

have stated the Questions accurately, which you would dispute, and have well opened the terms, and have given us your Arguments clearly, and answered theirs; whereas he that readeth your Book from end to end, will not easily find what is the true Controversie, much less orderly and accurately stated. And the Arguments of the Dissenters are mostly passed by, and Arguments of your own are hardly to be perceived. But instead of all this, mens words which sound not well, are recited, and they will say that a supercilious continued stile of scorn, doth pass for argument or confutation. Indeed all that you had to do was to have opened in what sense Christs Righteousness is or is not imputed to us. And the sum of all the Controversie is but this, Whether Christ fulfilled the Law and suffered, (not only thereby to merit all that Pardon, Justification, Adoption, Spirit and Glory, which is given by the new Covenant as you and I hold; but also) in the *person* of each elected sinner, *in sensu legali*, (though not in *his natural person*) so that we are justified by the *Law of innocency, and its works*, which saith, *obey perfectly and live*, as having fulfilled it all in and by Christ? This you and I deny. And how much otherwise doth *Watson de reconcil. Bradshaw, Gataker, John Goodwin*, dispute this, than you do as to the mode? To come out after such Learned Disputations, and think that the contemptuous reciting of four mens words should do the business, will not convince Dissenters.

7. They will call it livor or malignity, that you fall upon that which is blameless with the rest; what error or harm is in Mr. *Vincent's* words, when St. Paul hath much the like, *I have espoused you to one husband*; and the Prophet, *Thy maker is thy husband*? How did Mr. *Watson* offend by allegorizing? Do you not know that (besides the *Canticles*, and many other Scriptures) abundance of the ancient fathers do the like, and who reproacheth them for it? Almost all of them, I think, fall under this censure. And there are many of Dr. *Owens* words blameless which you blame, to say nothing of the rest.

18. They will say it is profane to make the very words of Scripture used by them, part of your reproachful recitation? and many of them not by them interpreted in any ill sense. But if they were, the sense only should have been blamed. And your talk of *marrying Christ by the Liturgy and the Ring*, will seem no better; and against the Apostle as well as them. And you distinguish not between the Allegorizers Explication and Applications. Do you think they use
not

not to open the nature of faith in proper terms, as well as you? But in Applicatory amplifications for the affections, what Fathers, what *Papists*, what *Protestants* do not allegorize? what false Doctrine can you prove that ever Mr. *Vincent* taught? &c. —

9. You must answer them that will say that you Subscribe one year, and write against the Doctrine of the Church which you subscribe to, another? while those that you oppose are thought worthy of silencing for not Subscribing. For they think the 11th, 12th, and 13th Articles of the Church are opposed by you, and the Doctrine of the Homilies, (and of the Apology of the Church.)

10. The worst of all is, that really it is injurious to the Readers that most applaud your Books, while it killeth their love, and teacheth them unjustly to condemn and hate their Brethren, if not to further their afflictions; it seeming to Preach Christ in envy and strife to add affliction to the afflicted; that they that come lately out of the Common Goals among Rogues might be thought meeter for such places than for the Church or Pulpit.

And they will say, that while you accuse others of dangerous Doctrines, your Doctrine is so unsound on the other extrem, as to be downright *Heresie*, and to subvert all *Christianity and Religion in the three Essential Articles of which I spake to you.*

In denying *God as our God*, while you say, *That the love we owe to God and Christ, is no other than Gratitude, because God loved us first.* And, *Could we be supposed to love God — purely for himself — it would not be accepted, because this is not a reasonable love, but an unaccountable and foolish passion.* Dreadful! it is such as the love of Christs Glorified humanity to his Father, if not of Angels and all perfect Spirits, or certainly the highest and perfectest part of it; and is that an unreasonable and foolish passion!

So P. 414. *A goodness which is considered as doing no good, is so far from being the object of our love, that it is not the object of our understanding.* But doubtless, though none denieth but we must love God as our Benefactor; yet of him, and by him, and to him are all things; and it is essential to God, relatively considered as our God, to be the *Causa prima efficiens, causa suprema regens, & causa finalis ultimates ultimus.* And for our selves to be *Alpha* or *Omega*, our own first or last cause, is to be Gods or Idols to our selves. God made all things for himself; and for his pleasure or will (as by his will) they are and were created. God is intelligible as before all his benefits or works; and he that knoweth him not as good in himself,

antecedently to all Communicated goodness, or at least (if he think the World eternal) distinct from it, yea as infinitely essentially good beyond all created goodness, and his relation thereto, knoweth no God. And he that knoweth not that *Goodness* as *Goodness* is *Amiability*, though it were not either *our felicity*, or a *means there-to*, hath lost the knowledge of humanity. An Angel, or the wisest and holiest man in the world were amiable, though he were in solitude, and never did good to me or any one. Should God place one Angel in the state of perfectest love to himself, and not useful to any fellow-creature, that Angel were amiable. That man that *loveth God only* for doing him good, (or other men) loveth him as a dog loveth his master for feeding him, and as the master loveth his dog for serving him; that is, he loveth himself best, and God but for himself, (or others), for the End, as such, is ever loved better than the Means as such. Thus God is feigned to be finally for the Creature, and not the Creature for God. Or to be the *finis cuius*, and man the *finis cui*. Dr. Stern the Physician of *Dublin*, hath such a whimzie in his *Medela anime*, that man is Gods end, and not God mans end, or his own; but it is by ignorance of the *ratio finis*, and a false conceit, that because God needeth us not, he cannot be our End; when his will as efficient is the beginning, and his will as fulfilled and terminative is the end of all the Creatures. He that maketh himself his *finis ultimate ultimus*, and God the means, changeth places with God in his imagination. Twenty Schoolmen on the Questions *de Amore Dei & de Beatitudine*, will tell you how unanimously *Papists* concur with Protestants in this: yea, when all the difficulty is whether, *Amor concupiscentia quo Deum ut nobismet ipsis bonum amamus*, be any part of our *finis ultimus*, though not the chief part; most say that it is not so much as any part, but a subordinate act; of which among others see at large *Agidius de Presentatione de Anima Beatitudine*. And almost all say that it is but an inferior part of the *finis ultimus*, and no part of the *finis ultimate ultimus*; that is, it is conjunct with our most perfective act, but is not it self: I feel in my self, 1. That it is my sensitive and natural powers which have a necessary inclination to self preservation for the ends of this life. 2. And that it is my sinful state that hath subjected my reason to this love of self and life, and made it inordinate. 3. But that so far as reason is reason, as I am wholly Gods propriety, I am not valuable but for him, and that his will (which is his interest) is the Rule of all created Goodness; and that if I had not rather be annihilated than the World,

or

or this Kingdom, or thousands should be so (yea or any more excellent than my self), or if I would not die to save my King or County, it would be but the prevalency of sense and nature against Reason. And that God is more amiable than King or Country, or the world.

2. I said so much to you of the second Article, that I will say but this: The knowledg of Christs Person (which is called by them *Our acquaintance with him*), is life eternal in part; and most Heresies condemn'd by your Councils have been errors about Christs Person. And undoubtedly as we must take a man for our Phylician, by consent, before we can take his Medicines; and for our King before we can obey him, and our Tutor before we learn of him, &c. so Christianity and Baptism it self, is a taking Christ for our Lord and Saviour; and to deny this, is to Unchristen us. Which as you do not, so you should not seem to do. Nor had you need to strain and pervert many Texts as you have done, by saying that by Christ is meant the Gospel, when the Gospel in many is but connoted, as Christs work.

3. And *Pag.* 389. to say that the Testimony of the Spirit concerns the general adoption of Christians for the Sons of God, not to testifie to any particular man that he is a good Christian, or in a state of Grace; seemeth a denial, of the third Article of our Baptism; and of the plain Scripture, and of all mens comfort in this world. As my reason beareth witness that I am a man, 1. *Constitutive, Objective, per modum evidentie.* 2. *Et active seipsam discernendo, & argumentative probando*, so doth the Spirit testifie the Sanctification of the Sanctified. If a man cannot know that he is a sincere Christian, he can have no knowledg that any promise to such belongeth to him any more than to an Infidel or wicked man. If he know it, how shall it be but by the indwelling operating Spirit of Christ? that is, in Scripture sense, by the love of God, or by inherent holiness wrought by the Spirit, the Divine Nature, the Image of God, which is the Spirit as a witness, earnest, first fruits and pledg, and seal of God. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his.* Rom. 8. 4. *If by the Spirit ye mortifie the deeds of the flesh ye shall live,* Ver. 13. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,* Ver. 1. *Because ye are Sons he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, by which ye cry Abba Father,* Gal. 4. 6. *The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits (which are only indivi-*
duorum.)

duorum) that we are the Sons of God, Rom. 8. 16. By this we know that we are the children of God by the Spirit which he hath given us. And to each believer the Spirit is promised to be as a well of living water springing up to everlasting life. And except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, Joh. 3. 5, 6. Except we eat the flesh of Christ, we have no life; and it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh (without it) profiteth nothing. Though we expect not an Enthusiastical testimony of the Spirit, as saying, Thou art a child of God, immediately; yet all Christians must have the foresaid inherent proof or evidencing testimony of the Spirit. Moreover Pag. 369. you misexpound Rom. 7. and upbraid others with the consequents of your misexposition.

What you say, pag. 367. of *splendida peccata*, is no more their Doctrine than *Augustines*, and 12th, and 13th Articles of the Church, which you subscribe: but you stretch it beyond all their meaning.

Pag. 335. l. ult. you assert Christs Righteousness, *quadrantem*, imputed, and yet elsewhere, oft speak against imputation undistinguished.

Pag. 253. you say, that *Abel*, and *Enoch*, those good men, had no other particular revelation of Gods will, but that God is, and is a Rewarder, &c. How prove you that? That they had no revelation to sacrifice, and to expect pardon by the seed of the Woman, &c?

Pag. 247. That Faith is a fiducial reliance, or a trust, is past all doubt: And how know you, that *Abraham*, that saw Christs days, and rejoyced, had no trust in him for salvation?

Pag. 192. You say of the Lords Supper, This is the only Act of Religion, which in Scripture signifieth Communion.

How Prove you that 2 Cor. 13. 14. the Communion of the Holy Ghost. And 6. 14. 1 Joh. 1. 3. *Our Communion* (I like not the word fellowship) *is with the Father*. And v. 6. & 1 Cor. 1. 9. Psal. 94. 20. are meant only of the Eucharist? What is our Communion but our access to God as our Father by the Mediator? Our acceptance with, and Communication from him? And have we this never but at the Eucharist? Do you say that you have none your self in Prayer, Praise, Preaching, Hearing, Meditation, &c?

Pag. 162. It's a strange passage, *Though Christ be our Lord and Governour, he doth not govern us immediately by himself*, (had you said only, it had been true) *but hath left the visible and external*

ternal conduct and Government of his Church to Bishops, &c. But all the world is agreed that Government containeth Legislation (as the chief act), Judgment and Execution. And hath Christ immediately made no Universal Laws for the Church? Then there are none at all. For he only can make such. When you prove that the Church hath any Universal Law-giver (Personal or Collective) on earth besides Christ, I think I shall turn *Papist*. And hath Christ immediately neither internal Governing motions of his Spirit, nor external Governing mutations of Providence? neither Judicial or Executive Mercies or Judgments?

Page. 163. They will say that you are a *Papist*, saying, The union of particular Christians to Christ is by their Union with the Christian Church, which consisteth in their regular subjection to their Spiritual Guides and Rulers, and in concord and union among themselves. And oft before, Page. 144, 145, 146, 147, 150, 151. you make our Union with the Church to be first in order of Nature before our Union with Christ. And so Baptism should first unite me to the Priest or Bishop, and then to the rest of the Church, and then to Christ; and should first oblige me to the Bishop, and then to Christ. *Bellarmino* indeed saith, but never proved, that implicite Baptism obligeth us to the Pope. But this is notoriously contrary to Christianity, and the common sentiments of mankind. When Subjects are united to the King, by the Oath of Allegiance, it is their first political bond, and relation. And that they are united to their fellow-Subjects, as the Kingdom is (at the same time, but) a secondary relation, because the Kingdom consisteth of Individuals united to the King, as King. The Scholar obligeth himself to his Master, to be taught in his School: The first intention, obligation, and relation, is to the Master, and that to the School-fellows, is but secondary, and consequential. So a Believer, in Baptism, giveth up himself to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as his God, and Father, his Saviour, and Sanctifier; but he doth this in conjunction with all the Church, and therefore consequently is united to the Church by Baptism; but his first, and chief obligation, and relation, is to Christ. Else, why is not the Church, or Bishop, mentioned in Baptism at all? But that the first union, or relation should be to a Bishop, a fellow-servant, and our fellow-Christians, and to Christ but secondarily by them, is such an Article, as my Creed shall never entertain.

And how can it refer primarily to the Church, and not to every Individual Christian, as p. 142, 143. when it is no way a Church, but as it consisteth of Individuals baptized, and so united to Christ? You may as well say, that Reason first belongeth to the Commonwealth, before it belongeth to Individual persons.

Pag. 96. You most unreasonably cry out on *Ignorance*, and say, *the truest expression of love to our Saviour, is not some fond, and amorous passions, but obedience to his Laws.* Obedience is undeniably necessary in it self, and as an expression of love. But the terms of *fond and amorous passions*, sound profanely. I have heard it a dispute, whether the pure Deity, being immaterial, can be the Object of passionate love; and some said, no; and I said, not the sensible immediate object of it: But the purest acts of the will, here in the body, touch, or move the sensitive affections, which therefore concur, or make all our love (or most) to be a compounded act. And thus God may be sensitively, or passionately loved, and must be. And upon search, you will find it hard to say, that ever there was such a thing as love, or delight in you, which was no whit sensitive passion. But however, none doubteth, but that Christ, as man, is the Object of this sort of love. And is love the very spirit in us, and our very holiness, and the more excellent way, and everlasting perfective act, which can never be too much? And shall we call it, fond, and amorous passion? I profess, I know no other Heaven than God, the final Object, and perfect love of God clearly seen, the perfect Act, conjunct with the perfect Receptions of his love, and pleasing of his will in both. And having oft read their Controversies, I never found the least inclination to think, that *Aquinas* was in the right, that Beatitude is only, or chiefly in Intellection; but that *Scorus*, and the rest, most certainly prove, that Love is the end of Vision; and Beatitude is more finally and eminently the Will: and *Medina*, and the rest of the *Thomists*, are triflers in their Argumentations hereupon: But I little doubt, but the Third sort are in the right, that make Beatitude to consist in neither alone, but the Complex of our Active and Passive perfections. And how much more savoury is it to me, to read honest *Gerson*, and other Papists Treatises, Treatises of Love, and Mr. *Boyles* Seraphick Love, &c. than the name of *fond, and amorous passions* to Christ,

Christ, when I know that God first looketh at the heart, and that our joy must be at the heart, and that I find no joy without passion, and passionate love, and find how wofully I want such holy passion? And yet I doubt not, but many mistaken people, lay more of their sincerity on passion, and less on obedience than they ought to do, to their great delusion. But love hath an excellency above obedience it self, formally considered: *Deus potentissimus est motor, Deus sapientissimus Rector, Deus optimus est finis & amabilissimus*; obedience is due to him, as Rector; which is but *rerum & mortuum ordinator*; but love is his due finally, for his *infinite goodness*. And though love, because commanded, is the chief material part of obedience; yet *formaliter*, it hath a more excellent nature than obedience, and therefore is the final Act. And your words, p. 95. are bitter, calling a *formal contract* with Christ (which doubtless is Baptism, and Christianity in it self), the *working of a heated fancy, and Religious distraction*. Pray that you never have worse distraction. I am against over terrifying the people, as well as you, and against requiring the observation of the method of Conversion you speak of, as necessary in all. But the Ancient Church, that trained up the Catechumens for Baptism, led them along to a contract with Christ, by such steps as you call a Religious distraction. And he that hath lived wickedly at Age, must be brought to a heart-contract with Christ, by such steps as the Church brought men to Baptism, though he must not be re-baptized. P. 72, 73. have harsh passages; and p. 75. is more harsh, *Acquaintance with Christs person*, being the first part of our Christianity, should not be a scorn: Nor should you have said, *Here is every jot and tittle of reason it is founded on, and pretends to*, when near a Horse-load of Lutherans, and Bishops, and other Protestants, have given abundance more. Much less should you have said of that, which so many Protestants, even Prelates, have copiously wrote for, even the strongest defenders of Prelacy, as Bishop Downham, Davenant, &c. *I think there needs no more, to expose it to the scorn of every considering man, who cannot but discover how inconsistent the Religion of Christs Person, and his Doctrine are*; where you confess, that scorn is the end of the Writer.

But I have presumed too far on your patience, and therefore pass by more, p. 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 55, 57, 59, &c. I will add but one thing more.

2. You have made so fore a temptation for your self, that it grieveth me at the heart, to foresee your danger. Some men will tell the world of these errors of yours, as lowd as you have proclaimed theirs, and expose you to dislike, as you have done them to scorn: Yea, your words have so ill a sound, that the greatest part (I think) of serious religious people, will think as bad of your book, as they do of *Dr. Parker's*; and all places will sound with your dispraise. And this will be to you so strong a temptation to destroy all your Charity to them, and turn your heart into an utter Enmity to them, that it must be eminent mercy, fortifying your humility, which must make you escape it: And if you escape it not, you are an undone man. And those that put the best construction on your words, will say, Was it meet for him to expose others to scorn, for unmeet words, who could no better word his own conceptions, than to seem to overthrow all Religion, whatever he meant? Sir, though your concession embolden me to talk thus freely to you, I know it will be hard for you to take well even these secret lines from me; For self will feel, till it be mortified. When (to lenifie you) I must profess to you, that I do it for your good, and warp not to a party: Doctrinals are usually so much higher, in our esteem, than Forms, that, if I were partial, it were like to be for you, with whom (if you hold not worse than I hope you do) I agree against the rigid sense of imputation. But I have felt in my self some part of your disease: When I wrote my first Book, I fell on *Mr. Walker, Dr. Owen, &c.* about Five and Twenty years ago: and I thought I ought to save men from the hurt of all the mistaking Books I met with, not knowing, how meddling with persons tendeth to dissention, and alienations, and how much better it is to meddle with the Cause, and Arguments. I have long wish't *Mr. Shepherd* had been more judicious: But *Mr. Firmin* hath more charitably, yet freely animadverted on his words, and *Mr. Hookers*, and *Mr. Daniel Rogers*, and *Mr. Perkins* (with some of mine) than you have done. And a few Independents in these points, about free grace, speak not the common sense of the Nonconformists. I intreat you to pardon the plainness of these lines, intended for your self alone: But whether you do that, or not, I earnestly beg of you, that you will use all means, that the entertainment, and Answers of your Book, may not destroy your

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Charity to the Dissenters, and turn your heart against them with that bitterness, which interest will be apt to tempt you to. And O that your own explications, and retractions, might prevent, or break the strength of this temptation. I rest

Dec. 24.

1673.

An unfeigned esteemer of your Parts,

and desirer of your Welfare,

Ri. Baxter.

His Answer followeth.

Reverend Sir,

I Received your Letter, but have been so hurried from one place to another, this *Christmas*, that I have not had time for my necessary occasions, which has forc't me to delay an Answer. But now I return you my thanks for your kind intentions towards me, and for your plain and open dealing; for I presume, Sir, you did not expect that I should give you a particular Answer to all your Objections, which would be, to write a Book instead of a Letter, which at present I am not at leisure to do; and many of the Objections are such, that I am confident you can answer them your self, and save me that labour; though I heartily thank you for acquainting me, what other men will say, who have not so much understanding, nor ingenuity as your self; which I hope will contribute much to break the force of that temptation you speak of: For, Sir, whatever becomes of my reputation, if any man convince me of a mistake, I resolve to own it; and as for those, who have no rule to judge by, but passion, and interest, and have no other way of confuting Books, but by bold, and groundless Slanders, I have nothing at all to say to them; and though this way is of late too much in vogue amongst those who pretend highly to Religion, yet I hope I shall be far enough from the temptation of such examples: For though, Sir, you are pleased sometimes with Acrimony enough, to charge my

my Writings with Scorn and Acrimony, yet I find other wise and good men have a better opinion of them ; and upon the most cool and deliberate reflections , were I to write it again, excepting some few passages, which are rather merry than sharp, I know not how I could have writ otherwise , without being wanting to the Cause I managed. But it is no more than expected , that different men would pass different censures upon my Book, which is the fate of all Books that ever were writ: And this I considered before I writ, and therefore am not surprized at it now. I value my Reputation, as all wise men ought to do, but yet I am not afraid of being reproach'd in a good Cause, in which I shall have the company of the best men that ever were in the world. It is not victory I contended for, but truth; and therefore am no more concerned to defend any thing I have writ, than I am to find out and defend the truth; and shall be so far from being angry with any man who shall confute me, and convince me of a mistake , that I shall heartily thank him for it: And for that reason, I once more return my hearty thanks to you, for appearing so much concerned to rectifie those mistakes you apprehend me to be guilty of; and subscribe my self,

Your obliged Friend, and Servant,

Will. Sherlock.

CH A P. III.

Of the manner of their Confutation of us by Reproach and Noise.

§. 1. **T**HERE is so much difference between Dr. Sherlock's judgment and mine, as to the *Order* and *Manner* of such Disputes, or Writings, as pretend to make known Truth and Falshood , that I have little hope of ever profiting by his method. He first over-passeth a fair discussion of the things

things which we have told him we dissent from: And what he pretendeth to justify against our contrary thoughts, is handled with such heaps of unsatisfactory words, as may amaze, or confound, or divert the unskilful, but need no reply to such as understand the state of the controversie, and the force of an argument, and will compare his words with mine.

I have long unfeignedly desired, 1. That they that still say, *there is no sin imposed on us*, would give us some such evidence of the lawfulness of all the things which I have named in my first *Plea for Peace*, as the matter of our dissent, as may satisfy the Consciences of such as truly search into the sense, and case, and dare not venture on such dreadful sin as I there described: That they will, without fraudulent forcing words, shew us the error of our doubts, and the lawfulness of all the Oaths, Declarations, Promises, and Subscription, and Practices there excepted against; Were it but the denying Christian Baptism, to such as think their sort of Godfathers undertaking, and the use of the Symbolical crossing to be sinful; when yet they seem to ascertain salvation to the baptized, if not to leave the unbaptized as condemned.

And that the new Articles of Faith there, about the certainty of salvation of baptized Infants, without exception, is verily certain by the Word of God.

And that it's lawful to deny the Eucharist to all that dare not take it kneeling, or be confirmed, as our Bishops do. When Mr. *Dodwell*, and such other tell us, that those that receive not the Sacrament (even from such as he describeth), or that suffer themselves to be shut out of Communion in such a case, have no Covenant-right to salvation: And so if I deny them Baptism, or the Eucharist, what cruelty do I use, though they were faulty, if I might give it them? Many more such things I expected a justification of, by solid proof, before I consent to them.

2. And when I had so oft, and largely distinguished of separation, and shewed in how many cases we renounce it, and in what senses and cases we take it to be a duty, I had hoped, that ere this, some of these Doctors that write and talk so much against *Separation* and *Schism*, would have endeavoured to shew me, that Separation is a sin in some one of those many particular cases, in which I take it to be none, or to be a duty.

3. And

3. And when in a Treatise of Episcopacy, I have given them so full an account, why we dare not swear, and subscribe for it, as is required, I hoped some one would have shewn us, by a reasonable Answer, what it is that should change our judgment, and warrant us to swear, never to endeavour any alteration.

4. And when I wrote my Apology for our Preaching (which is made our Schism, and the intollerable crime which deserveth our ruin in the common Goals), some one would have shewed us the error of our Arguments, if we mistake. But instead of this, we have such writings sent out against us, as I will not here name as they deserve, but have fully answered in my several Defences of my first *Plea for Peace*.

And if we do but manifest undeniably to the Reader, the gross errors, confusions, fallacies, notorious falshoods in matter of fact, which any of them would deceive their Readers, and tear the Church by, we are called *Proud*, and *Railers*, for supposing that we speak trulier than they: As many, and many a time I have known common drunkards and Blasphemers say of those godly men that urged them to repentance, *You are proud Pharisees, and hypocrites, that say, I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as this Publican. You are as bad, and worse than we.* And then they were safe from motions to repentance.

§. 2. As to their casting on us the *odium* of the late Wars; and as Bishop *Gunning's* Chaplain, calling us over and over, *cruel*, and bloody Sectaries, as if their own reviling would warrant men to destroy us: And as to the *Persons* that we have to deal with, I must desire the Reader to remember, 1. That before the Kings Restoration, almost all that had any Church-benefices, used the Directory instead of the Common-Prayer, and conformed to the times, as much as we did, that are now silenced.

2. That therefore of 9000, or 10000 Ministers, 7000, or 8000. that conformed, had before lived like the rest: So that all the reproaches that are cast on the late Ministry from 1646, till 1660, belong as much more to the Conformists, than to the Nonconformists, as 7000, or 8000. are more than 2000.

3. That the most of the Nonconformists, now living (I think more than ten to one), had no more hand in Wars, or deposing the Bishops, than their accusers; being either at Schools, or Uni-

Universities, or not meddling in such things.

4. That the new upstart zealots, that plead for our ruin, and the execution of the Laws against us, as Schismatical Separatists, were too young to have any of the honour of the Kings Restoration, but rise up to reap the fruit of other mens Loyalty (such as were the Presbyterian Commanders of General *Monk's* Army, and the Lord Mayor (Sir *Thomas Allen*), yet living), and the Presbyterian Ministers of *London*, who perswaded him, and the *Londoners*, to draw in General *Monk* for the King, &c.) and now cry us down, as Rogues for the Goal, and talk revilingly of persons, and things which they never knew, because they are trained up to Notions, and Inclinations, more suitable to Prelatical grandure and domination, than we.

§. 3. And yet I must truly tell the Reader, that I desire not to hide any of the worth of our slanderers, revilers, or persecutors. Man is a creature of a marvellous mixture: It's a wonder how so much good and evil can dwell together in the same breast. Forgive the freedom of my instance: I have heard Mr. *Sherlocke* Preach wholesom Truths; and yet his contentious writings are so false, so injudicious, so malignant, that out of the same Fountain cometh sweet Water and bitter.

Who would think, that read Dr. *Parker's Eccles. Polity*, and Preface to Bishop *Bramhall*, that he is the same man, that hath lately written a Defence of Natural and Christian Religion? A Book that constraineth me to forgive him his great virulency.

A great deal of laudible Industry and Learning, is manifest in Mr. *Morrice* his Vindication of the Prelatical Usurpations, under the name of the Primitive Church. I rejoyce there are any men of so much diligence, and worth. But this is the same man who distorteth Church-History, as making those Bishops and Councils, the great means of the Churches Concord, who have confounded it, and divided it into the many great bodies which are visible to this day (*viz. Papists, Greeks, Nestorians, Jacobites, Armenians, Abassines, and Protestants.*)

§. 4. And it is a wonder to me, that all the 7000, or 8000. that turned to Conformity, while many of them reproach the Nonconformists, for former compliances with Usurpers, do none

of them, or no more, accuse themselves. In my acquaintance, it was those that since conformed, that took the Engagement, excluding the King and House of Lords, when I wrote against it; and those that now are Nonconformists refused it, as to the greater part, proportionably compared together.

The difference then between the 7000, or 8000. and 2000. must be, that the 7000 repented when the 2000 did not. And Mr. *Morrice* taketh occasion to stigmatize the Nonconformists as enemies to repentance, for their Reputation sake, when I spake of the *peccavimus*, which the mutable Bishops pronounced in their Councils upon the turn of the times. I love repentance, and love the means that tend to bring me to it: But to run all one way, in one Princes Reign, and curse it in the next, and turn again in the next, with a *peccavimus*, is not so good as constant adhering to the truth. When Mr. *Barret* tells Dr. *Stillingtonfleet*, how he came and Preach't in his Church without his knowledg and consent, on a day of publick solemnity, commanded by the Usurpers for their successes, when Mr. *Barret* refused to keep the day, and staid at home; I would ask, Whether Mr. *Barret* do now deserve scorn or suffering for what he did then, more than Dr. *Stillingtonfleet*? And when, where, and how did they publish repentance for all those years of Church-obedience to the Usurpers, unless it was by changing with the times, and subscribing, declaring, and taking Benefices, and near 7000 professing Assent and Consent to all things contained in, and prescribed by a book which they had never seen (the Press having not finished it in time)?

I blame not their *peccavimus*. But why have we no more of their self-accusation in it, but rather accusing those that did as they did then, because they dare not do as they do now. And how came *Bartholomew*-day, 1662. to be so happy a day, as to bring at once 7000. to sudden understanding and repentance, that never shewed that repentance till then?

§ 5. But what are all these things to the deciding of our present case, whether our imposed Conformity be lawful? And whether, if it be, we deserve silencing and Goals for thinking and doing otherwise? But to bring an *odium* on the persons who dissent from them, is some mens chief Confutation of their Cause. But verily, if it must go by the persons true piety and honesty,

bare

bare words of accusation will not easily change those mens regard to the Nonconformists, who have been many years well acquainted with both sides. But if the stronger side be the right, I have been mostly in the wrong, unless we take God for our strength.

§. 6. For my part, I charitably judg the best of most that so suddenly conformed, that they took neither way of Government or Worship to be unlawful, and therefore did conform to both, as they thought necessity required. That this was Dr. *Stillingfleet's* thoughts, his *Irenicon* fully sheweth: Even as a Parliament, and *Westminster-Synod*, who had conformed before, did turn against it, when they thought necessity, or the state of the Church required it. And yet our present Church-Fathers like not the mutability of these Conformists.

§. 7. And I can truly say, That in all Counties of my acquaintance, it was those men (though never engaged in the Wars, or changes, coming since from the Universities) who excelled the greater part of the Ministers in heart-searching, heavenly fervent preaching and prayer, in diligent catechizing, and instructing the people, and watchful care of all their souls, in greatest care of true reformation of all sensuality and wickedness, and in the most blameless conversation, and seriousness in seeking their own and other mens salvation, and eminent charity to their power. I say, it was these men that were turned out, and silenced as Nonconformists: Yea, besides these that came younger, or since the change, even those that had been old Conformists, that were of the same temper of conscience, went out with them. Yea, one of my next Neighbours, that had been constant for the King against the Parliament, and since the War, deep in endeavours against them, but of too loose a life, since dating his conversion, as he judged it, from some Sermons, which meddled with no matters of Conformity, or Controversie, and becoming a serious Preacher, and of a new life, he proved a Nonconformist of greater resolution than the rest: For his change being not commonly known, he had no encouragement from other Nonconformists, nor scarce any acquaintance with them, they shunning him as the Christians at first did *Paul*, and he being private and modest, so that I had never any speech with him my self.

I speak these instances, as giving a truer description than strangers, imbittered by interest, or faction, give. I must say, that among all my acquaintance, I could before hand so far judg by the very complexion of their consciences and lives (not by their enmity to Bishops, but by the foresaid Characters) who were the men that would not conform: And though I was 100, or 120. Miles from them when the time came (1662), and never wrote a word to them about it, my conjectures did not fail me in above three or four, that I remember. And of some that had been in Arms against the King, I did truly prognosticate, that they would conform: Yea, some that had written for the Engagement, and much more; even that rare man of knowledge, who in his Treatise of Policy (Ecclesiastical and Civil) hath written that of the Kings death which I will not name, I made no question would conform, when others that wrote against it would not.

§. 8. The truth is, as far as I can perceive, the most fiery of the old Bishops and Conformists, were strangers to the men that they revile, even while they lived near them: And the younger sort judg of them by the revilings of the elder, and by the weaknesses of some *Antinomians*, or erroneous odd persons, or ignorant women that they hap't to meet with. I thought of their case when *Serenus Cressy* (sometime a Protestant Dean) sent me his Edition of *Baker's Book*, and told me, that he turned from the Protestant Religion, because there was no spiritual prayer and contemplation among them. I sent him my answer, that it was Gods just judgment on such as he, that upon others calumnies had made themselves strangers or enemies to godly Protestants, nick-named Puritans, that while they lived so near them, they did not know them; and for want of knowing such as dwelt among them, and whom they persecuted, should turn Papists to seek for such as they. But this the devil hath got by Faction.

§. 9. I find, that *some one thing* seemeth so great to most men, that they reduce almost all their other conceptions to the interest of that.

The Nonconformists, for the generality, so much look at *serious godliness*, and *extirpation of sin*, that *some of them* have been

been tempted into unlawful compliances, or means which seemed to them likely to attain it, and too much to oppose Liturgies and Forms, as thinking that they were used to mortifie and extinguish it.

The Statesmen that were most for *Property* and *Liberty* of the Subject, have some of them been tempted to think those Principles and Parties best that served this end: and many were inclined to *Erastianism* hereby.

The great Men of the earth, who are still for being greater, and absolute, and unlimited in Power or Will, are liable to the temptation to be for that Party and Opinion in Religion, which serveth this interest and end: And when Protestants will deliver them from Papal Tyranny, they are for the Protestants: And when Papists will promise to make them Absolute, they think by this to win them to be Papists, (that is, to be *Slaves to the Pope*, that they may be *Absolute*, and not to be tied to a loving-Fatherly Government; so much doth sin contradict it self!)

And if men once get a strong false conceit, that all Christians in the world must have a visible, unifying Church-power under Christ, and that this is a Council while it sits, and all the Bishops of the world as one Colledge, when there is no Council; and so that the Council of *Constance*, and *Basil*, and the *French* Papists that set Councils above the Pope, as to the Form of Church-Government, are in the right; and that the true Reformation of the Church lyeth, in getting *France* and *England* united in the Collegiate or Council-Supremacy, getting them to abate (or allow us to forbear) the Sacrament only in one kind, the Adoration of Angels and Saints, Transubstantiation, Priests celebrate, and the *Latin* Mass: And that this Union with the Contiliar part of Papists is to be called, *The Reformed Religion*; and is the only way to the peace and prosperity of the Church; I say, when this once is rooted in mens minds, what wonder if so great a thing as the supposed Interest of the Universal Church, and Christian Religion, do make them think odiously of all that are against it, and overlook their Piety and Honesty, and vilifie all their Reasons and Defences, and even think it needful to destroy or ruine them, as a service acceptable to Christ? All their thoughts and studies will run in this channel, to serve this espoused End and Error.

§. 10. But I have so far detected these mistakes in my Book of *Concord*, and answered their Accusations in my *Apology*, [p. 92.]

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