

The Preface to the Readers.

the perverting of them ; that they may become his instruments, to the perverting of the rest.

For Magistrates, he would first taint them with secret infidelity ; or else engage them to the utmost in a carnal self-interest, and perswade them that Christs Interest doth stand in their way. He would delude them so far as to cause them to mistake where their interest lyeth, and so to espouse them to an interest inconsistent with Christs ; and then will they be involved before they are aware into a seeming necessity of fighting against Heaven, and secret or open opposition of the Church : The deceiver would make them forget, that *from Christ* they have their power, and *under him* and *for him* must they hold it, and exercise it. A fairer opportunity indeed he hath to draw the Princes and Great ones of the world, to forget that they are but men, and servants, and to forget the fading vanity and danger of their condition, and to Rebel against Christ by self exaltation, then with the meaner and poorer inhabitants of the earth: He offereth them a more golden and glorious bait, and thereby hath hitherto befooled the most of them, to fall upon that stone that will dash them in pieces. Or else if he cannot taint them with the common Profaness, he will at least engage them to a hatred of the power of Godliness. Or if he can taint them (as he did *Constantius*) with Heresie, he will engage them to fall upon the soundest in the Church. Or can he but delude them to sit by, and as Neuters to look on, as being indifferent between Christ and him, at least, he will deprive the Church of the benefit of their power, or of that special interest in them, which they may claim from their commission. As *Nazianzen* calls the Magistrate the Vice-gerent of Christ ; so may the Church justly say as *Tertullian* did, *Apologet. cap. 33. Imperatorem necesse est ut suspiciamus, ut eum quem*

Dominus

The Preface to the Readers.

*Dominus Noster elegit : ut merito dixerim, Noster est magis
Caesar, ut à Nostro Deo Constitutus.*

But the main design of the enemy is against their Pastors.

Some of them he keeps in a superficial, carnal and customary Christianity; So that they never soundly believed the great mysteries which (for a Living) they study and preach: And how such are like to edifie the Church, and preach that heartily to others, that never was in their own hearts, you may easily Judge: when they must speak all out of their books, and by hear-say, and the common opinion of others, of things which they never well believed or felt themselves.

Others he intangleth in worldly affairs, and causeth them to mind the matters of the flesh, that they are heartless and unfaithful in their masters work; So that poor souls may go to Hell with very little disturbance, and starve even at the next door to them, while they are minding their Own matters, or are dulled by lazyness, and addict their chiefeft affections and endeavours to the service of so vile a master as their flesh.

How far Satan hath prevailed this way, with the Pastors of the Congregations, is a matter of too clear Evidence, and very sad consideration. As they do most grossly miscarry among the Papists, and more defiled parts of the Church, by keeping up Ignorance, and Discord, and a Carnal, Pompous, Ceremonious worship, that they may uphold a carnal Interest of their own; So I would in the most Reformed Churches we were more Innocent then we are. What an ignorant, or negligent ministry was (for the greater part) in *England*, in the time of the late Bishops rule, yea what opposers of Godlyness, and too many of them openly deoboist, I need not tell any that will believe their eyes and ears. And,

(b) though

The Preface to the Readers.

though through the great mercy of God, the case is much altered in those respects, yet alas, how few are they even of those that we hope are Godly, who earnestly thirst after the saving of mens souls, and lay out themselves freely in publike and private, in faithful endeavors to that end? What a multitude of sleepy, heartless Preachers are there, that give not the Alarum of Gods approaching Iudgement to the drowsie souls that daily sit under them, nor speak to poor people with any such seriousness, as beseems them in a matter of such unspeakable consequence. How seldom in many places shall we hear an awakening heart-warming Sermon? And of those few that are serious and diligent, so few have ability to put their matter into any handsom drefs, and so many run out into intemperance and divisions, that it hardeneth the drowsie Preachers the more in their way; and they take their dulness for soberness, and their consciences do the less check them for their neglect of mens souls. This is the unhappy case of many men of Good learning and parts: They are so sensible of the evil of the exorbitancies of the times, that they overlook and regard not the evil of their own heartless and unfaithful Administration. If they hear a Private man use some unfit expressions in prayer, it extreamly offendeth them: but if they totally omit it, they are not much offended at it. They forget that God will bear more with many slips of the tongue, and unhandsom words, then with a neglect of his worship, or a heartless performance of it: and that their well-drest forms, if lifeless, are stinking carcases, or useles pictures, when a broken heart, with broken expressions may go away with the blessing. And therefore they are commonly against private mens praying together, especially before many; And as the Papists would drive them from the Scripture for fear of abusing

The Preface to the Readers.

abusing it, so would they drive them from such Prayer, lest they should hap to use some unhanfome words.

Were there no other charge against the pious Ministry of *England*, but only the common neglect of Discipline, I think we should be ashamed to look up to heaven. Because the Sword doth not enforce it, they think nothing can be done; such contemptuous thoughts have they of their own offices, and the spiritual Sword which Christ hath put into their hands. Because there are differences about some Modes and Accidents of Discipline, therefore will they neglect the substance, which most are agreed in. Some will examine mens fitness for the Sacrament, and think they have done all, if they keep the unworthy from that Ordinance; suffering them still to remain members, and enjoy other parts of Communion. If Ruling be as Essential a part of our Pastoral work as Preaching, then are those to be numbred among Negligent Ministers, that neglect to Rule, as well as those that neglect to Preach. And why the Magistrate should not Punish *such negligent ones*, as well as the other, I yet know not.

But the great advantage that Satan hath got upon the Church, through the sin of the Pastors in these latter times, is by Division: For by this he hath much promoted all the rest of his Designs. Infidelity it self breaks in upon us; and not only the vulgar, but many of former forwardness and parts, do question or cast off all Religion, because they see us of so many minds and wayes. And our sin hath as haynous Aggravations as most mens can have: In that *We* are the men that have seen the sad effects of Division, that have had such extraordinary medicines to heal them, such Calls, such opportunities and advantages for a closure, and so long time in all: We have lived to see the Church in danger of being swallowed

The Preface to the Readers.

lowed up by deceit and by violence; and yet as we have laid it open to all this danger by our divisions or negligence, so we do sit still and do little to rescue it from the danger.

Some are regardless of these matters: some only enquire as of a matter of news, what others do in it, and wish it were done, while they sit still: some cry out of the Magistrate for not doing his part, not considering how they condemn themselves for neglecting their own. Few are able to do what our necessity requireth; and not many willing: Few have a skill in narrowing a difference; in finding out the true point and state of it, and hitting on the right remedy: And fewer know their own inability; and therefore we do not only want Healers, but we want men of so much meekness, and self-denial, and Christian humility, as to give their consent, that others may do that, which they cannot do themselves: And well were it if they would not reject what they approve of, meerly because it is not of their doing or motioning, or because it comes not from those whom they esteem. Too many there are also, that are so apparently carnal, that they will do nothing till they know whether it be pleasing to those in Power, lest they should make an ill bargain in hazarding their outward welfare, and in displeasing men that can hurt them, to please Christ, who they presume will not hurt them. And yet more are there, that apprehending how much the exercise of Christian Discipline displeaseth the vulgar, and consequently will lose them their love and maintenance, will rather quietly let all alone, then unite with any in so ungratefull a work.

And yet more hainous is our sin in the continuance of these divisions, in that we have been too much guilty of
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The Preface to the Readers.

being the Leaders into it, and therefore should lead out of it; and in that it especially belongeth to our office; and in that we have yet some such interest in our peoples estimation that we may probably do somewhat toward it. But specially, because the remedy is so obvious, and our union so easie, were we but truly willing and industrious to attain it. 1. For Discipline, our differences lie in so narrow a room, that there is no probability of the continuance of a breach, if we had but got together, and humbly and lovingly followed on the work, in impartial consultations, and in seeking Gods direction. 2. And for Doctrine, we have a Test and Rule sufficient to unite in: we have the whole sacred Scripture, which if we all profess to believe, we surely make a full profession of Faith. Or if that be too large, we have the Apostles Creed, or other ancient Creeds of the Church; and the Scripture before us, sufficient to afford us both matter and words for a full and fit Confession of our Faith.

But the Deceiver hath here over-reacht us as much as in any thing. Some are such Infidels and indifferent to all Religions, that they would have no Test at all, but have all to live in a broken Licentiousness: But I hope amongst Ministers these are but few. The far greater number run into the contrary extream, and would have almost all that thrust on others which they are confident of themselves: (And confidence is not the best or commonest sign of Truth.) Hence are our large and disputable confessions, to be imposed on others: Hence is it that every man is so ready to lay the heaviest charges on those that differ from his own conceits. That is hainous error which crosseth our opinions, and where we err not for company: and we are willing the Magistrate should restrain men from contradicting us, as being secretly conscious of our own

The Preface to the Readers.

disability, to make good the cause that we are so confident is the right.

All this must be done under some pious pretence: It is in a blinde zeal for unity that the Papists destroy (as much as in them lyeth) the Unity of the Church: It is in a blinde zeal against error that many an error is promoted. The most destructive engine (for ought I can understand that ever was used to divide that Church, were Humane, superfluous, and questionable Rules, in imposed Confessions, intended by proud and ignorant men, for the Unity of that Church, and the security of the Truth.

THese being the apparent ways of the Churches Recovery by Christ, and its danger from the Deceiver, which are before mentioned, I have judged it my duty to promote as much as I could, Christs means for our recovery, and to oppose as much as I could the Enemies designs and endeavors for our ruine. And in my weak performances my encouragements have been such from God and man, that I have no cause to complain, or to be much discouraged by some smaller Opposition. I must needs confess that I did not, nor could, in modesty expect the tenth part of that acceptance and fruit of my poor Labors, as upon experience I have since found. And when I meet with opposition, my conscience constraineth me to suspect my own miscarriage, and first to enquire, how far I have given cause. But when I have made as impartial an enquiry as I am able, and am more confirmed in the Truth which I have owned, I dare not desert that Truth under pretence of humility. Nor dare I bely my self to humour other men.

The Objections that I have heard made against me, besides

The Preface to the Readers.

fides what in this Book I have answered already, I shall here briefly touch upon, and give some part of my answer in the words of others that can better bear off the blow, because mine own are so lyable to misconstructions, and have by these dissatisfied Brethren been so much wrested as they have oft been.

1. Some have given out that I am addicted to singularity, and affect to hear an *Egoprimum inveni*. Their proof for ought that ever I could learn, is only from my Writings, because I say not in all things as they do.

To these Brethren I say 1. I shall promise by the grace of God to watch my heart with what diligence I can, against the affectation of singularity, and I desire their prayers and admonitions for my furtherance. 2. And I would have them also search, lest they prove guilty of a slander, while they enter into mens hearts, and venture to proclaim what they do not know. Is this the encouragement they give to Truth, that no man can tell them one word more then they have considered (though he profess himself never so much below them in other things) but it must be rejected as Novelty, and himself charged with singularity? Are they sure that I may not have better ends then they imagine? 3. And I shall engage the small reputation of my reading, to make good, that the Opinions which I oppose are most, if not every one of them, notorious Novelties, contrary to the Doctrine of the Ancient Christians for many hundred years after Christ. I profess to esteem it an unchristian thing to hunt after fame and vain-glory, much more to purchase it by the sale of Truth; and such courses can bring nothing but Infamy in the end. The great differing Characters which *Tertulian* giveth between an Infidel and a Christian, have taken much with me, and seemed to me excellently accommodated to each, *Apol.*
cap.

The Preface to the Readers.

cap. 46. *Quid adeo simile Philosophus & Christianus? Græcia Discipulus & Cæli? Fama Negotiator, & vita? Verborum & factorum operator?* To Trade for life eternal, is not consistent with Trading principally for Fame.

2. It is objected, that surely I am Proud, and the evidence is, that I contradict so many others, and speak so slightly of others as I do.

Ans. 1. I say to this, as to the former: I will by Gods help search my heart for the sin of Pride, and desire them to do the like, and see that they be well acquit from usurping Gods prerogative, and flandering their Brother. And this I dare say, that the evidentest victory that I have had against any sin (except Covetousness) is against Pride; and if I have not conquered this, I have conquered none: And yet I feel such reliques of it, that I am forced to suspect it, and constantly watch against it in all my undertakings. 2. But how come I to be so unhappy, that only those that know me not, load me with this charge, and never any one Brother did tell me of it to my face? 3. It may be worth their labour to search, how much Pride may lie in their impatency of contradiction, and making a man an offender for a word, and being such that a man knows not how to speak to them, for fear of seeming contumelious, by withdrawing, or not giving them the honour they expect. I remember how *Austin* excused his friend to a man of such a spirit, and with a fear lest after his greatest caution he should seem contumelious himself by the Apologie, *Epist. 143. ad Proculianum. Audi vi de Memorato fratre te fuisse conquestum, quod nescio quid tibi contumeliose responderit: quod quæso te ne illam contumeliam deputes, quum certum mihi est non de superbo animo processisse: Novi enim fratrem meum: sed si quid in disputando pro fide sua, & pro Ecclesia charitate, dixit fortasse ferventius, quam tua gravitas nollet audire;*

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The Preface to the Readers.

non illa* Contumacia, sed fiducia nominanda est. Collatorem enim & disputatorem, non Assentatorem & Adulatorem, se esse Cupiebat. Vereor ne me quoque aliquid contumeliose in te dicere existimes: quod vehementer Caveo, quantum possum.

* Fortasse
Contumacia.

4. If it be Pride in me to contradict a few Divines in this part of the Church, in this and one former age, and that with so great tenderness & respect, what is it in them to Contradict the antient Doctors and Churches, till these dayes, and all the other Churches of the world till now? 5. Let the Citations in this Book witness, whether I proudly affect singularity. 6. I am reviled as a Papist by Mr. Crandon, for teaching People to depend so much upon their Guides. And will they yet condemn me also, for not depending on them? yea for not believing them against the Evidence of Truth? which I never perswaded the lowest Christian to. And if I must needs depend on any, me thinks it should be on the Antient Churches and Doctors, whom themselves do contradict, and mention with higher charges of error (whether that be pride let them see to it) then ever I did them. I remember the antient Character of a Pagan and a Christian: Tertull. Apolog. c. 45. *Vobis humana aestimatio innocentiam tradidit: humana item Dominatio imperavit: inde nec plena, nec adeo timenda estis disciplina ad innocentie Veritatem. Tanta est Prudentia hominis ad demonstrandum bonum, quantum autoritas ad exigendum, tam illa falli facilis, quam ista Contemni.*

Nazianz. Orat. 27. pag. 468. (Edit. Morel.) Atqui plerisque secus videtur, inquires. Quid vero mea interest, qui rei veritatem magis curo, immo solum curo? hoc enim vel me Condemnaverit, vel absolverit: hoc miserum vel beatum reddiderit. At quid aliis videatur, nihil ad nos, quemadmodum nec alienum somnium.

Ob. 3. But thus you break the Churches Peace, while

The Preface to the Readers.

you pretend to be zealous for it : why do you not let go Truth for Peace?

Ans. 1. Have the Dissenters studyed an answer to this Question themselves?

2. I resolve by Gods help never to own or subscribe to one word of error for Peace: (& therefore desire much Caution in Imposed Confessions) : But I am resolved to *silence* any Truth for the Churches Peace, which is not of greater moment and worth than its Peace, so to be obtained.

3. I never yet was Conscious of such a Guilt, of breaking the Churches Peace by the divulging my opinions, (except in humane frailties, in the manner of declaring them) : I never endeavour to make a partie for my opinions. I ever spoke more against such parties, then for my opinions. My Doctrines, which they blame, are so purposely designed for healing of the divided Churches, that it was my chief motive to publish them. The Churches were lamentably divided about such things, before that I did offer my thoughts for a Remedy: Am not I then dealt with, as if I went to part two that are fighting in the street? and though I speak them fair, and perswade them to be friends, they take witness that its I that break the Peace?

4. It is not the peace of one divided party or Countrey, that is the Peace of Christs Church : Nor doth it be seem any Christian to have so narrow a Spirit, and to overlook Christs Interest in the rest of the Churches : but to remember the Condition of their Brethren abroad.

5. I do here offer it as my hearty desire, *That my Brethren of the Ministry in any of their Associations, when they are Assembled within my reach, where I may be present, would freely question any thing in my Doctrine which they dislike,*
and.

The Preface to the Readers.

and when they have heard me speak for my self, if they shall afterward determine that I ought to silence such Doctrines, or that the delivering of them tendeth to the disquiet of the Church, I do promise (if as aforesaid, they seem not to me of such evidence and moment, as to be of more value then the Churches Peace, of which sort I take not many to be besides fundamentals) that I will forbear any further publication of them. Yea we have long been under such an Agreement in this County, whereby we are engaged to be accountable for our Doctrine to the Associated Ministers; and never any yet once questioned me for any thing which I had Printed or Preach't, nor desired me to forbear.

I leave it therefore to a more impartial censure, whether I be guilty of breaking the Churches Peace.

Obj. 4. Some are much offended that I have Replied to some Brethren that have written against me.

Ans. Is it their duty to begin, and is it my sin to make a necessary Defence? Either their writings were contemptible, or of considerable weight; should I say the first, it would be justly taken ill: If the latter, either they prove me erroneous, or not. If they do, let the equal considerer of both discern it: he may best judge that hears both speak: Blame me not then for Replying, (but for erring in my Reply; and shew me the error. If they do not convince me of error, should I silently suffer the Reputation of man to cloud the Truth, and wrong the Church, and draw people into mistakes? And is it not marvel that this Objection should seem of force against me, for my Defence, & not against them that begin by an Accusation? Do we use to hear men called into question at any publike Bar, and then blamed and reviled, for appearing, or for ma-

The Preface to the Readers.

king their Defence? But this proceeds from the respect of persons; which blindeth the wise, and perverteth Justice.

Thence it is, that I am blamed by many Friends for Replying to my Reverend Brother Master *Blake*, who yet tell me that for all the rest its no matter, they deserved no better: When I used more reverence and care to avoid offensive words to him, then any another. *Hierome* saith thus to *Augustine* (*Hieron. Tom. 2. p. 352. Edit. Basil. Et inter Epist. August. est Epist. 18. pag. 27. Edit. Paris.*) *Nec egotibi, sed causa cause respondit. Et si culpa est respondisse, quasout patienter audias, multo major est provocasse: sed facessant istiusmodi queremonia, sit inter nos pura Germanitas; & deinceps non Questionum, sed charitatis, ad nos Scripta Mittamus.*

Object. 5. Others say that by intimating their errors, I dishonour the Ministry, and bring them into reproach.

Ans. 1. And yet I am blamed for honoring them so much, and drawing the people to so much dependance on them.

2. Then do I more dishonour my self: For, though I yet know them not in particular (for else I erred not) yet in general, I doubt not but I have a multitude of errors, and shall have while I am here, where we know but in part.

3. He that exalteth himself shall be brought low, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. It will more honour any Minister humbly to confess his imperfection, then to take himself wronged by those that modestly intimate them, by asserting the contrary Truth. Great *Augustine* was not too good to confess more, *Epist. 140. Audaci. Oraculum legis quomodo sum, de cujus latis atque abditis penetrabilibus, Nescio longe plura quam scio:* And oft he hath the like.

The Preface to the Readers.

4. I can honour and reverence my Brethren, while I honour not their error, which I would hate if I found it in my self. *August. Epist. 147. Quid autem in te honorare non dubitem, facile intelligis: Non errorem schismatis, unde omnes quantum ad me attinet cupio sanari, dignum honore aliquo existimo.*

5. I must freely confess that I both take the general-ity of the Ministers now in *England*, to be the best and wisest sort of men in the Land; and yet to be a great cause of our troubles and calamities, in that they are not wiser and better then they are: Their calling requireth so much more then a common degree of wisdom and goodness, that if they be but meerly honest as other men, they will be our ruine. *Nazianz. Orat. 1. faith (pag. 8.) Praefecti vel Antistitis (vitium est) non quam-optimum esse, nec novas subinde virtutum accessiones facere: Siquidem virtutis suae praestantia multitudinem ad mediocritatem tracturus sit: Ibid. Profecto Ars quadam Artium & Scientia scientiarum mihi esse videtur hominem regere, animal omnium maxime varium & multiplex. Et p. 6. At vero homini cum difficile sit scire parere, tum multo difficilius esse videtur, scire hominibus imperare; at praesertim in hoc nostro imperio, quod in lege divina situm est, & ad Deum ducit: cujus quo majus est fastigium, majorque dignitas, eo etiam majus periculum est; prudenti utique homini & cordato.*

I use the Translation rather then the Greek, as supposing more Readers understand it.

Object. 6. Another accusation is, that I am solicitous after a union with such as are not to be united with; and to that end do bend the Truth to such a shape as may seem least offensive to them; which compliance or syncretism affected with such men, doth argue some secret inclination to their opinions, more then I yet manifest.

Ans. 1. For the latter part, I have no answer to make, but to appeal to him that knoweth the heart, and knoweth whether I dissemble my faith, or they be daring slanderers

The Preface to the Readers.

derers that give this out. I have spoke to this in my following Confession, and add with *Tertul. Apol. c. 20. Nemo jam infamiam incutiat, nemo aliud existimet, quia nec fas est ulli de sua Religione mentiri.*

2. I affect no union with any that are not united to Christ, or appear so to me, by being in union with his Church: I will incorporate with none that deny any fundamental essential point of Christianity: And for the rest, I close not with them in their errors, but in the true faith which they profess. And those that be unfitted for actual Communion, though I communicate not with them, yet do I take it to be my duty to do my best to make them fit. I will not close with a Papist, as a Papist; but if I meet with a Christian that goeth under that name, I will own him as a Christian, though not as a Papist; and I would endeavor to undeceive him that I might fullyer joyn with him: And to that end I would take out of the way some hurtfull stumbling blocks, that I finde there laid. If he be cursed that putteth a stumbling block before the blind, I doubt he is too guilty that is angry with him that would remove it.

3. I never affected a Union on unlawfull terms (so far as I could discern them;) Never did I motion that we might renounce the least part of Gods Truth for unity with any: but only that we might finde out the true point of difference, and remove our verbal quarrels out of the way, and then consider, whether our disagreements are such as will warrant a rejection, separation, and condemnation of each other, or not; and accordingly to close, or alienate. In our Agreement about Discipline, some are offended that we affected any agreement with the Episcopal Divines: and most of them, as averse from it, and undisposed to close with others, As if indeed we were not all Brethren; and might not well be agreed, were we truly

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The Preface to the Readers.

truly and conscionably willing : For my part, I see no greater difficulty in the business.

4. The forwardness that is in many men to keep open divisions, and to think those that say not as they, to be so great Hereticks or so erroneous, that we must affect no communion with them, and thus making such grounds of their own for Church Union, which will not bear it, is a downright mark of a Schismatical Spirit, how earnestly soever they may speak against Schism. There will never be a sound Closure and Union but on Christs Ground-work, and in him as the Center. The Papists are the greatest Schismatics in the world (that I know of) and yet they are the greatest pretenders to Unity, and destroyers of Schism, and all by making a new Center for Unity: which who so doth not close in, must be disclaimed by them as Schismatical; that is, by making new Articles of Faith, and a new Head to the Church Catholick. And do not some enemies of Popery, turn so far to Popery, in appropriating the Church to their own party, and making their opinions (which the Church never owned, at least for four hundred years) to be the ground of Unity, and Test of true Christians!

5. I never thought that when ever men differ, it is my duty to go in a middle between both (for so that middle will be next taken for an extream, and men must seek out another middle to avoid that:) but yet I have observed not only that in most differences, men can hardly keep out of extreams, and that Truth and Peace do exceedingly befriend each other: but also that *Austins* Argument is very probable, in *Epist. 204. Donato*: perswading him to return from Schism to the Church, *Ibi est veritas & pietas, quia ibi est Christiana unitas & Sancti Spiritus Charitas*. However I am certain that our torn condition is not so desirable to any sensible well-tempered Christi-

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The Preface to the Readers.

an, as that it should seem to him an evil to attempt to heal us. Its sad to me to see it with us, as *Augustine* sometime complained, *Epist. 147. Mariti & uxores de suo Lecto sibi consentiunt: & de Christi altari dissentiunt: Filii cum perentibus unam domum habent suam; & domum Dei non habent unam. Succedere in eorum hereditatem cupiunt, cum quibus de Christi hereditate rixantur. Servi & Domini Communem Deum dividunt, qui formam servi accepit ut omnes serviendo liberaret.*

In a word, it is my daily desire, and prayer to God, That those men who hate so narrow a Creed, and so large a Church, and think so contemptuously of men, for some failings in Doctrine or Practice, may not by a sad eruption of open Infidelity among us (and that by means of such as were strict professors) be forced to set a higher value on those whom they now condemn: I must say as *Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 26. pag. 458. Tu viam minime tritam & inaccessam ingrederis: ego tritam atque calcatam, & qua multi ad salutem pervenerant. Nihil fide nostra, fratres, iniquius fingi posset si in eruditos tantum dicendique facultate, ac Logicis demonstrationibus excellentes caderet; popularis autem multitudo, ut auro & argento, aliisque omnibus rebus, que hic in pretio habentur, atque a plerisque avidissime expetuntur, sic hac quoque frustraretur, ac Deus id quod altum & excelsum est atque ad paucos pertingit, gratum acceptumque haberet; contra, quod propinquius est, nec vulgi captum superat, aspernaretur & rejiceret. Vide reliq.*

Yet I must confess that the Brethren whom I now blame have one extenuation (though not sufficient excuse) for their sin; so many and desperate errors have of late risen up, that it is no wonder, if they be raised to too much jealousy, and be too ready to charge error upon all that speak any thing which they do not well understand. Saith *Erasmus in vita Hieronymi. Nullum fuit un-*

quam

The Preface to the Readers.

quam seculum seditiosius, neque Confusius; & sic omnia contaminarant hereticorum errores ac dissidia, ut magnæ cujusdam artis fuerit orthodoxum esse. But yet it is sad that this should so much wrong the Truth of God, by driving men into such extreams, as the same *Erasmus* there mentioneth, *In isto factiosissimo seculo, vix quisquam eximie doctus hereseos suspitione carebat.* A wise man is long in attaining to wisdom, and with much diligence knoweth more then others: but its easie for a brainlick self-conceited Opinionist, to call him Heretick for it, when he hath all done.

1. The seventh and great Objection is, that I ascribe too much to mans works. To which having answered through the main body of this Book, I shall now only say, 1. That I suppose if I differ from the commonest opinion among us, it is but in giving less to mans works then they do: Nor shall their confident denial without any evidence, make me think otherwise. He that is justified by Faith as an instrument, is justified by it as an agent or act; for *Actio est Instrumenti causalitas*. I dare not go so high for all the new Arguments that I see produced for it. 2. I see many well meaning zealous men dividing our Religion, and running into two desperate extreams. One sort by the heat of opposition to Popery, do seem to have forgotten, that Faith and Christ himself, are but Means, and a way for the revolting soul to come home to God by; and thereupon place all the essence of their Religion in bare Believing, so making that the Whole, which is but the Door or Means to Better, even to a conformity of the soul to the image and will of God.

Others observing this error, flie so far from it as to make Faith it self and Christ to be scarce necessary: so a man have but Gods image, say they, upon his soul, what matter

See Bishop
Answers on
the fifth Petition of the
Lords prayer,
how forgiving
others is a
condition of
our Pardon.

The Preface to the Readers.

matter is it, which way he comes by it? whether by Christ or by other means! And so they take all the History of Christ to be a meer Accident to our necessary belief; and the precepts only of Holyness to be of Absolute Necessity.

The former contemn God, under pretence of extolling Christ. The latter contemn Christ, under pretence of extolling God alone. For the object is apprehended only by the act: he therefore that contemneth the act, doth contemn the object, as an object. And so he that pretending to extol Christ or Faith, degradeth Godlyness, thereby so far rejecteth God: And he that on pretence of extolling Godlyness, degradeth Faith, so far rejecteth Christ its object, which makes me think of a Passage of *Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 1. pa. 16.* where shewing how by abusing the Doctrine of the Trinity some were become Atheists (that is, denyed consequently any God-head) and some Jews (as *Arrius*) he addeth a third sort that in a mistaking way of avoiding the former being *nimis Orthodoxi*, too Orthodox, did worship many Gods in the Trinity.

On the one side, Christ were not Christ, the Saviour of souls, if he should not by Faith, bring them to holyness, and save them from their sins.

On the other side, it is a false supposition that any but Christ is able to renew Gods Image on the soul. For,

1. It is only Christ that by his blood hath removed Impediments, and purchased this Power, not into anothers hand, but into his own.

2. It is Christ only that by office is appointed thereunto:

3. It is Christ only that hath given sufficient precepts, Directions, and Rules for Sanctification.

4. And he only that hath propounded a sufficient Encouragement and Motive in the Promises of another Life.

5. And

The Preface to the Readers.

5. And it is he only that can send forth a Conquering Spirit, to sanctifie and bring back the souls of men to God. It is only to him that God hath committed the Spirit thus to bestow.

I do therefore detest both these extreame. But yet it being the former that I take to be the greater, and that too many men of better repute do give too much countenance to, in their inconsiderate disputes against Works in Justification, I thought I had a Call to speak in so great a Cause.

My opinion is that its Essential to Justifying Faith to take Christ as Lord and Saviour; and that they who say, *But not qua Justifying*, do emply false Doctrine, as I have elsewhere discovered: I think that Holyness is of the Essence of Christianity; and if I were sure a man were unholy, I would not call him (except analogically) a Christian. *Tertul. Apol. c. 46.* faith, *Sed dicet aliquis etiam de nostris excedere quosdam a Regula disciplina: Desunt tum Christiani haberi penes nos: Philosophi vero illi cum talibus factis in Nomine & in honore sapientia perseverant.* And *cap. 43.* *Nemo illic (in carceribus, &c.) Christianus nisi plane tantum Christianus: aut si aliud, jam non Christianus.* *Athenagoras Legat. pro Christ. p. 3.* *Nul- lus enim Christianus malus est, nisi hanc professionem simulaverit.* That it is the very business of Christ, the Spirit and all Ordinances, to bring back the soul from God to the Creature. See what *Nazianz.* saith, *Orat. i pag. 11.* *Huic contra scopus est, anima penas addere, ac mundo eam eripere, Deoque dare, Divinamque Imaginem, aut manentem Conservare, aut periclitantem fulcire, aut dislapsam in Pristinum statum revocare, Christumque per spiritum sanctum in pectoris domicilium admittere: atque ut summatim dicam, eum, qui superni agminis sit, Deum efficere, & supernam beatitudinem ipsi comparare: Huc Magistra Lex tendit:*