. I own, indeed, confusion is hereby occasioned, but it is by them who have made it the occasion: who those are has been already taken notice of, and shall it therefore be charged any more upon the Methodists than that at Philippi, Acts, chap. xvi. upon Paul and Silas, or that at Athens, Acts, chap. xvii. upon Jason and the brethren, or that other at Ephesus, Acts, chap. xix. upon Paul, Gaius, and Aristarchus?

“But in order to promote this scheme of confusion, some of the leaders have found it necessary to usher in the notion of inspiration; and to persuade a giddy multitude, that learning is no ways requisite to the duties of the ministry.” If you mean human learning, or imagine that the Metho-

dists mean so, (as, indeed, what can be meant else?) I hope they are right. Read but the first and second chapters of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, and there you will find they have a very good precedent for their pretence in St. Paul's example and declaration. "I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. God hath revealed them (the gospel, that is to say, here called, the things which he hath prepared for them that love him) unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God: which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, 5, 10, 13.) Why then should these men's assertion or pretension seem so strange to you; no man can or ought to preach the gospel before he be inspired with the Holy Ghost; or (which is all one) "feels in himself a spirit, by which he is led to preach." For, as the apostle says also, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God," (ibid. ver. 11, 12.) In this objection against the Methodists you manifestly discover the want of this spirit, this *indwelling teacher*, in yourself; and consequently, however you are outwardly qualified, you have no right, authority, or commission at all to preach; any more than those vagabond Jews, exorcists, and the "seven sons of Sceva, the priest,

had to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus," (Acts xix. 13, 14.)

"But let us inquire (in the next words) into the nature of this plea." This, sir, may not be improper. "Now we must distinguish, say you, two kinds of inspiration, an extraordinary one, such as was granted to the apostles." This I allow. And that it was granted them for such like purposes, as you assert in your next paragraph. This I own too. "And that there is an ordinary one, (*i.e.* as men now-a-days phrase it) such as we pray for in our collects of public prayer." This I deny not. But this distinction in this place, sir, is nothing to the purpose: these men affirm, as you yourself say, "That they feel in themselves a spirit, by which they are led to preach;" and that human learning and education are not necessary herein. "This is the plea," as you are pleased to call it. The question is, therefore, whether their pretence to such an inspiration, or motion (whether ordinary or extraordinary) of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel, be reasonable or unreasonable, needful or needless thereto. We have seen, sir, that St. Paul is clearly on their side, making it indispensably needful. But, being St. Paul was one of those apostles, who was endued with the extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the better to enable him to propagate the gospel in the world, and "to remove (what otherwise would have been impossible) the strong prejudices of 4000 years, &c." his authority, I suppose, you will scarcely admit to be an argument to prove the case before us. Let us hear then the sentiments of our church, the ancient fathers quoted by her, and some pious and judicious divines, concerning this matter. Chrysostom, says our church, testifying thereby the approbation of the assertion, declares, "That man's human and worldly wisdom and science are not needful to the

understanding of Scripture; but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them, that with humility and diligence do search; therefore, he that asketh, shall have; and he that seeketh, shall find; and he that knocketh, shall have the door opened.* Eusebius, which is another indication of her mind, "tells, says she, a strange story of a certain learned and subtil philosopher, who, being an extreme adversary of Christ and his doctrine, could by no kind of learning be converted to the faith, but was able to withstand all the arguments that could be brought against him with little or no labour. At length there stands up a poor simple man, of small wit, and less knowledge, one that was reputed amongst the learned as an idiot, and he in God's name, would needs take in hand to dispute with this proud philosopher; the bishops and other learned men standing by, were marvellously abashed at the matter, thinking, that by his doing, they should all be confounded and put to open shame. He notwithstanding goes on, and beginning in the name of the Lord Jesus, brought the philosopher to such a point in the end, contrary to all men's expectation, that he could not choose but acknowledge the power of God in his words, and to give place to the truth." "Now," says our church, "Was not this a miraculous work, that one silly soul of no learning, should do that which many bishops of great knowledge and understanding were never able to bring to pass? So true, says she, is the saying of Bede: Where the Holy Ghost doth instruct and teach, there is no delay at all in learning."†

St. Chrysostom says, "That the wise man is not profited at all by his wisdom, nor the ignorant man

* Homily of Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, 2d part.

† Homily for Whitsunday, 1st part.

prevented by his ignorance from receiving the preaching of the gospel; yea, if I may, says he, assert a wonderful truth, ignorance is more fit and apt to receive the gospel, than wisdom: and a shepherd or ploughman (so far differs this venerable father from you in your margin, page 18) will sooner submit to it than a learned man, who relies on the strength of human wisdom and reason.”*

This very truth the Methodists have abundant experience of daily; I myself can produce some hundreds of instances of it, within the compass of my small ministry; and hope, sir, to see as many more before I die.

But to proceed, Luther affirms, “That it is an error to say, a man cannot be a divine, but by reading Aristotle,” (i. e. by means of learning and education.) “Nay,” says he, in the next words, “He cannot be a divine, except he become one without Aristotle.”†

This same excellent servant of Christ has another strange expression (but which all the Methodists know to be true) which is this, “a man is made a divine by living, yea by dying and damning, and not by instruction, reading, and study.”‡

And again, “the Scriptures, says he, are not to be understood, but by the same spirit, by which they were written: and that spirit can be found no where more present and lively than in those sacred letters which he himself hath written.”§

* Chrys. Hom. 4th, in 1st Epist. ad Corinth.

† Error est dicere, siue Aristotele non sit Theologus: Imo, Theologus non sit, nisi id fiat sine Aristotele. Luth. fol. 1st. page 10th.

‡ Vivendo, imo moriundo, et damnando, sit Theologus, non intelligendo, legendo, aut speculando. Luth. fol. 2. page 57.

§ Scripturæ non nisi eo Spiritu intelligendæ sunt, quo scriptæ sunt. Qui Spiritus nusquam præsentius et vivacius, quam in ipsis sacris suis, quas scripsit, Literis inveniri potest. Luth. fol. 2. page 300.

Zuinglius declares, "we must needs be taught the gospel, not of men, but of God: for that it is the eternal truth, which knows not how to lie, (John 6th chap.) But if you do not firmly believe, that you may be taught of God, human doctrine being utterly rejected, you are still void of true faith. Neither, says he, have I myself invented this. For Hilary also is of the same opinion; but there is no need of his testimony, when we hear that Christ and his apostles were of the same mind."*

Calvin affirms, "that it is necessary, that the same spirit, which spoke by the mouths of the prophets, should pierce into our hearts to persuade us that they faithfully related what was by him delivered to them."†

Bishop Latimer, that blessed martyr, asserts, "that carnal and philosophical understanding of the Scriptures is not that wisdom of God, which is hid from the wise, and revealed to babes."‡

You see, sir, what the church, and these worthy divines say of the necessity of the continual presence of the Holy Ghost, to unfold the sacred writings to the understandings of both teachers and hearers, and how small account they made of learning and education in this matter. The very same, and no other, do the Methodists maintain. This therefore being all they pretend to; all that you say about the extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, the occasion of them in the church, and also their ceasing, for upwards of two pages following, is quite foreign to

* Zuingl. Lib de Certitudine et Veritate Verbi Dei.

† Idem Spiritus, qui per os prophetarum locutus est, in corda nostra penetret, necesse est: Ut persuadeat fideliter protulisse, quod divinitus erat mandatum. Calv. Institut. Lib. 1. cap. 8. sec. 4.

‡ Carnalis et philosophica Scripturarum intelligentia, non est Sapientia Dei, quæ a sapientibus absconditur, parvulis revelatur. Latimer's Answer to Sir Edward Bainton's Letter.

the case of the Methodists, and the very design you would serve by it.

If they affirm no more, what need of such a long harangue of nonsense about ordinary and extraordinary inspiration? If they also have our church on their side for all that they say of their own inspiration, and the insignificance of learning and education, or at least the non-necessity (if I may so speak) of it for a preacher of the Gospel; and if the Holy Ghost makes divines, as is evident from the premises; why should they be thought to blame in asserting that they have a motion of the Spirit to preach? Why should they be charged "with giving way to gloomy imaginations, or raising themselves to such a pitch of enthusiasm?" How can you charge these people of God, these servants of our dear Saviour, without reflecting upon the Holy Ghost and his gracious inspiration, and the sending forth of his ministers, in the foulest manner? I hope, in pity to your poor soul, that your ignorance will screen you, or else I really do not see how you can be clear of the commission of the unpardonable sin. You talk, poor man, of reason, of just reflection, and the firmness of a man; but where appears it? Are you not also at the same time casting dirt upon your own church? Are you not flatly denying, and maliciously ridiculing what she maintains; even that church are not you yourself, "flying in the face of, which you craftily pretend to follow?" Fy for shame.

Your own words, in the latter end of the last paragraph, (page 14th) will allow a very obvious and easy inference in favour of the Methodists as to this very point, viz. that inspiration is, and human learning and education are not, requisite and necessary for a minister of the gospel. For you say that amongst other designs of God in inspiring the apostles in an extraordinary manner, this was one, "to convince the world that the system of the redemption was not a system of learn-

ing." From hence then we may infer, that this system requires not learning and education to support it, and to preach the doctrines of it. One may reasonably suppose that that which has no learning in it, may be understood and explained without learning. We may likewise reasonably suppose, that that same Divine Spirit which gave us this system of the redemption, will himself instruct us in the true sense of it. As our Saviour says, "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you," John xiv. 26.

What you are pleased to say in the next paragraph, and in the marginal note under it, concerning the time of the continuance of miracles, and of their ceasing so soon as the gospel was sufficiently propagated, is quite foreign, as aforesaid, to the subject in hand. What I would only take notice of here is, your roundly asserting that a sufficient propagation of the gospel was the occasion of the ceasing of these extraordinary powers. I own, indeed, that many before you have asserted the same; nor will I altogether deny this to be a reason for it: yet being you take occasion to mention it, and I have frequently read the same in other authors, I must own I have sometimes been induced to question the sufficiency and certainty of the truth of this assertion. I find nothing in the New Testament to countenance it, nor ever found or heard of any thing like it in the ancient writers of the church. St. Paul says, indeed, "whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease," 1 Cor. xiii. 8. but why they shall cease, there is nothing said. I think it is as likely, that the degeneracy of the church into formalities, heresies, superstition, and various abominable errors and corruptions which

began about the middle of the third century, was the occasion of it: for, as every year she thus grew worse down into the fifth, so it is observable, in Arch-deacon Chapman's opinion, that though miracles were then "as public, as clear, and as well attested, yet not as frequent, by far, as in the earlier ages." The fourth century affording fewer miracles than the former, and the fifth than this. The Holy Spirit, who will not always strive with man, it is not unlikely, even from this observation, was grieved with such growing evils, and that the more so, as it was in a time, when the church was so honoured with such extraordinary measures and manifestations of his presence and powers. Therefore he, in mercy, not suddenly, but gradually, withdrew them, as those corruptions gradually prevailed.

In the time of Constantine, though there were very heavy persecutions of the church, yet as is usual, there was a great gospel-work, and a copious in-gathering of souls into her; for the sufferings of Christians have been always found to be the most fruitful seed of the church. Under his protection they fled for succour, and this was doubtless one main occasion of propagating the faith amongst this emperor's subjects. He also gave Christianity all manner of encouragement, and it flourished wonderfully, by this means, at least, for a time, insomuch, that we are told, that he wrote to Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, to procure him "fifty volumes of the Holy Scriptures, writ on parchment, distinct, and legible; and in a volume of such size, as might be carried with greatest ease, for the further instruction of such as had attained to the knowledge of the Christian religion.*" Yet in the latter end of his reign, Christians began to grow carnal, and secure; the gospel work de-

* Euseb. Lib. 4. de Vita Constant.

clined, and philosophy, &c. grew into vogue. This, as the Arch-deacon asserts the continuation of miracles till after this emperor's days, but not long, may in some degree favour the reason abovesaid, of their ceasing; and thus, not only by sin and wickedness, but furthermore, even by human learning also, may we suppose, that the Spirit was quenched, 1 Thess. v. 19, as St. Paul expresses it, and the extraordinary gifts withdrawn.

Your marginal reference, upon lucrative assurance, (pages 18, 19) may next be considered. And here again what a medley of falsities, disingenuous surmises, and groundless slanders, are trumped together, "Poor ignorant men, (say you) who never have been conversant further than the plough; who little know the constitution of any church, may be easily led astray with visionary notions about religion." If you would here be understood of such as are in connection with the Methodists, what I have already shewn concerning their principles, &c. I trust will sufficiently convince any reasonable man, that these words are mere calumny. They will appear to be so far from being ignorant of the constitution of any church, that they both understand and embrace the principles of the true church, the church of Christ, and, consequently, what is really good in any national church under heaven; or if you mean such as run after the Methodists to hear them, but are not joined with them, more pity for them, and more shame for yourself, and such like pastors. Whom concerns it, if not such as us, to teach them better, particularly the principles of our church? This, I say again, is chiefly owing to that shameful negligence so common amongst the clergy, of not reading and expounding the Homilies and 39 Articles, and preaching according thereto; therefore take the blame and shame, and curse, to yourself, if you find that several in your parish, for want of know-

ing the principles of the church they profess to call themselves members of, are become dupes and ninny-hammers to the Methodist preachers; or, rather to speak more properly, and as the truth is, being stirred up by the Holy Ghost, are, like wise men, prudently and seasonably searching for, the true principles of our church indeed, *the truth as it is in Jesus, for the salvation of their souls*, at these men's mouths, for want of proper instructions from their proper guides.

"I imagine (proceed you) their lucre is very small." What may this mean? Where must this lucre come from? Not from their followers. They are willing, indeed, to contribute to each other's relief, when necessity requires, but surely this scarcely can be called lucre. Or, do you think they may expect it from their teachers? Alas! they, in general, have but little to bestow. Herein they are like their poor predecessors, Peter and John. "Gold," said Peter to the cripple at the beautiful gate of the temple, "and silver have I none, but such as I have, give I thee," Acts iii. 6. Or suppose they were able to give them both, must those that "sow unto them spiritual things," 1 Cor. ix. 11, allow them to reap their carnal things also? Or, is it usual with parsons to part with much? No, no, they love "to pass by on the other side," Luke x. 31, 32.

Yet, for all this, their lucre is not so small as you may imagine; for though gain be far from being to them what it is to those, who are *destitute of the truth*, as St. Paul speaks, *their godliness*, 1 Tim. vi. 5, 6, yet their *godliness* is to them *great gain*, Rom. viii. 32. "They are Christ's, and all things are theirs, as they are his," 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. Yea, they have Christ himself, who is doubtlessly an infinitely greater gift than to have all heaven besides. They have remission of sins; "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;"

are Christ's members: God's children: endued with the Holy Ghost: sealed to the day of redemption: and have heaven and eternal glory for their inheritance. They are of age, Sir, ask them; they shall speak for themselves: there are thousands, I praise God for it, amongst us, that are able, and will "be ready to give an answer to every man that shall ask them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear."

In the next words you fall upon Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley. Mr. Whitefield, you are pleased censoriously to charge with what the world do, or may know to be a lie: "That a satisfactory account has not been given us of Mr. Whitefield's disbursements in Georgia, and I am afraid, by his late modest insinuations, in or about the highlands of Scotland, of the want of five hundred pounds," &c.*

* Orphan House in Georgia, Dr.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>grs.</i>
To cash received from the 15th of December, 1738, to the 1st day of January, 1745—6, by public collections, private benefactions, and annual subscriptions, per account	4982	12	8	
To balance super-expended, January 1st, 1746	529	5	1	½
Total	£5511	17	9	½

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>grs.</i>
By cash paid sundries, by particular accounts examined, from the 15th of December, 1738, to January 1st, 1745---6, for buildings, cultivations of lands, infirmary, provisions, wearing apparel, and other incidental expenses	5511	17	9	½

Savannah, in Georgia.

This day personally appeared before us, Henry Parker and William Spencer, bailiffs of Savannah aforesaid, William Woodrooffe, William Evan, and William Russel, of Savannah aforesaid, who being sworn, say, that they have carefully and strictly examined all and singular the accounts, relating to the Orphan-House in Georgia, contained in forty one pages, in a book entitled, *Receipts and Disbursements for the Orphan-House in Georgia*, with the original bills, receipts, and other vouchers, from the 15th day of December, in the year, of our Lord one

Mr. Wesley's fellowship, I am credibly informed, is about an 100*l.* per annum, out of which 30*l.* are deducted by the college for non-residence; the remainder, with the profits arising from the sale of his books, are so entirely laid out in carrying on the great and good work he is engaged in, that he scarcely provides necessaries for himself. This is a true relation of that good man's estate, of whom you are pleased roundly and falsely to affirm, "that he has a better income than most of our bishops." Prove your assertion. "And as to the underhand lay-praters, (as you call them) I have reason to assert, &c. they may be supposed to be in a better way of living than the generality of our vicars and curates." This you likewise would impose upon the world for truth. Pray, make a careful, impartial inquiry, into this matter; you may do it with little trouble, no expense, and in your own parish. What can a

thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight, to the 1st day of January, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and forty-five; and that the monies received on account of the said Orphan-House, amounted to the sum of four thousand, nine hundred and eighty-two pounds twelve shillings and eight-pence sterling, as above; and that it doth not appear that the said Rev. Mr. Whitefield hath converted any part thereof to his own use and property; or charged the said house with any part of his travelling, or other private expenses; but, on the contrary, hath contributed to the said house many valuable benefactions; and that the monies disbursed on account of the said house, amounted to the sum of five thousand five hundred and eleven pounds, seventeen shillings, and nine-pence farthing sterling, as above, which we, in justice to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and the managers of the said house, do hereby declare, appear to us to be faithfully and justly applied to and for the use and benefit of the said house only.

W. WOODROFFE.
W. EVAN.
W. RUSSEL.

Sworn this 16th day of April, 1746, before us, bailiffs of Savannah: in justification whereof we have hereunto fixed our hands and the common seal.

HEN. PARKER.
WM. SPENCER.

penny or two, once a fortnight, from the abler sort, do for them? The poor are excused, and no one obliged to give any thing. Were the generality of vicars and curates no better provided for; were their livings as poor and precarious; and their labours as indispensably painful and irksome, there would be none such striving for them, nor half so many, as, it is to be feared, there are, ready, Ananias and Sapphira like, to lie to the Holy Ghost, in saying, they "are moved," &c. &c. &c.

I shall only take notice of this one thing more in your marginal reference, and that is the offence you take at men attempting to preach, "Who have never been conversant further than the plough. A plough, Sir! an edifying machine! Were you well at it, it would not only best become the name you are pleased to give yourself of *Agricola Candidus*,* but possibly you might receive the first true call to the ministry from thence: a plough may make as good a priest as a popish academy; try the experiment awhile, and who knows but—Should you think it a disgrace to follow a lay-prater from that instrument, remember, for your credit and comfort, that Elisha was ploughing with twelve yokes of oxen, when he was called to succeed Elijah in the prophetic office, 1 Kings xix. 19, 20; and St. Chrysostom, afore observed, has spoken very honourably of a ploughman. Where, then, can be the harm or shame in such a call? However, *Ne sævi, magne Sacerdos*. Be not offended; I only propose it.

(Page 19th) "What still, say you, is a greater misfortune is, they really are unacquainted with the nature of preaching and instructing." Here is another strange proof of these praters insufficiency: but what is it? Why, "Instead of laying down the plain, easy rules of the Christian dispensation,

* In English *George*, alias *Husbandman*, *White*.

they dwell too often [what a reason is this for their insufficiency] on the grand mysteries of *Election* and *Reprobation*, which belong to God." Indeed, sir, it is neither my design nor desire to meddle with this opinion: I profess *the universal scheme*; and believe, though it may be true in the opinion of some, that there are a select number, given by the Father to the Son as the reward of his toil and sufferings, which shall be infallibly brought in, and saved, and so far an absolute, unconditional election, as to such, admitted; yet, that Christ Jesus died for the salvation of all men, and that all men therefore may be saved. The greatest part of this paragraph concerns those Methodists, if they please to answer it, who are in that way of thinking; whom, nevertheless, I own and esteem as brethren in Christ Jesus, and think it my duty, so far, to vindicate them from that paltry, ridiculous aspersion you would fasten on them, as to assert that, whereas some hold the peculiar, some the universal scheme, and others both, there are as eminent and pious divines hold the first, as those who espouse either of the others: and therefore why any, that at this day preach this doctrine, should, on that account, be looked upon to be really unacquainted with the nature of preaching and exhorting, I cannot understand.

If you mean that they make the very life and substance of religion to consist in holding and teaching this doctrine, I must own you are right in affirming that they are unacquainted with the true nature of preaching and instructing; and so they are who place it in any other opinion. Religion, to be sure, is a reality: a man is made by it, what he never was before: opinion herein is mere nothing. There are among the Methodists that hold both this and the other opinions aforesaid; but *have better learned Christ*, I trust, than to repose their hope and confidence of eternal life in their favourite way of thinking; so far from it, that they

own, that though a man be never so tenacious thereof, and orthodox in the faith, he may perish for ever. It is not what we hold, but what we are, that makes us Christians. Hence is it also that difference in opinion with them makes no difference of affection. "As they have put on the Lord Jesus, their care and delight are only to walk in him, and to love as brethren, for dear Jesus' sake."

But then, what is the true nature of preaching and exhorting? What should we, ministers, stewards, if we know what we are, of the manifold grace of God, preach and exhort? In the close of this paragraph are these strange words, "I say nothing of the terms of *new birth and regeneration*, which mean, in plain English, *repentance, a change of heart, a conversion to God?*" But where or what could you have said better? These, and other doctrines, are the substance of what we should preach. Have you done it in saying, "New birth and regeneration are repentance, a change of heart, and conversion to God;" as if new birth and regeneration were unintelligible terms used by these men to amuse and puzzle their hearers with; but every body (which I wish they did) must know what repentance, &c. mean. These terms also, as familiar as you think them to be, are no more intelligible than the other.

"But we all preach up these truths." Some, I hope do. I wish you be one of them. The next words suggest but very small reason to believe it:—"But which, in the mouths of several of these instructors, convey a further idea of *perfect righteousness*, and a state free from sin (evident impossibilities.*)" You take care to preach *a change of heart, and conversion to God*: but such we are to understand, as allows men in the commission of sin, otherwise it is an evident impossibility. Pretty preaching and exhorting, indeed! In what manner, however, the Methodists under-

stand and teach these truths, has been sufficiently shewn in my account of their principles and doctrines. The same, we have seen, are not inconsistent with those of the Church of England; and I heartily embrace them. Would to God all men did so.

Page 21, you hasten to your second proposition, under which you pretend to lay down "such persuasive inferences or observations, as may possibly prevent all this confusion and other notorious ill consequences."

The first is an entreaty "of this set of people, to look into themselves with a little more circumspection and impartiality; to examine the prejudices of their hearts, and what real grounds they have to rebel against the canons and articles of the best of churches." Physician, heal thyself: pray pull the beam out of your own eye. This entreaty concerns not the Methodists, as being no violaters, but asserters, of them, at least in a fuller manner than the generality of her pretended members do.

In the next paragraph, pregnant with a variety of false insinuations, you beg "of them to consider how our dissenting enemies will triumph on this fresh disunion." When you or they can prove that the Methodists occasion a fresh disunion by their present conduct, both you and they may triumph.

"Industrious trade, also, in consequence of so many constant attendances on this new model of worshipping the Creator," (as old, however, as the days of our Lord and his Apostles,) "will become an idle concern." Sir, in my own, in others, and I dare say, in your parish also, the constant attenders on this *new model of worship*, as you falsely call it, are more industrious in their trade and other occupations, and maintain their families better than ever they did before.

"But, sir, I make the following appeal to your

own conscience, whether you do not believe that trade receives more obstruction and real detriment, in one week, from numbers that run a-hunting; from numbers more, that allow themselves, in various idle diversions, an hour, two, or sometimes three daily, for what is vulgarly called a Noon-sit; and from many yet more, who loiter away their precious time, on a market day in your town, in drunkenness, janglings, and divers frivolous matters, than from all that give the constantest attendance to this new model of worship, in the space of two or three months. Admitting these people are in an error, is not their conduct, rather than that of those others, more likely to bring a blessing to your trade? But supposing that this model of worship, so contemptible in your eye, be truly Christian, as I hope, is evidently proved before, and consequently altogether agreeable to the will of God, must not its devotees be those only, in whose hands, by whose means, and for whose sakes God will prosper it?

“Consider,” say you in the next place, “how family affairs will suffer an inevitable neglect.” This is as groundless and disingenuous an insinuation as the last. You seem willing to say any thing, rather than say true. This requires a general proof, for an instance or two, in such a case as this, amounts to no more than only to shew that the bad behaviour of a few may blemish a good cause, and the otherwise irreprovable conduct of the whole. This is a common device of Satan; and you seem, as well in this as in most you have said hitherto, mightily inclined to second *Old Harry*. But you only surmise that family affairs will suffer. Remember, *will* is one tense, and *doth* is another. Do family concerns, therefore, and that in a general way, suffer what you, as boldly, as basely, term an *inevitable neglect*?

“A neglect, you add, which may unfortunately

prevent the education of children." What education is here meant? Is it in *literature*, in *religion*, or (which you seem most concerned for) in *trade*? Have any of the Methodists, who had aforetime designed to have given their children a liberal education, taken them from school since, or neglected to keep them constantly thereto: or do they not mind to bring them up in religion, in the *nurture and admonition*, and to the praise and glory of the Lord, so well as before. I doubt not, but upon an ingenuous inquiry, you will find that they do it much better; yea, many will be found to do this now, that never did, nor perhaps never would have done it, had they never followed the Methodists. How many in your parish take the same care that these people do in this respect? Or, lastly, do they not in general (for an instance or two, as aforesaid, can be no exception) teach and inure their children to trade, and industry therein, as well, if not much better, now than before? Surely, then, Methodism can, in this respect, be no occasion of the *ruin of a rising generation*. Away, then, for shame, with such malicious *prognostications* and malevolent *may be's*.

The substance of your next paragraph might be readily granted:—The Methodists deny not learning and education to be useful for the purposes you mention, or that such evils, as you intimate, might possibly attend the want of them. Something not unlike this has been in hand before: but is this, that you have said in this place, all that you intend by learning and education? No; we are to guess at something that better connects with the rest of your discourse; and that we must gather out of the margin; namely, that they despise learning and education for the uses of "demonstratively proving the veracity of the Holy Scriptures; reconciling their apparent contradictions; or explaining in a masterly taste, like a worthy teacher,

the sacraments and the new covenant. At this distance of time, idioms also, customs, and national proverbs are to be well known and digested for these purposes; but how, without the above-mentioned qualifications." The Methodists despise not learning on these accounts either.

This they believe, that learning, even on these accounts, is not as necessary in these days as formerly: There are so many comments and expositions upon the Old and New Testament, done by the most able authors, both ancient and modern, that little more can or need be added for the understanding of the sacred text. I think there are far too many already extant, insomuch that thereby the genuine sense, in many places, is rather obscured than illustrated; and this, I should think, should be a sufficient warning, by the bye, not to lean too much upon human learning and education in these respects: for which reason the Methodists, as many truly wise and pious men have done before them, prefer experimental divinity to all *letter-learned performances*, and esteem it to be the best spring to practical religion. The Holy Ghost alone teaches, and the heart learns this. The other, man teaches, and the head receives. In this, all our wisest rabbies and most sage philosophers are mere fools; and the most illiterate Methodists, brought up at the *loom* or *anvil*, quite outstrip and confound them, as I have before shewn. This learning, not all the universities in Europe are able to teach; and yet no one without this, notwithstanding the advantage of the most eminent natural and acquired parts, ought to assume the office of the priesthood. This has been already taken notice of.

"Believe me," say you in the next words; (but who can believe you after so many palpable untruths?) but, "believe me, the pretence of religion has perhaps occasioned the greatest calamities, and

strove as a cloak, even to the most inhuman murders and plunderings, the most insatiable avarice and lust." But which way, and by whom? This I have already shewn. I shall only add, that in this, not only I, but any one, may believe you. You pretend to religion, and so do all the banditti you lately headed, and at the same time have thoroughly convinced the world, what mischief and confusion pretences to religion can make. You herein have full well proved, Sir, the old proverb to be true, *that a parson's preaching and life should be all of a piece.*

Therefore, it can be no reflection upon your character, I hope, to quote your own words in the close of your sermon, in this place. "I must beg leave to assure you, that the sense of duty I owe to my God," (to my God too) does not your text tell you, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." Pray, who is your God then? Surely not this God: the God you serve, if we may conjecture from your conduct, is a god of confusion: and who can this be but the devil? who, you know, is for this very reason called *Diabolus*, (*a scatterer abroad, or maker of confusion*) by the Greeks and Romans. But, however, "I must beg leave to assure you, that the sense of duty I owe to my God, the obligations I am under, not only as a regular minister, (regular indeed!) but as a rational inhabitant (rational, there again! *Bisum tenetis, Amici?*) to see honest industry flourish, instead of superstitious idleness, will always give me true courage (poor man!) to oppose, to the uttermost, attempts (with your leave, Sir, by the Methodists unattempted) so unnatural and unjust." Thou art the man! That the Methodists are a disorderly people, you have, indeed, over and over asserted, but never once proved. May it not, therefore, be advisable to take your own counsel, "Let us beware, lest we take superstition for religion, the

degradation of human reason, the weakness of the brain, a dream of the night, (and, let me add, *a drum-head at Colne-Cross*) terrifying indeed, where there is no danger."

"True religion, you proceed, being a system of real reason, will always stand the test of a judicious inquiry." So it is, and so it will; and to this I freely submit my account of the methodistical doctrines. But one thing seems all along wanting on your part, and that is, to let us know what you call *true religion*; you have guessed well; indeed; at the blessings attending it, but whilst that is wanting, this avails little.

In page the 20th, one might have thought, that *repentance, a change of heart, and conversion to God*, had meant at least, what most moralists make of them, a turning from an evil to a good life. But how far your conceptions of religion come short even of this, the next paragraph informs us: "True religion was never intended to sour our tempers, to give us a melancholy turn of countenance, or even to deprive us of the decent conveniences and innocent amusements of life." The very language of an epicure! The dialect of a rake or debauchee! Doctrines adapted to the very purpose of promoting licentiousness and libertinism. It is said, I confess, on all sides, that the Methodists *preach people beside their senses*. But you, it seems, choose another way, viz. with the "priests of Israel, to heal the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly," Jer. vi. 14. To you, we are to suppose, it is a grievous offence, and an egregious error, that these praters teach, that no one must frequent ale-houses, fairs, pastimes, or diversions of any sort, upon pain of eternal damnation; and that if men hunt, game, or play at tables, cards, or dice, &c. they must go to hell. "By this means they sour men's tempers, and deprive them of the decent conveniences and innocent amusements of

life." But you say also in these cases, "peace, peace, when there is no peace," (ibid.) And thus, as it is with the people, so it is with the priest. By this we may plainly see what a preacher of repentance and conversion you are, or rather how little you are acquainted with either. Had you ever experienced aright the weight and burden of sin, the irksomeness of guilt, a wounded spirit, the wrath of God, the condemnation and curse of his law, and the fearful apprehensions of judgment to come: had you ever felt what David, Psal. vi. 6; the publican, Luke xviii. 13; or the three thousand, Acts ii. 37; or the jailor did, Acts xvi. 29, you would scorn to talk so wildly of a soured temper, or a melancholy turn of countenance. Conviction, or, which is the same thing, repentance, (to which I have spoken before) is necessarily attended, I must tell you, with such a temper. Whoever are strangers to this, are strangers to true conversion and religion; but such as have experienced these things, can no more dispense with what, it is but too evident, you call decent conveniences or innocent amusements, no, not a jest or vain word, than they can with the grossest act of murder or adultery; and yet you have affirmed, "We (as if you did) preach up repentance, &c. as highly necessary."

You proceed, "Rather let us look on the great Deity, as the compassionate Father of mankind." Strange divinity! These words, if they mean any thing, mean what is most impious and profane. You represent that Holy One, "who is of purer eyes than to behold evil," Hab. i. 13, as a compassionate father to such as live in it; as one that connives at innocent diversions, as you term it, and will never punish for them, though nothing be more certain from his own words than the contrary, Eccles xi. 9. This delusory doctrine has caused many poor men, on a dying bed, to

look back on a life thus spent, as no bad one, or of the least dangerous consequence to their eternal welfare; nor are they, as they ought to be, exhorted by their ghostly fathers to repent thereof, upon pain of their everlasting ruin. Or should they conscientiously or cursorily mention these follies, it is commonly passed by with an, "Oh! God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss; he will never enter into judgment with you on these accounts: they are frivolous trifles, or rather, such beneficial recreations to human life, as God does rather approve, than blame us for." Yes, O blind leader of such blind, the Almighty, wise, and just God, I again aver, will as certainly, and everlastingly, if not as severely, punish the smallest vanity or diversion, as the most heinous and atrocious parricide. Good Lord, deliver us from such soul-physicians as these be! How must Satan and hell be beholden to such! What numbers, may we greatly fear, are thus decoyed into that "bottomless lake, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is never quenched," Mark ix. 44. It is shocking to hear, that that very compassion and mercy, which principally moved God "to send his only begotten Son into the world," to save us from eternal death, should be made use of as an argument to involve us in it. Thus much in answer to your sermon. If any thing may seem to be spoken with too much warmth, impute it not to anger, or want in any wise of charity and benevolence, but to a well-meant zeal for the "truth as it is in Jesus," and its votaries: if you will not, you are welcome to do as you please. What I desire to add more is, only a few general observations upon Methodism, and a word of exhortation to all sorts of people.

Methodism, so called by way of reproach, is a complete system of gospel truths, and a perfect summary of reformation-principles. The more

ingenuously and attentively men search into it, the more evident and undeniable will this appear. It therefore needs must, and accordingly does, gain the esteem and approbation of many of every denomination. Notwithstanding the general opposition made to it on all sides, it daily gains ground. Its progress, considering how few years it is since its first appearance, is surprisingly extensive. It has all the marks and indications of a divine work. It ascribes the total of a man's salvation to the mere free grace of God, the sole merits of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Ghost. It makes faith the instrument, Jesus's blood the cause, and the Spirit the discover of our justification. It attributes our sanctification wholly to this heavenly paraclete. It makes Christ the Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith. Its sect is every where spoken against. It holds forth, not the form merely, but the life and power of godliness also.

Now may we hope, Sir, that the knowledge of the Lord, as the Prophet speaks, or righteousness, even the righteousness which is of God, Rom. x. 3, Phil. iii. 9, by faith in Christ, and "love and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17, the pure religion of the anointed one, "shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea," Isa. xi. 9. Nay, from the wonderful circumstances of this blessed work, the general disposition of mankind to listen to it, as aforesaid, and the free uninterrupted access it has made into various kingdoms and countries of late, there is reason to believe that, in St. Paul's words, the salvation (now) of the Gentiles will provoke the Jews to jealousy, to forebode that the time of their call to embrace the gospel is near at hand, and that that blindness in part, as the Apostle speaks, "which hath happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, (and this seems to be the period for it)

is now near an end; and so all Israel shall be saved, Rom. xi. 25, 26.

I desire leave, in the last place, to give a word or two of advice and exhortation to all sorts of people. And to you first I address myself, who are already Christians, that is, "know our Saviour, have peace with God through Him, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Adhere steadfastly to our Established Church all your days, if you have been brought up in her communion; for this, you know, is altogether consistent with your principles. A true Methodist is no other than a true member of the Church; nor does Methodism make any schismatics. Are you dissenters? It is still the same. You are now more than ever established upon the main plan of your respective denomination, and therefore ought not to separate yourselves from your own communion, in any wise, on this account; but be sure you neglect not your band, class, or society-meetings. Attend public exhortations as constantly as you possibly can; and plead no excuses for your absence on any of these occasions, but such as your conscience tells you, God will dispense with at the great day of judgment. Place not religion in opinion, nor imagine that what you know, but what you are, if you are what you should be, declares you a Christian: the former makes you miserable, the latter happy indeed. Faith, remember, is feeling; religion a reality, and the word of God the soul's food and nourishment. Hear it, therefore, for soul-feeding; meditate much upon what you read and hear. Meditation may be called the soul's chewing; and, as experience tells us, that the better we chew our meat, the better it digests and nourishes our bodies, in like manner through close meditation does the word benefit our souls. Never think you have heard it to purpose, if you feel not the power and

virtue of it in your hearts. One of our Homilies speaks after this manner, "Not he that reads most, profits most; but he, that is most turned into what he reads, and is most inspired with the Holy Ghost."* Was not this the holy psalmist's practice and experience? (Ps. 119.) Meditate frequently upon your natural and fallen estate, and every miserable circumstance thereof; but particularly upon the life, death, and sufferings of our dear Saviour. These meditations will conduce much to the humbling of your hearts, (a thing, we are, notwithstanding the advantages of grace, too remiss in) and to the glory of God, who hath done so great things for your souls, through his only begotten and beloved Son: yea, the more you do thus, the more you will discover of the abundant grace and mercy of God in pardoning you, and the more will your love and obedience increase towards him. Divert yourselves, especially at such intervals as you are freest from conflict and temptation, as the apostle directs, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, (Col. iii. 16.) For if any be merry, says St. James, let him sing psalms, (Jam. v. 13.) Prayer also must be a continual exercise. Remember the apostle's advice, "be instant in prayer," (Rom. xii. 12,) "continue in the same," (Col. iv. 2,) and that without ceasing, (1 Thes. v. 17,) especially in seasons of temptation: yea, even then, when, as it often happens, you feel the greatest indifference and aversion to it. Prayer must not be declined at such times by any means: it is one most intimate part of your communion with God; as well as a "making your requests known to him," (Phil. iv. 6.) And if the devil can interrupt and break off this intercourse with the Almighty, he will, because he very well

* Hom. of Exhortation to reading the Holy Scripture, part 1st.

knows that a declension from prayer is always attended with a suspension of blessings; and that you have scarcely more need of the divine assistance at any time than now. And though the indifference I am here speaking of, be never so great, insomuch that you can hardly utter a word with your lips, nor perceive the least motion of your heart thereto; yet, the soul, if you observe attentively, is all the while uneasy, grieves that it cannot pray, yea, grieves that it cannot grieve to pray, and languishes for want of enlargement therein. This uneasiness, you may assure yourselves, is the spirit's *connatus*, if I may so speak, to pray; and this *connatus*, or anxious desire after liberty to prayer, is indeed the best of prayer. Stick fast to it, hold you there, and all will be well: your intercourse with heaven shall shortly be opened again. Observe all the ordinances of God diligently, and particularly that of the Lord's supper. A present blessing attends it. If you sit down in faith to the holy table, you then as really eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, spiritually, as you do the bread and wipe bodily: and the same nutritive and refreshing virtue will you experience the soul to receive from those, as the body from these.

Consider seriously the manifold and mighty obligations you are indispensably under to live to the praise and the pleasure of that all-great, all-glorious, and all-gracious, Lord and Saviour, who hath done so great things for you, as through his righteousness and blood-shedding only, to redeem you from all your iniquities; to ransom you from eternal wrath and damnation; to seal you with "his Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption, (Epes. iv. 30,) to sanctify and cleanse you thereby from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, to perfect holiness in the fear of God, (2 Cor. vii. 1,) and to make you meet to be partakers of the inhe-

ritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) O, I beseech you again and again, consider and lay deeply to heart, how indispensably obliged you are, on these and innumerable other important accounts, by thought, word, and deed, in heart, lip, and life, to live solely to his glory all the days of your "appointed time, until your change come." Remember, dear brethren and sisters, remember, "you have laid your hands to Christ's plough," and are by no means "to look back," (Luke ix. 62.) If you do, his own mouth has expressly declared, "that you are not very fit for his kingdom," (ibid.) Pray "remember Lot's wife," (Luke xvii. 32,) and that "it is he alone, that endureth to the end, shall be saved," (Matt. x. 22.) Can any thing be more reasonable than to devote the small remains of life allotted us here, to his service? Who has of mere mercy and free grace, given us to be his only beloved Son's members, his own children and the heirs of eternal glory, and that even in "his own presence where there is fulness of joy, at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore," (Ps. xvi. 11.) "If ye love me, keep my commandments," (John xiv. 15.) Love is the main-spring of obedience; and this must consist not only in doing, but in suffering. Bear the cross therefore, and follow your Lord, counting it all joy to suffer for his sake: think it not strange concerning the "fiery trial that must try you." Our Lord, the glorious captain of our salvation, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is (now) set down at the right hand of the throne of God, (Heb. xii. 2.) Marvel not, my brethren, (says St. John) if the world hate you," (1 John iii. 13.) It is a sign you are the children of God, if the world hate you for the profession of Christ. If the world hate you, says our Saviour, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world

would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you, (John xv. 18, 19.)

And as you are desired to testify your love to our dear Saviour, not only by doing, but suffering all things for his precious name and blessing of the gospel's sake, so be careful to give no offence to any man, that the truth as it is in Jesus, be not blamed. There is nothing more scandalous and deservedly ridiculous than a disorderly professor of the gospel. One single instance of immorality in such a one, does not only bring his whole conversation to be suspected of hypocrisy, but a general contempt upon our most holy religion, and upon all that sincerely and irreproveably profess it. Indeed, the evils consequent upon our miscarriages are both many and monstrous; and therefore as you value God's love to you, and tender his honour, I beseech you, I most earnestly beseech you, "so to let your light shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven," (Matt. v. 16.) Consider, not only the reasons I have just before offered, to enforce your obligation to such circumspection, but consider withal, that the eye of both God and men are upon you continually: he looks at the heart, and they at the habit. In a word therefore, give all diligence. (In the words of St. Peter) I beg of you "to add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you, that ye shall not be barren, or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true; whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever

things are of good report : if there be any virtue, says St. Paul, and if there be any praise, think of these things : these things which ye have both learned and received, and heard, and seen, do, and the God of all peace shall, undoubtedly, be with you," (Phil. iv. 8, 9.)

My next advice is to you, who are awaked to see your sin, and shame, and guilt before God, are heavy laden with the sense of it, and have not yet found deliverance, rest, and peace, through faith in the blood of Jesus. Though you have not yet "tasted," in the psalmist's words, "that the Lord is gracious," this should not discourage you. Your present distress of soul is the work of the Lord. To him alone it belongs to convince, as well as to convert ; conviction is not only necessarily previous to conversion, but expressly attributed to the office of the Holy Spirit. "When the Comforter is come, says our Lord, he will reprove (in the margin of our bible, convince) the world of sin, (first, then) of righteousness, and (lastly) of judgment, (John xvi. 11.) Be sure, if you *feel* but the least concern upon your conscience for sin, your *day of grace is not yet past*," that that dear Lord, who takes pleasure in shewing mercy, still waits to be gracious, and that the deeper you are affected with compunction, terror, and despair, the nearer are you to the day of your redemption. Take the following counsel in your present circumstances. Be diligent in the use of the means of grace ; give as constant attendance as you possibly can, to hearing the word and exhortation ; meditate much, and digest well what you hear ; do the same by what you read ; converse chiefly with such as are "justified, and have received remission of their sins," which is the same thing, as afore shewn, or, in St. Paul's words, "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans v. 1.)

These men, as experience, in this as well as other matters, is allowed to be the best master, will always give you the best instruction and most satisfaction. Indeed, only such can do it: it is in no man's power besides: therefore, I urge it again, be much in the company, and always upon the inquiry, of such people. The reason is obvious, because they have been in the very same, or the like condition before you.

If, as above hinted, your convictions increase, and your condition grows apparently more and more desperate, insomuch that at last you are brought to the very brink of despair, feeling the wrath of a just God heavy upon you, all prospect of mercy and salvation vanished, and no signs or glimpse of any thing remaining, save a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation; you are then upon the threshold of mercy, and "the day of your redemption draweth nigh." Shortly shall you hear the Saviour's voice: "Sons, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you," (Mark ii. 5.) Shortly shall you experience the life, virtue, and comfort of the Redeemer's blood in your heart. Shortly shall you receive the Holy Ghost, which shall dwell "with you and in you for ever," (John xiv. 16, 17,) if you "grieve him not," (Ephes. iv. 30.) In a word, shortly shall you see Christ's kingdom set up within you; and that it is, as St. Paul hath experimentally and truly affirmed, "Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xiv. 17,) and shall rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, (Rom. v. 2.) In this condition, you will find yourselves frequently and severely tempted by the devil with blasphemous and evil thoughts and imaginations, which will greatly distress your souls, and add no little to the weight of your convictions. Enemies will be raised against you on all sides; your bosom friends will become your most impla-

cable adversaries; your bitterest "foes will be those of your own household," and they that "eat of your bread, will lift up their heel against you." They will call you melancholics and mad men, and what not, and "say all manner of evil against you." All this originally proceeds from the artifice and malice of the devil. And no wonder, because, he perceives, he is now in danger of losing you. Sometimes Satan will take another way of deluding you, and that is, by infusing into your breasts a fear of scandal, and shame, and suffering, for the sake of what you feel; and at other times he will labour to delude you, by exciting now and then strong desires after the good things and pleasures of the world, in your minds. And one device more, among the many that might be named, which I shall mention, as made use of by the wicked one, in this case is the flattery and friendly speeches of your friends and relations. A father's fine promises, and a mother's or a wife's tears, are dangerous wiles, and but too often fatal delusions. In the beginning of your convictions, before your hearts are deeply wrought upon, any of the devices aforesaid, especially the two last, as Satan very well knows, will easily stifle and quench your concern, and draw you back. Nor are you ever safe, though the danger may be somewhat less, in deeper conviction, so long as you are short of a sure hope and consolation in Christ.

Pray be careful and watch over yourselves herein. You are in the way to Christ. O that you may come forward, however "labouring and heavy laden," till Christ, as he hath graciously promised, (and can he lie?) "shall give you rest!" (Matt. xi. 28.) If you draw back, it is ten to one you are never called again; my soul, says the Lord, "shall have no pleasure in him," (Heb. x. 38.) Woe be to you, I had almost said; better were it

for you, (may you yourselves fear,) *if you had never been born.* Pray "remember Lot's wife," (Luke xvii. 32.)

I address myself, in the next place, to the moral and virtuous part of mankind. These generally make themselves, as I have afore shewn, their own saviour, and their good lives meritorious of eternal salvation and happiness: and they are reducible to two sorts; either such as have always lived in a *strictly devout and religious way*, or are lately turned to this from an *irreligious and vicious* life: but whether be the case, the consequence is much the same. You are all in the same common danger of damnation, if the Gospel be true; for this only sets forth Jesus Christ for the sole way, truth, and life, (John xiv. 6,) assuring us, "that no man can come to the Father, but by him; and that there is none other name under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved," (John xiv. 6, Acts iv. 12.) Every one, therefore, and particularly such as these, that trust in any other thing, shall be damned. Alas, you think you are converts and Christians! I have said enough, I hope, in its place, before, to convince you of your error. In a word, you that have been virtuously disposed from your youth up, imagine you never needed a conversion; and you that have reformed, conceit that conversion is nothing but turning from a bad to a good life. The true and only conversion, be it known unto you, is turning to the Lord. When you turn from a vicious to a virtuous course, you are but turned from the service of the devil to the service of yourselves; that is, from one devil to another. For of us, who think we do good, "there is none that doth so, no not one;" (Psal. xiv. 1.) "Are we not naturally earthly, sensual, devilish?" (James iii. 15.) "Are not all our righteousness filthy rags?" (Isa. lxxv. 6.) And what is it but to serve ourselves, when we hope thereby to save ourselves? And what is it

but to save ourselves, when we look in any wise to obtain remission of sins, the favour of God, and eternal life by what we do? Is it not evident, as afore shewn, that such good livers are in as bad, if not in a far more dangerous and damnable state, than those who serve the devil in all manner of sensuality and vice. This cannot, but the other may blind you; and the more blind a man's condition makes him, the more dangerous and fatal may it prove to him. Thus it was with the Scribes and Pharisees of old; and thus it is with you, and all of your way of thinking. Pray reflect seriously upon your case: read and examine diligently the Gospel, and next to it, the Homilies, Thirty-nine Articles, Catechism, and Liturgy of our Church; or, if you are Dissenters, your own Catechisms, &c. You will find, as the Apostle says, "You can neither will nor do," (Phil. ii. 13;) and that whether you once sin actually, or never, you are damned for ever. Hear these preachers, and all that bring the same message with them. It is sound, orthodox, and evangelical, and you shall never perish. One main part of it being to turn from your own righteousness, to lay hold of the Saviour's righteousness, and so to be saved. "Go ye," I pray, "and do likewise."

My last advice is to the wicked, vicious, and profane sort. "If the righteous can (so) scarcely be saved, where," as the holy Apostle asks, "shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" (1 Pet. iv. 18.) Though they have a chimerical gourd to cover them; yet you, alas, have nought at all to trust to, or boast of: you must be obliged to plead guilty at first to the charge of an all-righteous and just Judge, stand speechless, and tacitly submit to a sentence of punishment, not only eternal, but adequate to all your sins, at the last day? and how soon this, or the hour of death may surprise you, you know not; when this punishment, "snares, fire, and brimstone, storm, and tempest, shall be

rained on you for ever," (Psal. xi. 16.) Pray "how will you dwell in eternal fires? How will you dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isai. xxxiii. 14.) Consider further, when you have dwelt therein as many thousands of years as there have been blades of grass upon the earth from the beginning of the world to the present day, or to the end of it, you are not one moment nearer to the end of your torment than when you were at first cast into it. Consider withal, the intenseness as well as duration thereof. All this time your souls and bodies must lie in those flames, a thousand times hotter than the hottest bar of iron in a forge. O consider this, all you that indulge yourselves "in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, (1 John ii. 16,) who are (continually) making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, (Rom. xiii. 14,) and working all uncleanness with greediness," (Heb. xi. 25.) Are you content to "enjoy (these) pleasures of sin for a season," (Eph. iv. 19,) and then "to consume, perish, and come to a fearful end," (Jer. xlv. 27.) Consider again how our gracious God, rather than see *iniquity* become thus your *eternal ruin*, hath sent his Son, his only begotten Son, into the world to save sinners, the chief of sinners, repenting and believing in him. Consider seriously what this dear Redeemer endured from his *cradle* to his *cross*, when he bore the *iniquities of you all*. And in this Saviour, consider how tenderly and compassionately he calls by the Prophet, "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call ye upon him, while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon," (Isai. lv. 6, 7.)

Repent, and believe the Gospel, (Mark i. 15.) Believe and repent (and what this repentance is, I

hope you may learn from the premises) — “and ye shall be saved,” (Acts xvi. 31.) If, repenting, ye believe in the “blood and righteousness of our Saviour,” that instant, though you have been never so vilely wicked before, “ye shall be saved;” that is, your sins shall be forgiven that moment, and everlasting glory shall be your portion and your happiness; when those who seek for salvation through a diligent and circumspect obedience to the law of God, and resolutely labour to fulfil it to that very end, shall perish for ever. Has not the Lord spoken it? “Publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of God before such,” (Math. xxi. 31.) And again, “I say unto you, that many shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but (mark the next words) the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” (Math. viii. 11, 12, Luke xiii. 28, 29.)

