

**The true Nature of
Beholding the
Lamb of God,**

and

**Peter's Denial
of his Lord**

by

**George
Whitefield**

*The true Nature of Beholding the Lamb
of God, and Peter's Denial of his Lord,*

OPENED AND EXPLAINED,

IN TWO

SERMONS,

By **GEORGE WHITEFIELD, A.B.**

Late of **Pembroke College, Oxford,** and **Chaplain to the Rt. Hon.
the Countess of Huntingdon.**

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JOHN i. Verses 35, 36.

Again, the next Day after, John stood and two of his Disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith,
Behold the LAMB of GOD.

GLORIOUS Words these! Before we set about the opening and enforcing them, permit me to introduce myself in the Language of *Paul* to King *Agrippa*, *Would to God that both my own Heart, and likewise the Hearts of all that hear me this Day, may not only be almost, but altogether in such a divine Frame, as I am persuaded the Heart if that Man of God was who just utter'd these Words!*—I need not tell you his Name; our Text tell us, it was *John*, emphatically call'd *John* the Baptist, because he was sent to baptize with Water unto Repentance, in order to prepare his Hearers for the further Baptism of the Holy Ghost. He was a *Boarnerges*, a Son of Thunder.—He came in the Spirit, and Power of *Elias*, and thereby soon rendered himself so exceedingly popular, that not only *Jerusalem*, all *Judea*, and all the Regions round about *Jordan*, flock'd to hear him preach, but even some of the *Jewish Sanhedrim* began to doubt, whether he was not the *Messiah* himself.—Accordingly we are told in this Chapter, *That they sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who art thou? What sayest thou*

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of

of thyself? A most commodious Opportunity this, had he any Thing in view but his Master's Glory and the Good of Souls, for *John* to have set up for himself.—He might have said, "*Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*; if People will be deceived let them, I will impose on their Credulity, and let them look upon me as the *Messiah*:" But scorning any such sinister and base Ends, *He confessed, and denied not, but confessed I am not the*

Christ.—The Evangelist expresses himself in a very peculiar manner, *He confessed, and denied not, but confessed*; implying that he took more than ordinary Pains to rectify their Mistake, and guard them against thinking more highly of him than they ought to think: Nay impatient, as it were, of the least Appearance of any such Thing, he speaks of himself in the most diminutive Terms, acknowledges that he was unworthy even of carrying his blessed Master's Shoes, and seizes the very first Opportunity that offer'd itself to point him out in Person to the People.—The next Day (Ver. 29.) *John* seeth *Jesus* coming unto him, and upon seeing him immediately cries out, *Behold the Lamb of God*: “Gaze not on, nor let your Views terminate in me, but look to and *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the World*.”—Thus *John* spoke in public; and to prove that he acted the same consistent Part in private, our Text informs us, that, *Again, he next Day after, John* flood and two of his Disciples, who like other newly awaken'd Souls, having their Master's Person too much in Admiration, he labours to divert their Views also from himself to Christ, and that too in the very same Lan

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guage. For looking upon *Jesus* as he walked, he saith, *Behold the Lamb of GOD*.

Thus does this disinterested, honest-hearted Baptist, unweariedly, and repeatedly recommend the *Lord Jesus*, under the same endearing Character of *The LAMB of GOD*.

It shall be our Business in the following Discourse,

First, To show you why it is that *Jesus Christ* is stiled *The LAMB of GOD*. And,

Secondly, What we, are to understand by *beholding him*. Way will then be made for a Word of Application.

And First, Why is *Jesus* stiled *The LAMB of GOD*? I presume one Reason that may be assign'd for it may be drawn from the Account we have given us of his most amazing and unparalelled Meekness. A Lamb, you all know, is one of the most pacific Creatures in the World. When we would describe, or point out a Person of a peaceable Disposition, we say such a one is as quiet as a Lamb. But what is the Meekness of any Person, even *Moses* himself, nay, of all the Saints that ever liv'd, put them altogether, in Comparision of the Meekness of the blessed *Jesus*?—To prove this, I might refer you to his whole Life, which was one continued meek and patient enduring of Contradiction of Sinners against

himself; but if you want me to specify particular Instances, only take a Walk with me to *Gethsemane's* Garden; there you will see the Traitor *Judas* at the Head of a Troop of Ruffians? accosting his glorious Lord with a *Hail Master kissing him, and then betraying him*. But what says the Prince of Peace? Only, *Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, be*

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trayest thou the Son of Man with a Kiss? But how does this same *Jesus* behave after he was apprehended? Even in the same meek Manner: For when his warm-hearted Disciple Peter, thro' a misguided Zeal, had cut off the High Priest's Servant's Ear, *Suffer ye*, said the Holy *Jesus, thus far*.—In all Probability these Words were address'd by our Lord to the Officers who had tied his Hands behind him.—As tho' he had said, "Be pleased to unloose me, whilst I cure that Poor Man's Ear, which my too forward Disciple hath imprudently cut off, and then you shall bind me again." Was ever Reply, was there ever Meekness like unto this thy Meekness, O thou blessed LAMB of GOD! Well did *Isaiah* prophecy concerning thee, *That thou shouldst be led as a Lamb to the Slaughter*, which goes as willingly to the Shambles, as to the Pasture: And as justly might thy Forerunner call upon Sinners to behold thee under the pacific Character of The LAMB of GOD.—Help us, holy *Jesus*, to come at thy Invitation, and to learn of thee, who gavest such amazing Evidences of thy being meek and lowly in Heart! Then, and not 'till then, shall we find true Rest in our Souls.

But further, the dear *Lord Jesus* may properly be call'd A LAMB, or *The LAMB*, by way of Emphasis, not only in Allusion to the Lamb that was offer'd under the Law Morning and Evening, but more especially because he was typified by the Paschal Lamb.—Hence he is stiled, by that Prince of Preachers St. *Paul*, CHRIST our *Passover*; and in Allusion to the same, the Apostle Peter tells us, *That we are not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, from our vain Conversation, but with the*

precious

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precious Blood of JESUS CHRIST, as of a LAMB without Blemish and without Spot.—This was an indispensable Requisite to be found in the Paschal Lamb. It was to be a Lamb without Blemish. A proper Type of him who knew no Sin, but was spotlessly holy, harmless, and altogether undefiled in Heart, Lip, and Life. Indeed, if we consider him as having the

Chastisement of our Peace, and the Iniquities of us all laid upon him by way of Imputation, he was, as some Divines express it, the greatest Sinner that ever was: And we should esteem him to be such in Reality, were we to judge of his Innocence by the abusive and barbarous Treatment that he met with whilst tabernacling on Earth.—But, notwithstanding all this, he was without Sin, and therefore could boldly and truly give Men and Devils the Challenge, and say, *Which of you convinceth me of Sin? The Prince of this World cometh, but shall find nothing in me.*—There was no Corruption in the Heart of this immaculate LAMB of GOD for Satan's Temptations to lay hold on: But this properly belongeth only to him: For any of his Followers, tho' arrived at the highest Pitch of Christian Perfection, much less for young Converts, mere Novices in the Things of God, to presume that they either have, or ever shall, while on this Side Eternity, arrive at such a sinless State, argues such an Ignorance of the spiitual Extent of the Moral Law, of the true Interpretation of God's Word, of the universal Experience of God's People in all Ages, as well as of the remaining unmortified Corruptions of their own desperately wicked and deceitful Hearts, that I dare venture to tell the Preachers and

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Abettors of any such Doctrine, however knowing they may be in other Respects, that they know not the true Nature of Gospel-Holiness, nor the Compleatness of a Believer's standing in the unspotted imputed Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*, as they ought to know, or as I trust they themselves, thro' Divine Grace, will be made to know before they die. Surely it is high Time to awake out of this delusive Dream! Pardon this short, (would to God there was no Occasion of adding) tho' too necessary a Digression.

But to proceed. The Paschal Lamb was farther typical of *Christ*, its great Antitype, in that it was to be killed in the Evening, and afterwards roasted with Fire. So *Christ*, our Passover, was sacrificed for us in the Evening of the World; only with this material Difference, the Paschal Lamb was first slain, and then roasted; whereas the holy *Jesus*, the spotless LAMB of GOD, was burnt and roasted in the Fire of his Father's Wrath before he actually expir'd upon the Cross.—To satisfy you of this, if you can bear to be Spectators of such an awful Tragedy, as I desired you just now to go with me to the Entrance, so I must now entreat you to venture a little further into the same Garden. But—stop—What is that

we see? Behold the LAMB of GOD, undergoing the most direful Tortures of vindictive Wrath! Of the People, even of his Disciples, there is none with him. Alas! was ever Sorrow like unto that Sorrow, wherewith his innocent Soul was afflicted in this Day of his Father's fierce Anger? Before he enter'd into this bitter Passion, out of the Fulness of his Heart, he said, *Now is my Soul*

troubled

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troubled.—But how is it troubled now! His Agony bespeaks it to be *Exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death.* It extorts Sweat, yea, a bloody Sweat. His Face, his Hands, his Garments, are all over stain'd with Blood.—It extorts strong Cryings and many Tears.—See how the incarnate Deity lies prostrate before his Father, who now laid on him the Iniquities of us all. See how he agonizes in Prayer! Hark! Again! and again he addresses his Father with an *If it be possible, let this Cup pass from me!* Tell me, ye blessed Angels, tell me *Gabriel*, (or whatsoever thou art called, who wast sent from Heaven in this important Hour, to strengthen our agonizing Lord) tell me, if ye can, what *Christ* endured in this dark and doleful Night; and tell me, tell me what you yourselves felt when you heard this same God-Man, whilst expiring on the accursed Tree, breaking forth into that dolorous, unheard-of Expostulation, *My God, my God, why, or how hast thou forsaken me?* Were you not all struck dumb? And did not an universal awful Silence fill Heaven itself, when God the Father said unto his Sword, *sword finite thy Fellow?* Well might Nature put on its sable Weeds; well might the Rocks rend, to shew their Sympathy with a suffering Saviour, and well might the Sun withdraw its Light, as tho' it was shock'd and confounded to see its Maker suffer.—But our Hearts are harder than Rocks, or otherwise they would now break, and our Souls more stupid than any Part of the inanimate Creation, or they would even now, in some degree, at least, sympathize with a crucified Redeemer; who for us Men, and for our Salvation, was thus roasted, as it were, in the

Fire

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Fire of his Father's Wrath, and therefore fitly stiled *The LAMB of GOD.*
But further. The Paschal Lamb was typical of *Christ* our Passover in another respect. For as the Blood of the Lamb, after it was slain, was sprinkled upon the Door Posts of the *Israelite's* Houses, so the Blood of

Jesus Christ, shed for the Sins of the World, is to be applied to, and by Faith sprinkled upon the Hearts of the true *Israel* of God. And as the destroying Angel had no Power to execute Vengeance on, or hurt those whose Door-Posts were thus sprinkled with the Blood of the Paschal Lamb, so in the great and terrible Day of the Lord, he shall be prohibited both from destroying or hurting true Believers, who by a living Faith in the Blood of *Jesus*, have their Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience. Hence the Blood of *Christ* is called *The Blood of sprinkling*.—And lastly. As the Lamb under the Law was feasted upon by God’s People, after it was slain, so Believers under the Gospel by Faith, feast upon a crucified Redeemer.—*Christ, our Passover*, says the Apostle, *is sacrificed for us*, therefore let us keep the Feast, not barely upon an *Easter Day*, but all the Year round. For the just, *i.e.* truly justified Souls live by Faith, and find, by happy Experience, that in a spiritual Sense *Christ’s* Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed; and therefore believing on him is stiled *Eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of the Son of Man*. Agreeable to this in our Communion Office, the Minister, when he gives the Bread to the Communicants, is directed to make use of these affecting Words, “*Take and eat this in Remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed*

“on

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“*on him in thy heart by Faith with Thanksgiving.*” May all who give, and all that receive that Bread, feel the meaning of this Form of sound Words experimentally, and powerfully pressed home upon their Souls! Then indeed, but not ’till then, may they expect to take this holy Sacrament to their Comfort. Upon all these Accounts then, well might the Baptist recommend the holy *Jesus* under the significant Character of the LAMB. And with equal Propriety might he be called *The LAMB* of GOD, not only because he was a LAMB of GOD the Father’s providing, but because he was co-equal, co-essential with the Father, *The Word that was with God, the Word that was God, even God over all, God blessed for evermore.*—For ever adored be the triune God for this great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh! Oh may it be continually marvellous in our Eyes! Oh make us thou altogether lovely, Redeemer, like-minded with thy blessed Angels, that with them we may always so eagerly, and so perseveringly desire to look into that neither the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, or Pride of Life, may ever in the least divert us from beholding thee!

What this beholding him imports, comes next to be consider'd, under our second general Head.

And here I take it for granted, that it cannot imply a beholding the *Lord Jesus* in Person with our bodily Eyes. 'Tis true, indeed, when *John* call'd upon the People, and his Disciples to behold the LAMB of GOD, they were thus highly favour'd: And we are apt to say within ourselves, blessed are the Eyes which saw what they saw; and so undoubtedly they were.

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But had their Views terminated only in beholding his Person, or knowing him barely according to the Flesh, they might notwithstanding have died in their Sins, and been condemned to depart from him into everlasting Fire prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels.—Our Lord himself hath told us, that there will be many who will plead that they eat and drank in his Presence, and heard him preach in their Streets, to whom he will say, *Verily I know you not*.—A true Beholding of the LAMB of GOD, must therefore necessarily import something more; and what can that be but a beholding him with an Eye of Faith? This is what the Old Testament Saints were invited to, when the glorious Redeemer call'd upon them in those emphatic Terms, *Behold me, behold me*; and again, *Look unto me all the Ends of the Earth*.—This our Lord in another Place terms *Believing on him*. *Blessed are they which have not seen me, and yet have believed*: Not barely as the Result of a mere rational Conviction, which is no more than an historical Faith, but as the Consequence of a true spiritual Conviction of our being every way undone, and liable to eternal Condemnation without him. This is believing on him with the Heart, and is sometimes express'd by *coming to, receiving, and trusting in him*. Different Expressions, but all importing one and the self same thing *I wound, and I heal*.—That is the Method the Holy Ghost takes, and that is the Pattern Gospel-Ministers must follow in preaching him; from any other, though prescrib'd to us by an Angel from Heaven, good Lord deliver us!

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But secondly. By beholding the LAMB of GOD, we are to understand not only looking to him so as to trust him for the Pardon of our Sins, but beholding him so as to have our Hearts broke with a true and godly

Sorrow for having crucified and slain him by them. For thus speaks the Lord, by the Mouth of the Prophet Zechariah, They *shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for an only Son, and shall be in Bitterness for him, as one that is in Bitterness for his first-born.*—This Prediction was in some degree fulfill'd immediately after the Descent of the Holy Ghost, in the Days of *Pentecost*, when so many being prick'd to the Heart, were made to look to, believe on and lament over a pierced *Jesus*. But it will be continually fulfilling in the Experience of every true Beholder of the LAMB of GOD, 'till Time shall be no more. True Faith, at the same Time as it opens the Heart to receive *Christ*, melts and dissolves it into Tears of godly Sorrow, for having betray'd and crucified him. Such were the Tears of *Mary* when she wash'd the Feet of her Sing-forgiving Lord. They flow'd from a Sense of pardoning Love. She lov'd much, having much forgiven her. And tho' she knew the Lord had forgiven her, yet she could not forgive herself. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.*—Hence those repenting Tears: They proceeded from Love: Sorrow, flowing from any other Principle, is not a godly but a legal Sorrow, which the most abandon'd Wretch may have without the least degree of Saving Grace. Thus we hear of a *Judas* his repenting, and of an *Esau* crying out with an exceeding bitter Cry, but the one all the while was a prophane Per

son, and the other immediately went and hanged himself. And why? Their Sorrow was only extorted by a Fear of Hell, and a despairing Sense of impending Ruin. 'Tis true, a godly Sorrow may, and I believe generally does, begin with something of this Nature; but then it does not end there. Thro' Want of a due Consideration of this, 'tis to be fear'd, many seeming Converts have taken up with a few legal Convictions, which never ended in savingly and truly beholding the LAMB of GOD.—May none here present, by a half-way Repentance, and hypocritical Sorrow for Sin, add to the unhappy Number!

But this is not all. A scriptural Beholding of the LAMB of GOD, denotes not only such a relying on *Christ* for Pardon of Sin as is attended with a truly godly Sorrow for it, but such a believing on him, as is productive of a holy Life, and a universal chearful Observance of all his Divine Commands. When the two Disciples mention'd in our Text, heard *John* speak, we are told that they followed him, *viz.* the *Lord Jesus Christ*. And if God hath given us an hearing Ear, when call'd upon to behold the

LAMB of GOD, we shall certainly have an obedient Heart, and follow him in the Way of holy Obedience. But then it will be an Obedience flowing from Love. A working not for, but from Life.—Not out of a servile Fear of being damn'd, but from a grateful Sense of having received the Beginning of Salvation in our Hearts. And this is what the Apostle calls *Faith working by Love*.—Many, I know, censure and look upon us as Troublers of of *Israel*, for preaching up the Doctrine of Justification

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tion by Faith alone, in the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ. We own the Charge. We do preach, and hope shall continue to preach it, 'till we can preach no more. *Luther* stiles it *Articulus stantis aut cadentis Ecclesiæ*; the Article by which the Church must stand or fall; and in the 9th Article of our own Church, it is term'd *A most wholesome Doctrine*.—Take away this, and you take away the only solid Foundation upon which a truly weary and heavy laden Sinner can possibly build his Hopes of Pardon and Acceptance in the Sight of a holy and Sin-avenging God. But why this Outcry against the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone? They say this Doctrine destroys good Works. But do we, by preaching this Doctrine, make void the Law of God? No. We thereby establish the Law. For, *Tho' Faith alone justifies, yet*, as the Good old *Puritans* used to observe, *that Faith which is alone justifieth not*. Agreeable to this speaketh the 12th Article of our Church. *Albeit, that good Works which are the Fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our Sins, and endure the Severity of God's Judgment, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith, insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a Tree is discern'd by the Fruit*.—They therefore who object against our insisting upon Justification by Faith alone, as destructive of Morality, not only betray great Ignorance of the Articles of our Church, and of God's Word, but give too great Reason to suspect, that they never experienced the blessed Influence of a true and lively Faith in their own Hearts. For true and

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undefil'd Religion is nothing more, or less, than a universal Morality, founded upon the Love of God and Faith in *Christ Jesus*. And a true beholding him as pierced for our Sins, will, in its own Nature, sweetly compel us to cry out. *What shall we render unto the Lord?*—It was this,

that, perhaps, in a Quarter of an Hour, made that covetous worldling *Zaccheus* give half of his Goods to the Poor. It was this, that all of a sudden made the Jailor wash the Stripes of those whom he had but a little before thrust into an inward Prison. It was this that caused *Lydia* whose Heart the Lord had open'd, so freely to open her House to entertain the Apostles: And it was this that excited the Apostles themselves, in general, and *St. Paul* in particular, to bid adieu to worldly Honours, to glory in nothing but the Cross of *Christ*, and to fly like an Arch-Angel, from Pole to Pole, publishing the blessed and everlasting Gospel. *The Love of Christ*, said he, *constraineth us*.—Preaching Faith in this Manner, seems to me the only scriptural Way of preaching *Christ*; and by this Means we shall steer a middle Course, between two dangerous Extremes. For to insist only upon Morality and Good Works, and not lay a true lively Faith, as a Foundation whereon they are to be built, (as it is to be fear'd too many do) is to act like Pharaoh's Task-Master, and bid People make Brick without shewing them where to get Straw. *My Soul, come not thou into their Secret!* On the other hand, to call upon People to believe in, and behold the LAMB of GOD, and at the same Time not exhort them to maintain Good Works, as an Evidence and Fruit of their beholding him, is the Way to

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turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness. And therefore, however Evangelical such Preachers may seem in their own Eyes, yet if the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets, of our *Lord* and his Apostles, are to be our Judges, they do not rightly divide the Word of Truth. *To their Assembly, mine Honour be not thou united!*

Once more. A true beholding of the LAMB of GOD, implies such a beholding him, as will transform us into his divine Likeness. This will be the effect of our seeing him as he is in Heaven; and this, in its Degree, will always be the Consequence of our beholding him, with an Eye of a true and lively Faith on Earth. When *Moses* came down from Mount *Horeb*, where he had been convening with God, we are told that his Face shone; and if we have been upon the Mount of Ordinances beholding by Faith the blessed Image of GOD, tho' our Faces will not shine, yet our Hearts will be moulded into his blessed Image. This is what the Apostle *Paul* terms in one Place, *Being transformed by the renewing of our Minds*; and in another, *Passing from Glory to Glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord*.—All Manifestations, of whatever Kind or Degree, if not attended

with this transforming and truly iiniifying Influence, are unprofitable, delusive, or merely imaginary. *Balaam* could call himself the Man whose Eyes were open, and the Man who had seen the Visions of the Almighty, and yet he was a poor Worldling all the while. He loved the Wages of Unrighteousness, tho' forced by God not to receive them.—Hence we may easily, and ra

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tionally account for the falling away of some, and it may be the final Apostacy of many others, who in the late religious Stir (as some are pleas'd to call it) seem'd to be uncommonly gifted, and to be lifted up, as it were, to the third Heaven.—Satan being sensible that the Holy Spirit of God was working a great Work upon the Earth, turns himself into an Angel of Light, introduces his Extraordinaries, and thereby mimics God's true Work now, as the Magicians were once permitted to mimic the real Miracles of *Moses*, formerly.—Such Counterfeits, those who are not ignorant of Satan's Devices, ought from Time to Time to add all Diligence to search out and detect; but after the utmost Caution imaginable, I believe we shall find the Saying of a very zealous Reformer (who thought, at his first coming out, that he should convert the whole World) to be too true, viz. *That old Satan will be in many Cases too hard for young Melancthorn*.—Satan is an old Practitioner, and we, comparatively speaking, but Novices; and therefore no Wonder, that we sometimes mistake his Extraordinaries for the powerful Operations of the Holy Spirit; or look upon those, at least for a while, who are only stony-ground Hearers, and have received the Word with Joy, as tho' they were truly converted to, and had by a living, Soul-transforming Faith, beheld the LAMB OF GOD.—Such Mistakes may serve to make us more cautious; but to condemn a Work in the Lump, as merely delusive and diabolical, or roundly to affirm that all the pretended Subjects of it have taken up only with an Ideal *Christ*, because some have mistaken Imaginations for the true spiritual Manifestation of Gods Love to

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their Hearts, discover such an Ignorance of Scripture, of Satan's Devices, and the Accounts given us of past Revivals in all Ages, that if one did not know the dreadful Blindness of a bigoted Sectarian Zeal, and what a Proneness there is in the best of Men to condemn every Thing that

doth not come just in their own Way, we should think it morally impossible that good Men should run such Lengths as some have done of late, in censuring what I think may be call'd, amidst all the Infirmities and Weaknesses that have attended it, *A great and glorious Work of God.*

But 'tis Time for me to draw nearer to a Conclusion.—We have now then, my dear Hearers, done with the Doctrinal Part of our Text; in opening of which, that we might deal with you as rational Creatures, we have endeavour'd calmly, and in the Fear of God, to address ourselves to your Understandings: But the hardest Work is yet behind, namely, to affect and warm your Hearts.—This I take to be the very Life of preaching; For Man is a compound Creature, made up of Affections, as well as Understanding; and, consequently, without addressing both, we only do our Work by Halves.—'Tis true, every one hath his proper Gift, and some excel in making use of a proper Method to inform the Judgment, whilst others are more eminent for exciting the Passions.—Both are beautiful in their Season; and both ought and will be used by all who have warm Hearts, as well as clear Heads. *Moses* and the Prophets, *Christ* and his Apostles, dealt much in Exhortations, as well as in opening and explaining the weighty Mat

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ters of the Law.—And if we are taught by the same Spirit, we shall, like them, bring Light and Heat with us, when call'd to speak of, and enforce the Things which concern the Kingdom of God.—Without a proper Mixture of these, however, a Preacher may acquire the Character in the Letter-learned and polite World, of being a calm and cool Reasoner, yet he never will be look'd upon by those whose Senses are exercis'd to discern spiritual Things, as a truly Evangelical and Christian Orator.—And surely, if a Minister's Heart is ever warm, it ought to be so in a more especial Manner, when calling on a blind and drowzy World, to behold the LAMB of GOD.—Oh! that my Tongue was at this Time touch'd with a Coal from his Altar.—Oh! that my cold and frozen Heart (for I must again repeat the Wish I put up at the Beginning of this Discourse) was in the same blessed and divine Frame, as we have Reason to believe the Holy Baptist was favour'd with, when he call'd upon his Disciples and the People, so repeatedly, to behold the LAMB of GOD.—But to whom shall I apply myself first? Or with what Language shall I address you when pressing you to the same important Thing?

Will my Brethren in the Ministry suffer a Word of Exhortation from one who is less than the least of them all? Does not the Practice of this fervent Harbinger and Fore-runner of the SON of GOD, naturally lead me to it? For did he so unweariedly recommend the Lord *Jesus*? Did he take such Care to preach not himself but *Christ Jesus* his Lord? And shall not we make this same *Jesus*, the Alpha, and Ome

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ga, the Beginning and End of all our Discourses? Did he take such Pains to debase himself, exalt his Lord, and evidence to the World that he was disinterested, and sought not his own Glory, but the Glory of him whose Forerunner he was? And shall we not go and do likewise? To prepare the Redeemer's Way before him, by turning the Hearts of the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just, and to proclaim a coming Saviour, *John* esteemed his highest Honour.—This is an Employ worthy Angels. They thought themselves highly favour'd, when sent to give Notice of the Mediator's Birth to some humble Shepherds. And I hope I am speaking to some, who had rather be employed in such an Errand, than be Ambassadors to the greatest Monarchs on Earth.—Go on then, my Brethren, or rather Fathers, as it becomes such a one as I to call you. Ye Angels of the Churches, Ye Stewards of the Mysteries of God, go on in the Name and Strength of the everlasting I AM: Preach *Christ* and him crucified; continue to preach him: Be instant in Season, and out of Season; and tho' you should be call'd to suffer for so doing, fear not, but rather rejoice, and be exceeding glad: Great will be your Reward in Heaven: For so persecuted they *John* the Baptist, and others that have been employ'd in calling upon Sinners to behold the LAMB of GOD before you.

Are any here present who are entrusted with the Care of Youth that are intended for the Ministry? My Text warns me not to leave you out in this Address. *John* directed his Disciples to behold the LAMB of GOD: And ought not such who have the Oversight of those who are

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hereafter to be employ'd in the same divine Work as *John* was, to make it one main Part of their daily Endeavours to bring their Pupils to a true experimental and saving Acquaintance with the ever blessed LAMB of GOD? This may be done without leaving any one necessary Branch of

true Knowledge and useful Learning undone. A Neglect of this important Point hath been, and it is to be fear'd even now is, the Bane of the Christian Church. For, if young Men's Minds are from Year to Year wholly engag'd in studying the Heathen Mythology, instead of being shewn the Beauties of the New Testament; if they are taught to delight more in reading *Cæsar's* Commentaries, or the Exploits of an *Alexander*, than to admire the Miracles of *Jesus of Nazareth*; if they are directed to employ themselves more in giving an Account of *Homer's* Battles, than of the important War between *Michael* and the *Dragon*; if it is esteem'd a greater Excellency to be engaged in studying the Folds of a *Roman* Garment, than to enquire into the various Turnings and Windings of their own corrupt Hearts; If these, and such like trifling Things, are recommended to their daily Study, and the glorious Doctrines of the Gospel, such as Regeneration, Justification, &c. wholly neglected, or superficially spoken of, is it any Wonder, that so many ignorantly strike their Heads against the Pulpit, or appear when put into it, more like *Heathen* Philosophers, or *Roman* Orators, than Gospel-Preachers, tho' without half the Clearness and sound Reasoning of the one, or a thousandth Part of the true Pathos and unaffected Eloquence of the other? The recommending

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and enforcing the Practical Study of the Doctrines and Example of the blessed *Jesus*, seems to me to be the only Remedy for this great, not to say growing Evil.

And therefore, I beg leave in the next Place to address myself to those who are now actually engaged in the Study of Divinity, and are desirous of being prepar'd according to the Preparation of the Sanctuary, for the great and solemn Work of calling upon Sinners to behold the LAMB of GOD. When *John* the Baptist was thus employ'd, he took Care to assure the People that he himself was well acquainted with that *Christ*. *I saw*, said he, *and bear Record, that this is the Son of God*. And doth not this at least intimate to you, young Students, that above all Things you should study to get an experimental Acquaintance with the *Lord Jesus* in your own Hearts, before you attempt to recomemend him to the Choice of others? Then, having believed, you will speak: Speak not as mere dead, formal, letter-learn'd Scribes, but as Men having Authority: You will then, like *John* the Baptist, *Be the Voice of one crying*: You will lift up your Voices like Trumpets: You will preach not with the enticing Words of

Man's Wisdom, but with the Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power: This, with a moderate Share of useful Learning, which is quite necessary in its Place, will enable you to do Wonders; Vallies shall be filled up, Mountains shall be brought low, and a Highway made, thro' your Instrumentality, into Sinners Hearts, by the blessed and all-powerful Operations of the Spirit of the everliving God.—Such a Method, perhaps, may render your preaching a little un

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fashionable, but *it is the only Way* to render it useful, and truly Evangelical. Take the Apostle *Paul* for your Ensample. He was a great Scholar, as well as a great Saint; and if call'd to it, could have fought the learned World with their own Weapons; but he chose to fight only with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: And even when preaching at so polite a Place as Corinth, determin'd to know nothing amongst them but *Jesus Christ* and him crucified. He too, like another *John*, made it his constant, uninterrupted Employ to beseech poor Sinners to behold the LAMB of GOD. May that Mind be in you, which was also in Him!

But do not the Words of our Text lead me to address all in general, as well as Tutors and their Pupils in particular? Yes; to you, even to as many as hear me this Day, whether high, or low, rich or poor, young or old, one with another, may a Word of Exhortation naturally be directed.—It was to the People, as well as to his Disciples, that *John*, when he saw *Jesus* coming unto him, spoke those endearing Words, *Behold the LAMB of GOD*.—I therefore call upon you all in the same Language, and for the same Reason; for it is he, and he alone that taketh away the Sins of the World.—It is this that you all stand in need of, whether you know it or not. You are all stung by that old and crooked Serpent the Devil. *Therefore, as Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so was the Son of Man lifted up that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* Oh then behold him, behold him! Look unto him all ye Ends of the Earth, even ye upon whom the Ends of the World are come,

and

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and be ye saved: Some of you I trust, thro' Grace, have already been enabled to do this. Oh come, come, I beseech you, and repeat the blessed Look, for this is the Christians grand Catholicon, the sovereign Remedy

for all the remaining Diseases of his Soul. Are ye tempted? Behold the LAMB of GOD. *He was tempted in all Things like as we are*, that he might be able experimentally to sympathize with, and succour those that are tempted. Are ye deserted, and bewailing an absent God? Behold the LAMB of GOD: He once complain'd, and that too to his own Creatures, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death*. He once cry'd out, and that to his heav'nly Father, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.*—Are ye poor? Behold the LAMB of GOD; he had not where to lay his Head. Are ye betray'd and forsaken by Friends? Behold the LAMB of GOD; he, was betray'd by *Judas*, denied by *Peter*, and when apprehended, all forsook him and fled.—Are you blacken'd and malign'd by Enemies? Behold the LAMB of GOD, he was counted a mad Man, a Deceiver, nay, a Belzebub, the very chief of the Devils. Are ye afraid of Death, or dying? Behold the LAMB of GOD; he hath taken away the Sting of that King of Terrors, and came to deliver those, who thro' fear of Death were all their life-time subject to Bondage. Doubt ye whether ye shall hold out to the End? Behold the LAMB of GOD; *He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith*; and having lov'd his own, he lov'd them even unto the End.—Do ye want more Grace, either to mortify remaining Corruption, or to enable you to bring forth more Fruit unto God? Behold the LAMB of
 GOD;

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GOD; *Out of his Fulness we may all receive, and that too, even Grace for Grace*; Grace upon Grace, Grace to beget more Grace, even till we are fill'd with all the Fulness of God. Oh, ye Believers, my Heart is enlarg'd towards you; Look to, and live much on the Blessed *Jesus*; and then you will live to, and act for him more and more: Be thankful for what you have received, but be looking out continually for fresh Discoveries of his Love, and fresh Incomes of heavenly Grace, 'till you are call'd to behold this LAMB of GOD in Glory. That Time, blessed be God, will shortly come. Tho' *Worms destroy our Bodies, yet in our Flesh we shall see our God*; not as we do now, thro' a Glass darkly, but Face to Face, see him as he is; and what is yet better, be growing up more and more into his divine Likeness, thro' the endless Ages of Eternity. But as for ungodly and obstinate Unbelievers that die in their Sins, it shall not be so with them. Behold him indeed you shall; behold him you must. *For yet a little while and we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ*. But Oh! how shall I speak, it? You must behold him once never to behold him any more! Behold him not so much as the LAMB of GOD, as the Lion

of the Tribe of *Judah*, and hear him roaring out that dreadful Sentence, *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels.*— Oh think of this all ye that have hitherto neglected to behold this LAMB of GOD by Faith, so shall Unbelief not prove your final Ruin. To you, even to you I once more call, Blessed be God, the Door of Mercy is not yet shut; the Day of Grace is not yet over. Look unto him and you shall yet be sav'd:

His

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His Heart is open, and his Arms stretch'd out ready to receive you.— Oh that he would rend the Heavens and came down amongst you, and as he had once Compassion upon a Poor Woman, that was bow'd down with the Spirit of Infirmity, *lo eighteen years!* Oh that he would repeat that all-powerful Command, *Be ye loos'd from your Infirmity*, and enable every unconverted Sinner to look up to, and behold the LAMB of GOD! However, if you will not come to him that you might have Life, God forbid that I should cease to pray for you. O Lord God most holy, O Lord God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, by thine, Agony and bloody Sweat, by thy Cross and Passion, by thy precious Death and Burial, by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, we humbly entreat thee to help all such to take the Warning that has now been given them! Oh help them to behold thee by Faith here, that so no Pains of Hell may fall from thee whenever they are summoned to appear before thy awful Tribunal hereafter! I am persuaded all that love the *Lord Jesus* in Sincerity, will lay, *Amen! Even so Lord Jesus! Amen! and Amen!*

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MATT. xxvi, 75.

*And Peter remembered the Words of Jesus, which said unto
Before the Cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice:
And he went out, and wept bitterly.*

BIOGRAPHY, as one observes, is the best History; or, in other Words, writing or reading the Lives of great and good Men, is one of the most profitable and delightful Kinds of History we can entertain ourselves with.—For hereby we are convinced, that Wisdom's Ways are indeed Ways of Pleasantness; and being proved to be practicable by Men of like Passions with ourselves, we are insensibly allured to follow them as they followed Christ, and encouraged to run with Patience the Race set before us.—This, one would hope, is the grand End proposed by all such who undertake to draw the Characters, or hand down to Posterity the remarkable transactions of Persons who have shone as Lights in the Church of God.—Many have done worthily in this Respect; and for this their Labour of Love, thousands as yet unborn shall rise and call them blessed. But without detracting any Thing from their due Praise, I cannot help observing, that in most of the Lives that I have had an Opportunity of perusing, there seems to be one Deficiency, I could almost say, common to them all. It is

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this, The Writers of them seldom or never mention the Blemishes or Falls of those whose Characters they exhibit. They emblazon their good, without so much as hinting at any of their bad Qualities. In short, they paint them blameless, and by not mentioning any of their Foibles, or the Sins that *did not easily beset them*, they make them, as it were, equal to the Angels of God, or rather to the Son of God himself, of whom alone

it can truly be said, *That he was without Sin*.—Such a Method (however well meant, because we are more prone to imitate others Vices than their Virtues) to speak in the softest Terms, is not according to the Pattern shewn us in the Mount, The Scriptures set us a different Copy. In those lively Oracles, as in a well drawn Picture, we have both Shade and Light; and at the same Time as they paint out to us, in the most striking Manner, the Graces for which the holy Men of old were most eminent, they also, with an equally impartial Hand, expose to public View not only the common Infirmities, but even some of the most dreadful Falls, with all their aggravating Circumstances, of some of the greatest Men of God that ever did, or will live, 'till Time itself shall be no more.

One of these is to be the mournful Subject of our present Meditation.—*Procul ite profani!* Let all profane Persons keep at an awful Distance. We are going to tread on holy Ground. I set an Hedge about it in the Name of the Living God. Come not too nigh the Mount, lest that which was written for your Learning, thro' your own perverse Abuse of it, should prove unto you a further Occasion of falling.

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If any should enquire, “Why all this Caution?” I answer, “We are about to discourse on the Apostle *Peter's* shameful Denial of his and our blessed Lord and Saviour, *Jesus Christ*.”—A Passage recorded by all the Evangelists, St. *Mark* himself not excepted, who is supposed to have been Amanuensis to St. *Peter*, and to have taken his Gospel from *Peter's* own Mouth.—A Proof this not only of the Impartiality of the sacred Writers, but also that the Holy Ghost intended that this awful Story should, in an especial Manner, be recorded for our Learning, on whom the Ends of the World are come. But though all the Evangelists are very explicite in relating this perfidious and wicked Act, yet we shall chiefly confine ourselves, at present, to the Account given us of it in this 26th Chapter of St. *Matthew*, and for Method Sake purpose to consider:

1st. The Steps. that led to this Great Man's Fall.

2d. The Fall itself.—And,

3d. His Recovery from it, mentioned in the Text.

And Peter remembered the Words of Jesus, which said unto him before the Cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.

But before we proceed to the Prosecution of these Points, it may be proper to premise, that we take it for granted the Apostle *Peter*, before his Fall, was certainly a Converted Man.—This is controverted by some.

For what Reasons is best known to themselves. The Scriptures evidently leave us no Room to dispute it. One Passage may suffice for a Proof. *Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jonah*, said the Glorious *Emanuel* to

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Peter

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Peter when he witnessed that good Confession, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God; for Flesh and Blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven*. Not content with this, he adds,—*Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail against it*;—Words that carry with them the strongest Presumption, not only that *Peter* was a converted Man, but that he had some eminent Place to be assigned him in the Kingdom of Grace. For our Lord pronounces him blessed.—*Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jonas*. And gives him a Reason for it.—*For Flesh and Blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my heavenly Father*.—So that *Peter* called Christ Lord by the Holy Ghost, which none but converted Person can do.—And further, *Upon this Rock*, says Christ, *will I build my Church*, which whether it be understood of his Confession of Christ's Divinity, or his being afterwards to be employed in first preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, seems to denote some peculiar Favour and Honour assigned to and hereafter to be conferred upon him. It is true, indeed, the same all-seeing Redeemer, when afterwards he fore-warned him of his Fall, subjoined this particular Command.—*And when thou art converted strengthen thy Brethren*. But this only implies that his Fall would be so exceeding great, that his Recovery out of it would be, as it were, a second Conversion.

The Steps that led to this terrible Disaster, come now more particularly to be considered.—In order to be informed of these, (as I take it for granted you have brought your Bibles with you) I must beg you to look back to the 33d Verse

of

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of this Chapter, where we shall find that *spiritual Pride, and a too great Dependance on a Stock of Grace already received, was one of the first Steps discernable in this Apostle's Denial of his Lord*.—The Blessed *Jesus* knowing all Things that should befall him, after the solemn Institution and Celebration of his last Supper, gave his Disciples this tremendous Warning, back'd with a Scripture Prediction.—*All Ye (Verse 31) shall be offended because of me this Night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep shall*

be scattered. A Warning one would imagine terrible enough to have struck them all dumb, at least to have filled them with a holy Jealousy of their own desperately wicked and deceitful Hearts. But what says our Apostle? He (Verse 33) answered and said, *though all Men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.* Poor Peter! How unlike thy former self, when at thy first Calling, thou criedst out, *depart from me, for I am a sinful Man, O Lord.*—Alas, He now thinks his Mountain is so strong that it never could be moved.—Though all Men should be offended because of thee, yet will *I* never be offended.—Oh these Egotisms! How frequently are they used by, but how little do they become such frail Creatures as we are!—Yet will *I* never be offended; so far from being offended this Night, that I will *never*, at any time, or in any Place be offended because of thee.—No Wonder, after hearing this, that the Holy Jesus said unto him, (Verse 34) *Verily I say unto thee, that this Night, before the Cock crow, thou shalt, or will deny me thrice.* (For Christ's predicting his Fall laid him under no Necessity of falling)—Surely Peter will now retract!—Nothing less.—On the

contrary,

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contrary, depending too much on the Sincerity of his Intentions, and his present good Frame, he said unto his Master, (Ver. 35th.) *Tho' I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.*—As tho' he should have said, *“Die with thee I may.—To die with or for thee, I am ready. But to deny thee, I dare not. Deny thee in any wise I cannot, and neither will I: Is thy Servant a Dog, a Devil, that he should do this?”* Stop Peter,—Whither art thou going? Where is thy present warm Zeal carrying thee?—What! Wilt thou give the God of Truth the Lie?—I begin to tremble for thee.—Such Self-confidence and spiritual Pride, generally go before a Fall.

But to proceed. “Spiritual Sloth, as well as Spiritual Pride, help'd to throw this Apostle down.”—The Sun, that glorious Sun of Righteousness, was now about to enter into his last Eclipse. Satan, who had left him for a Season, or, 'till the Season of his Passion, is now to be permitted to bruise his Heel again.—This is his Hour, and now the Powers of Darkness summon and exert their strongest and united Efforts.—A Hymn is a Prelude to his dreadful Passion.—From the Communion-Table the Saviour retires to the Garden. An horrible Dread, and inexpressible Load of Sorrow begins to overwhelm and weigh down his innocent Soul.—His Body can scarcely sustain it: See how he falters!—See how his Hands hang down, and his Knees wax feeble under the amazing Pressure!

He is afflicted and oppress'd indeed.—See, see, O my Soul, how he sweats! But what is that which I see? Blood—Drops of Blood—great Drops of Blood failing to the Ground. Alas! was ever Sorrow like unto this Sorrow? Hark!

what's

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what's that I hear? Oh dolorous Complaint?—*Father, if it be possible let this Cup pass from me.* Hark he speaks again. Amazing! the Creator complains to the Creature, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death: Tarry you here and watch with me.* And now he retires once more.—But see how his Agony increases.—Hark! how he prays, and that too yet more earnestly! *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me.* And will his heavenly Father leave him comfortless? No.—An Angel (Oh happy highly favour'd Angel!) is sent from Heaven to strengthen him. But where is *Peter* all this while? We are told that the Holy *Jesus* took him with *James* and *John* into the Garden.—Surely he will not leave his Lord in such deep Distress! What is he doing? I blush to answer. Alas! he is *sleeping*: Nay, tho' awaken'd once by his agonizing Lord, with a *Simon Peter* *sleepest thou. What! Couldst thou not watch with me one Hour?* Yet his Eyes, notwithstanding his Profession of Constancy and Care, are heavy with Sleep. *Lord, what is Man.*

After hearing all this, we need not be surprized at the Account given us, (Ver. 58th.) of another Step to his Fall, *viz. His following Jesus afar off.*—But *Peter*, says the Evangelists, *followed him afar off.* The Redeemer's Agony was now over, And behold the Hour is at hand, when he is to be betrayed into the Hands of *Sinners*. He warns his sleepy Disciples of it, and, acting like himself, goes out to meet the threatening Storm. *Arise*, said he, *let us go, behold! he that betrayeth me is at hand. Judas*, one of the Twelve that eat of his Bread, performs the hellish Talk, and lifts up his Heel against him. He says, *Hail,*

Master!

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Master! kisses and then betrays him. For this was the Sign agreed on, *Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he, hold him fast.* They knew the Watchword, and like so many roaring lions, seize on their unresisting Prey. This rouses *Peter*. Out of an honest, but misguided Zeal, he draws his Sword and cuts off the, High Priest's Servant's Ear. The blessed *Jesus* heals the one, reproveth the other; and according to *Isaiah's* Prophecy,

Is contentedly led as a Lamb to the slaughter. Peter's heat is soon cool'd, and instead of adhering to his Lord, or saying, as might justly be expected, *Whither thou goest I will go, whithersoever they lead thee they shall lead me also;* Alas! alas! *He followed him afar off.* Observe, he does not deny his Lord all at once. No. Satan leads us on by degrees into great Sins, and will not suffer us to be very bad immediately. *Peter*, at first follows afar off: Heskulks behind, and keeps on Purpose at a Distance, lest he should be accounted one of his Follower.—Oh *Peter, Peter*, did I not know how prone my own deceitful Heart is to go astray from the great Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, I should now begin to say, Fie upon thee, fie upon thee.—Hadst thou kept close to thy Lord, thou mightest have been sheltered safely under his Almighty Wings, but how canst thou avoid falling, and that foully too, when thou beginnest thus to be ashamed of thy glorious Master?

But this is not all.—For we are not only inform'd that he followed *Jesus* afar off, but that *He went into the High Priest's Palace* (Verse 58.) and *sat with the Servants.* So that keeping bad Company was another Step that led to his great Fall.—Oh *Peter!* My Blood begins now almost

to

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to run cold within me.—I tremble for thee more than ever. What canst thou propose to thyself, or what bad Thing may we not expect to hear of thee, when sitting in such sorry Company? I had much rather have heard that thou hadst fled with thy other cowardly Brethren. Thou sitteth among thy Master's professed Enemies *to see the End.* Whatever becomes of him, I dread to hear what the End of all this gradual Backsliding will be, in respect to thy own Soul.

Well! The blessed *Jesus* is now at the Bar.—Omnipotence suffers itself to be arraigned, and he who set Bounds to the Sea which it cannot pass, is content to be bound, and that as a Criminal, by the Work of his own Hands.—False Witnesses rise up against him, and lay to his Charge Things that he knew not.—*This Fellow*, say they, (Verse 61.) *said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three Days.*—And what Reply doth the innocent *Jesus* make? None at all.—Not only because they all knew that it was a malicious Slander, but because he stood as our Representative.—He, therefore, *held his Peace*, and as a Sheep before the Shearers is dumb, so this immaculate Lamb of God opened not his Mouth.—At length, being adjured thereto by the High-Priest in the Name of the living God, he confesses himself to be the *Christ*, the Son

of the blessed; and lets the imperious *Sanhedrim* know, that however contemptible his Appearance might be now, yet they should hereafter see him sitting on the right Hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.—And does not this strike Terror into his Accusers and Judges?—By no means.—The haughty High-Priest rises in Distain, hypocritically rends his

Cloaths,

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Cloaths, urging this as a Reason, *He hath spoken Blasphemy; what further Need have we of Witnesses?* Was ever Indignity, like this Indignity, put on thee, thou most Adorable Mediator! Which shall I marvel at most, the High-Priest's Impudence, or thy Patience?—Both, doubtless, are unparalleled.—And yet, alas! a further Trial awaits our suffering Lord. For whilst the Master is thus arraign'd, insulted, and causelessly condemned at the Bar within, *Satan* is no less busy in wounding him through *Peter's* Side, who was sitting in the Palace without.—*Peter*, indeed, thinks to sit there undiscovered; But a Damsel comes to him, (Verse 69) saying, *Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.*—And what then? Was that high Treason? Or rather was it not the highest Honour? *Peter*, what sayest thou? Alas, (Verse 70) *He denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.*—Know not what thou sayest? *Peter*, her words were plain enough, *Thou also was with Jesus of Nazareth.* Can any Words be plainer?—To deny this, in the least, was bad, but to deny this *before them all*, who could so easily confront thee, proves thee to be falling indeed.—Call him now no longer *Peter*, but call him *Ichabod*.—For the Glory of the Lord is departing from him.

However, as yet there is Hope concerning him. For conscious, as it were, of his Guilt (Verse 71) *He went out into the Porch.*—*Satan* pursues him.—For when a Saint begins to fall, his hellish Language is down with him, down with him, even to the Ground. Another Damsel, therefore, is put in *Peter's* Way, who, upon seeing him, says, not unto *Peter* himself, but to them that were there, (Verse 71) *This Fellow was also*

with

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with Jesus of Nazareth. She speaks the same Language with her Sister Scoffer, and with those who accused the blessed *Jesus* at the Bar. Doubtless, our modern Scoffers are related to them, for they use the same Dialect every Day when speaking of *Christ*, or those that, through Grace, dare

to own and confess him before Men. But here would I stop and feign be excused from relating to this great Assembly *Peter's Answer*.—Oh tell it not in *Gath*, publish it not in the Streets of *Askelon*!—But we must not be wise above what is written.—The Holy Spirit hath left it upon Record, and proclaimed it by four Evangelists upon the House-Top, and, therefore, I am constrained to tell you that again (Verse 72) *He denied with an Oath, I do not know the Man*. What? An Apostle swear? Was it not enough barely to deny the Damsel's Assertion, but he must deny it with an *Oath*?—Perhaps, it was a Crime he never was guilty of before.—Surely, the Way of Sin is down-hill.—One Step leads to another.—At first he only denied what was said to him, by a Kind of Equivocation, *I know not what thou sayest*.—Now he grows bolder, and denies with an oath, *I know not the Man*.—What? *Peter!*—Know not the Man? That glorious God-Man *Christ Jesus* thy Lord?—What? Not know him, who called thee from the poor Occupation of catching Fish, to make thee an Apostle and a Fisher of Men?—What? Not know him, who had thee come to him upon the Waters, and him who with his own almighty Arm saved thee from drowning, when thou wast answering thy Name *Cephas*, and sinking like a Stone?—What? Not know him, with whom thou hast so ultimately conversed for three Years last past,

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who,

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who, so lately pronounced thee blessed, washed thy Feet, gave thee a new Name, and took thee to Mount *Tabor*, where he displayed before thee his excellent Glory, which made thee cry out, *it is good for us to be here?*—What? Hast thou forgot all this *Peter*?

Surely, it is high Time for the Cock to crow,—Hark! The Cock does crow, not only once, but twice; But all in vain.—Fallen as this great Man is, he must still fall lower—Satan is now about to give him the last and most fatal Thrust. He hath his Quiver full of deadly Arrows, and hath always Instruments at Hand, the weakest of which will foil the strongest Apostle when left to himself.—After a while (Verse 73) *came unto him they that stood by, and said unto Peter, surely, thou also wast one of them, for thy Speech betrayeth thee*.—As though they had said, “*how canst thou have the Impudence to say thou knowest not the Man, when thy very Language and Manner of speaking betrays thy being even one of his Followers?*” What says *Peter* now? Can he withstand this glaring Evidence? Yes,—He not only denies it with a single Oath, but (Oh, how shall I speak it!) he *began to curse and to swear*, and with a whole Volly of execrable

Expressions, striving to act the Bravado, he persists in saying (Verse 74) *I know not the Man*.—And now *Satan* thou hast gained by Point.—A great Man, through too much Self-Confidence, spiritual Pride, spiritual Sloth, and too great Intimacy with some of thy Children, is fallen indeed! Thou hast sifted him with a Witness.

But is he fallen never to rise again? Is Peter sunk too low for free Grace ever to raise him up? Will the Redeemer suffer his Truth to fail; or
shall

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shall the Prayer put up for him before he was led into Temptation, viz. that his Faith should not fail, remain unanswered? No, all the Promises in *Christ Jesus* are all Yea and all Amen; and having loved his own, he loves them unto the End. The Enemy hath broke in upon *Peter* like a Flood, but the almighty Redeemer will now lift up his Standard against him, and deliver his captive Servant.—*Immediately*, (Verse 74) upon this last Denial of his Lord, *the Cock crew*.—And what is most of all (nay, without which the Cock might have crowed ten thousand Times) another Evangelist tells us, that *the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter*.—Oh amazing Condescension! Oh unparalleled Instance of endearing Love! Our Lord was now upon a Trial for his Life. Fat Bulls of *Basan* were surrounding him on every Side. Yet the same Love, that in the Night in which he was betrayed, would not permit him to forget his Disciples in general, would not, though he was himself now arraigned at the Bar, suffer him to forget his poor fallen Apostle in particular.—*The Lord, therefore, turned, and looked upon Peter*:—But who, besides *Peter*, and Souls like him recovering from their Backslidings, can tell the Language of that Look?—Doubtless, it carried with it an “*Et tu Peter?—And art thou there Peter? Is it not enough for me to be falsely accused, and condemned by my Enemies, but I must be wounded also in the house of my Friends!—Is it not sufficient that Judas betrays me, but thou must add to my Grief by denying me?—Deny me too with an Oath, nay, with Oaths and Curses deny that ever thou knewest me? Is this thy Kindness to thy Friend?—Alas! What is become, of thy boasted Professions now? Art thou the Man that didst so solemnly declare, that though*

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thou shouldst die with me, thou wouldst not deny me in any wise? Yes, Thou art the Man.”

This, and much more of the same Kind, we may well suppose was the real Language of that convincing, heart-piercing, Look, which the Lord

Jesus at this Time gave his fallen *Peter*.—Amazing! He looks him into Contrition; whereas had he rewarded him according to his Iniquity, he might have looked him into Hell.—Rejoice with me, therefore, my dear Hearers.—This straying Sheep, through the tender Mercies of the compassionate Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, by this Look is brought back to the Fold again.—And *Peter*, says our Text, *remembered the Words of Jesus, which said unto him, before the Cock crow, i.e. at the Time emphatically called the Cock-crowing, which was about Three in the Morning, thou shalt deny me thrice.—And he went out* (The Word seems to import, that he threw himself out with a holy Violence) *and wept bitterly*.—St. *Mark* only says, *And when he thought thereon, he wept*.—For being an Amanuensis to St. *Peter*, though explicit in the Account of his Fall, he is very sparing in mentioning his Repentance. Unless we suppose that St. *Mark* would insinuate that whenever *Peter* reflected on his Fall, he always wept for ever after.—However that be, he wept bitterly now.—Methinks, I see him wringing, his Hands, rending his Garments, stamping on the Ground, and with the self-condemned Publican smiting upon his ungrateful Breast.—See how it heaves! Oh what piteous Sighs and Groans are those which come from the very Bottom of his Heart! Alas! It is too big to speak.—But his Tears, his briny, bitter, repenting Tears plainly bespeak this to be

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the Language of his awakened Soul.—“*Alas! Where have I been? On the Devil's Ground. With whom have I been conversing? The Devil's Children.—What is this that I have done? Denied the Lord of Glory, with Oaths and Curses denied that ever I knew him.—And now whither shall I go? Or where shall I hide my guilty Head? I have sinned against Light. I have sinned against repeated Tokens of his dear distinguishing and heavenly Love. I have sinned against repeated Warnings, Resolutions, Promises and Vows.—I have sinned openly in the Face of the Sun, in the Presence of my Master's Enemies, and thereby have caused his Name to be blasphemed. How can I think of being suffered to behold the Face of, much less to be employ'd by, the ever blessed Jesus any more? O Peter, thou hast undone thyself.—Justly mayst thou be thrown aside like a broken Vessel.—God be merciful to me a Sinner.*”

And is this the Language of thy Tears, O *Peter*? Blessed art thou still then thou *Simon Bar Jonah*.—These Tears, and this holy Resentment against thyself, bespeak thee to be a holy Mourner.—Yet a little while and thou shalt be comforted with a *Go tell his Brethren and Peter, that he*

is risen; and with a Simon Son of Jonah, lovest thou me? Then feed my Lambs.—And where is now thy boasting, O Satan? or what hast thou gain'd by foiling this Favourite of heaven? Thou didst desire to have him. Thy Request was granted. Thou hast sifted him as Wheat. But dost thou imagine the all-prevailing Mediator will suffer thee to pluck him out of his Hands? No. *Jesus* hath pray'd for him, and therefore *Peter's* Faith shall not finally fail. Rejoice not

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then over him, O thou Enemy of Souls! For tho' he has fallen, yet see how he begins to rise again. Tho' at he present he sits in Darkness, yet, 'ere long, the Glory of the Lord shall shine around him.

Where then are those Sons of *Belial*, those perverse, Disputers of this World, and yet, if possible, more perverse Perverters of the Word of God? Dare any of you now go away saying within yourselves, "*Who can blame us for a little equivocating, or a little innocent lying, cursing, and swearing? Was not Peter, the great Apostle Peter, guilty of all these?*" Yes he was, but with this Difference, He fell thro' Surprize, and but once, you perhaps sin wilfully and habitually. Fall he did, and that dreadfully too; but if his Fall was dreadful, his Repentance was as sincere and lasting. 'Ere long you shall see this same *Peter* boldly owning his Lord before the whole Jewish *Sanhedrim*, and rejoicing that he was counted worthy *to suffer for his great Name Sake.*—'Ere long you shall hear of an Angel's being sent to bring him out of Prison, and at last feasting his blessed Doctrine with his Blood. Go ye then and entreat the Lord to look you into a godly Sorrow, and see that with *Peter* you bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, or as the Lord God liveth, in whose Name I speak, and in whose Presence we now stand, you with all your carnal Reasonings, and wilful Wrestings of the Word of God, shall 'ere long be thrust down to the nethermost Hell.

But why should I waste my Time in reasoning with Men of such perverse Minds?—To you who do from your Hearts believe on *Jesus of Nazareth*, and who in Reality are the Chil

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dren of the most High God, the mournful Passage we are now upon, does in more immediate Manner call me to address myself. You, I am persuaded, on hearing of *Peter's* Fall, and the Lord's turning and looking

upon him, will not draw this abominable Inference, *Let us sin then, that Grace may abound.* No. I know you detest it from your inmost Souls; and if it was proper to speak, would to a Man cry out, *God forbid.*—Your Hearts, I would humbly hope, are rather employ'd silent Recollection to the holy *Jesus* saying within yourselves, “*Oh that he would this Day look down from Heaven, the Habitation of his Holiness, and cause out of these rocky Hearts, Floods of repenting Tears to flow.*” I will readily join with you in this necessary Request. For, alas! we are all guilty concerning this Thing, *viz.* Of denying our Lord, as well as *Peter*. Some of us, perhaps, have not so openly with Oaths and Curses denied that ever we knew him. But then, tho' we have in Words own'd, yet in Works and Practice, it may be, we have habitually denied him. For how often have we been sleeping, when we ought to have been watching? And how often have we been warming and indulging our Bodies, when we should have been in our Closets warming our Hearts in Prayer? How often have we needlessly left the Communion of Saints, and as needlessly put ourselves into the Way of, and too intimately conversed with open and unconverted Sinners, or at least with these who we had Reason to think were Enemies to the Cross of *Christ*? How often have we been drowsy when hearing the Word of God? Nay, how often have we been stupid, and even as dead as Stones

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at the Table of the Lord, when *Christ* has been evidently set forth crucified before us? How often have we been so foolish as to trust our Hearts, and instead of trusting the Lord, have lean'd on the broken Reed of our own Understandings? How often have we been puff'd up with spiritual Pride, and confidently boasted of our Graces, as tho' we had not received them? And Oh how often have we shamefully followed our Lord afar off? And, notwithstanding he may have manifested himself to us as he doth not to the World, notwithstanding he may have taken us on the Mount of Ordinances, given us to see his Glory, led us into his Banqueting-house, and let his Banner over us be Love, notwithstanding our repeated Vows that we would never leave him, never forsake him, yet how often have we, as it were, been ashamed of him, and his glorious Gospel, and given our Lord occasion, Times without Number, to complain in that cutting Language,—“*These Wounds have I received in the House of my Friends?*”—And now which of us shall throw the first Stone at *Peter*? Behold, he has been placed in the midst of us this Day. My Brethren,

why stand we like Statues? I say, let him that is without this Sin of denying the Lord *Jesus*, cast the first Stone. But with what Face of Justice can we do this, being guilty in many Respects equally, and in some even more guilty than *Peter* himself Rather let us turn the Edge of our Resentment against ourselves, and imitating *Peter* in his Repentance, as we have undoubtedly too much imitated him in his Crime, let us go out from a wicked, noisy, and deluding World, and weep bitterly.—Who knows but the Lord niy re

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turn and leave a Blessing behind him? For this End was this Instance of human Frailty, and divine Condescension recorded. In him the Redeemer shewed all this long Suffering, that we, notwithstanding our manifold Backsliding, might be kept from Despair.—True, we have sinned, but tho' we have sinned against Light, and Love, yet we have still an Advocate with the Father, even *Jesus Christ* the righteous, whose precious Blood can, and, if applied to our Souls, by a living Faith, will certainly cleanse us both from the Guilt and Power of all our Sins.—It was this which wash'd away the Stain of this foul and dreadful *Fall from Peter's* Heart.—He quickly rose, and was as speedily restored to his blessed Master's Favour again. *Go tell his Brethren and Peter*, said the Angel, *that he goeth before you into Galilee*. There shall you see him. They did see him. And what said *Jesus* unto him? He renewed his Commission, and bid him *Feed his sheep and Lambs*.—Accordingly we hear not only of his preaching, but of his being honour'd so to preach, that three thousand were converted in one Day.—And is not the Lord *Jesus* the same now as he was Yesterday? Yes, he is, and will continue the same for ever. We have his own royal Word for it, that he will heal our Backslidings, and love us freely.—Let us return then unto the Lord, from whom we have revolted.—He is long Suffering, slow to Anger, and soon repenteth him of the Evil which we provoke him to send upon us. But Oh let us not return again to Folly, but carefully watch and pray against spiritual Pride, 1 Tpiritual Sloth, and Self-indulgence, from whence all our Evils flow.

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Young Preachers, to you in an especial Manner are these Words of Exhortation sent. Of all People in the World, you had need watch most against spiritual Pride. It is a Fly that often spoils your whole Pot of

Ointment. This made aged *Paul* so careful to warn *Timothy* not to lay Hands upon Novices, *Lest*, says he, *being puff'd up with Pride, they fall into the Condemnation of the Devil*. How many awful Instances have we had of this in various Places within these few Years last past? Young Men, therefore, I exhort you to be humble. For *Christ's* Sake, for your own Souls Sake, for the Sake of the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own Blood, pray without ceasing that you may be clothed with Humility. Take care of carrying too high Sail.—Popularity is a dangerous Sea, and nothing but the special and almighty Grace of God can keep you from oversetting in it. Mark the Rocks against which others have made shipwreck, and beg of the Lord *Jesus* Night and Day, to help you to steer such a Course as to avoid and keep clear of them: He alone can preserve you. *Satan* envies the Honour put upon you, he has a particular Enmity against those whom he sees the Redeemer making Use of. He knows your weak Sides, and will desire to have you, as he desired to have *Peter*, that he in may sift you as Wheat. Watch, therefore, and pray always, that you may not fall in an Hour of Temptation. If *Peter* could not stand when left to himself, what are we?

Have any from among ourselves of late given Proofs of this? Nay, have any that once appeared boldly for our Lord, and seem'd ready to follow.

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follow him to Prison or to Death, have any such, I say, been permitted not only to follow him afar off; but shamefully and openly to disown and deny both him and his People? Let us not marvel as tho' some strange Thing happen'd unto us, but let us search the Scriptures. Many such Instances are recorded there, and we know who hath forewarned us to expect them now. *It must needs be*, says the unerring, all-seeing *Jesus*, *that offences come. Let us not therefore be high-minded, but fear; and let him that standeth take heed lest he fall*. Brethren, pray for them; who knows but they may yet rise, and the Locks at present cut off, grow again? Who knows but the Cock may yet crow, *Jesus* may yet look, and such grievous Backsliders, being as it were reconverted, may appear more zealous than ever in strengthening their Brethren? When shall this once be? *We wait for thy Salvation, O Lord: Make no long tarrying, O our God!*

In the mean while, let none of us be discouraged, *God will take care of his own Cause*. The Redeemer hath declared, that the Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail against his Church: And, therefore, tho' the Ark may totter, he can keep it from falling; and tho' driven for a while into

the *Philistine's* Country, he assuredly can bring it back.—He that heal'd the Wound imprudently given by *Peter* to the Ear of the High Priest's Servant, he can, and will heal all Wounds, and repair all Breaches that have been occasion'd either by the Backslidings, or unguarded Conduct of those whom he vouchsafes to employ. *Out of the Eater shall come forth Meat, and out of the Strong shall come forth Sweetness.*—The Wicked, no doubt, rejoiced when they

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heard of Peter's Fall, and in all Probability frequently vented their Spleen in saying, "*Here is Religion for you! Here is a pretty Family of Reformers, and Setters forth of new Doctrines. One of them hath betrayed his Master with a Kiss, and another with Oaths and Curses denied that ever he knew him: If this be the beginning, what will the End of their boasted Reformation be?*"—What will the End of it be? Ye Fools! I have an Answer ready, *Christ* shall be glorified, *Satan* and all his Emissaries confounded, and a Multitude of Souls out of every Nation, Language, and Tongue, redeemed and finally saved.—Oh what a *Christ* have we! Courage then, my Brethren, Courage! I beat to Arms again in the Name of the Lord of Hosts.—Let us not quit the Field of Battle, but in the Strength of our once crucified, but now exalted *Jesus*, renew the Combat.—*He is faithful who hath promised not only to make us Conquerors, but more than Conquerors thro' his Love.*—Yet a little while and our Warfare shall be accomplished, Death will put an End to all.—A wicked World, a wicked Heart, a wicked Devil shall then cease from troubling us, and our weary Souls shall never be so much as tempted to deny our blessed Lord any more. Where is *Peter* now?—Yonder he sits,—not weeping bitterly, but rejoicing in God his Saviour on a Throne of never-fading Glory. To him, at whose right Hand he is now sitting, and who alone is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, to him the only wise God, our Saviour, be Glory, Majesty, Dominion, and Power, both now and ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

