

*A SERMON*  
*Preach'd before the*  
*SOCIETIES*  
*FOR*  
*Reformation of Manners*  
*by*  
*Edmund Calamy*



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A  
SERMON  
Preach'd before the  
SOCIETIES  
FOR  
*Reformation of MANNERS,*  
IN  
*London and Middlesex,*  
Upon *Monday*, Febr. 20. 1698/9.

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Publish'd at their Request.

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By EDMUND CALAMY.

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To the Worshipful  
Sir *RICHARD LEVETT*,  
Knight and Alderman  
OF THE  
City of *LONDON*.

SIR,

**T**HE *Design which the Plain Discourse ensuing aims to promote, is so much for the Good of this City and Kingdom, that I am satisfy'd it needs no Recommendation, to induce you to afford it Countenance and Encouragement. The vigorous Endeavours of a number of sober Persons to detect the Profligate, who break the Laws of God and the Land, and to bring them to deserved Punishment, to the deterring of others, and averting the Displeasure of the Almighty, give so hopeful a Prospect, as cannot but be highly pleasing to such as have Your Concern for the Publick Welfare.*

*If we may believe the wisest of Princes, One Sinner destroyeth much Good. How much Mischief then will Troops of daring Criminals Occasion! Should there be none who had Courage eno' to oppose them, soon would they undermine the Foundations of the best establish'd Community. Those therefore who Regularly set themselves to Countermines them, deserve to be Honour'd as COMMON BENEFACTORS.*

*The Dissoluteness of our Age, is a matter of frequent and sad Complaint. They who would go about to confine it to any one of the Parties whereinto we are unhappily divided, would but proclaim their own Folly. A General Conflagration calls for every Man's Bucket; And our spreading Immoralities for all Hands to check them. And it is an hopeful Prognostick in the present Case, that those who differ in Ri-  
tuals*

*tuals but with too much Vehemence, should unanimously join together in forming those Societies for Reformation, who aim at the Checking those Vices which threaten to over-run us, which are heartily detested by Good Men of all Perswasions.*

*It would look very black upon us, should so laudable a Design as this, meet with Discouragement; and those who engage in it be roughly treated by any in Power. Nothing can be more evident, than that this would embolden Wickedness, and make it Triumphant; Subvert our Good Laws, Cross the End of Magistracy, and open the Sluices to the most Flagitious Villainies. If any in Commission have herein bin tardy, I pray God forgive them. I know none concern'd in this Affair, but who much rather desire that such might be Convinc'd, than Expos'd.*

*But*

*But it is hop'd that You (Worthy Sir) won't easily be induc'd to lend an Ear to the Whispers of those, who employ their Subtilty in finding Subterfuges for Notorious Offenders, or devising specious Calumnies against their Prosecutours. Your Patronizing any who are Litigious, or who pretending to a Zeal for God, only vent their Malice against their Neighbours, is no way desir'd. But the Continuance of Your kind Regard to them, who (all Circumstances consider'd) cannot fairly be conceiv'd, to be Acted by any other Principle, in their Opposition to Profaneness and Immorality, but a Concern for the Divine Honour and a General Good; Your Directing them where their Conduct may be hazardous, excusing them in any Innocent Mistakes, teaching them, upon Occasion, the most Regular Methods, and protecting them*



*them when their Enemies would overpower or perplex them, is humbly desir'd by the foremention'd Societies, and expected by all that know you.*

*Your Steadiness and Impartiality, in the Administration of Publick Justice, which hath procur'd you so Great and General a Respect, naturally promises as much; and is the Reason why they who wish well to a Reformation of Manners among us, do so earnestly long for Your Advancement to the Chair; when it's hop'd Your Zeal for Suppressing Vice will be as Exemplary, as Your Integrity, Generosity, and Publick Spiritedness, without undue Regard to any Particular Interest, have bin hitherto.*

*May You become more and more a Terrour to Evil Doers, and an Encourager of Vertue in this City:*  
*May*

*May you be enabled to Discharge whatsoever Trust either is already repos'd in You, or awaits You, to the Glory of God, the Satisfaction of our Sovereign, and the Comfort of his Faithful and Loyal Subjects: May Your Name be transmitted to Posterity with Honour; Your Family be enrich'd with the best of Blessings, and be Famous both for Piety and Prosperity for Many Generations,*

Thus heartily Prays,

*(Honoured Sir)*

Your Much Oblig'd

Humble Servant,

*E. CALAMY.*

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A  
SERMON  
Preach'd before the  
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FOR  
*Reformation of Manners.*

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GENESIS IV. 9.

*And the Lord said unto Cain, where is  
Abel thy Brother? And he said, I know  
not: am I my Brother's Keeper?*

REGULAR Attempts to Reform  
a Vicious Age, have such a ten-  
dency to a Publick Good, that  
they can't want Encouragement from  
those who have either a sense of Duty,  
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or of their truest Interest: nor be discountenanc'd by any, who regard the Divine Favour, or value the Welfare of the Community they belong to.

There is indeed a sort of Men who are so Degenerate, that if they can make but the poorest Shift to support *themselves*, care not what becomes of the rest of the World; so they can but live at their Ease, and have their Humour, they matter not how it fares with others: For *themselves* they apprehend they were *born*, to *themselves* they *live*, and in *themselves* are they *swallow'd up*, freely giving way to a general unconcernedness, as to what falls not within their own Vortex. If this Temper be spreading and prevalent, 'tis no wonder if a design'd *Reformation* is found clogg'd with Difficulties.

There are others, who tho' they have a little more Consideration and Generosity than to be so grosly Selsish, are yet too easily daunted by those Popular Insinuations, whereby a vigorous Activity in Suppressing reigning Vices is represented as a needless meddling; and those who appear concern'd at the  
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the Immoralities of their Neighbours, are branded for Busie Bodies, and disturbers of the common Peace: The Fear whereof, where it once takes place, will by degrees cool the most Zealous, and sensibly abate the most promising Fervours.

Could I suggest any thing that might contribute to the Amendment of the former, or the Confirmation of the latter, I should think my Pains well bestowed, and should have no cause to Repent of my publick Appearance upon this Occasion. I am not insensible of my own Disadvantages; but however, having look'd upwards for Assistance I'll make an Essay, and leave my Success to the Blessing of the Almighty.

Were all Men of the Temper of Cursed *Cain*, the World would become a Desert; Who could desire, nay, who could bear to live in it? For Love, Trust, and Converse would be universally banish'd. Were the few that are otherwise minded, either sway'd by the Multitude who tread in his Steps, or cow'd by their Reproaches, how soon must we be forc'd to bid adieu to

all Order, Regularity and Sobriety! In no Age hath this Wicked one been without a Progeny; tho' it may be question'd, whether it was ever more numerous than in the days we live in: And it not a little adds to our Unhappiness, that those who are of another Stock and Lineage, are in many Instances too apt, either to resemble his Degenerate Off-spring, being infected and influenc'd by their Examples; or to be affrighted by their Taunts and Obloquy.

My Text well consider'd might be a Guard both ways. For tho' in its *Prime* Aspect it presents us with an unparallell'd Instance of the Arrogant Sullenness of a Saucy Creature towards the Blessed God, under which Notion it no way suits our present Purpose; yet doth it *Secondarily* set before us an affecting Instance of Monstrous Selfishness, our Reflecting whereon may be very seasonable. For we have *Cain* here Stigmatiz'd for his Impiety and Inhumanity in his Carriage to his Brother, to the Terrour of all Posterity; and his wretched Disposition in this respect expos'd

pos'd to common View, with a design it should be a Warning to all After-Generations, to take heed of an Imitation: And we need not pursue a long Train of Consequences, to be able to discern, that such Malignity as is here remarkable, naturally vents it self in Calumniating, and (all ways possible) obstructing, those who aim at a general Good; which yet on their Part may easily be disregarded, whilst they observe the Principle from whence it Springs.

The Words thus consider'd, afford us Three Observations, that are very suitable to the present Occasion.

*First*, Take Notice, that *we are Accountable to God for our Carriage towards our Brethren*. We find *Cain* here enquir'd of about his Brother; where he was? and what he had done to him? how he stood affected towards him? and had demean'd himself under late Emergencies, which had excited his Resentment. And if we'll allow for a Parity of Reason, this will come home and close. For why should he be Re-

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sible for his Brother, did not his Relation oblige him to a constant Inspection, watchful Care, endearing Love, and hearty Concern? Did his Obligation hereto arise meerly from *Consanguinity*? That without doubt was a strengthening Consideration; but it presupposed higher Motives, of a more general Nature, and more extensive, which therefore must have a place allow'd them, wheresoever Persons stand in the Relation of Brethren, notwithstanding there be no such immediate nearness of Blood. Again, 'twas his Carriage towards his Brother, with regard to his Temporal Welfare, of which *Cain* was here call'd to give an Account: But is there not greater Reason why Persons should be mindful of those to whom they stand related as Brethren, as to the Concernments of their Souls, than those of their Bodies? As to Spiritual Matters which are unspeakably more weighty, than as to those that are common and but temporary, relating to their Life or Goods, Name or Liberty? If there be, there is plain Evidence of Duty; and a Responsibility



sponsibleness concerning it results by Consequence. Well therefore may we look upon our selves as Accountable to the Great Governour of the World, for our Demeanour towards all our Brethren, whose Good (especially in Spiritual respects) we are any way capable of promoting. Well may we conclude that he who ask'd *Cain* for his Brother *Abel*, will one Day demand of us, where those are, and what are become of the Persons, whom we might have *kept* from Sin, and Snares, and Fatal Dangers, had we duly discharg'd our Duty. And I think it's well worth our while beforehand to consider, what Reply we shall be able to make to such a Question, if we now are Careless and Negligent.

*Secondly*, View my Text, and take a little Notice, *How soon a close, unnatural, and selfish Temper discover'd it self among the Children of Men*. The Earth was just Form'd, and as yet empty of Inhabitants; We know not by our our Sacred Records, but *Cain* might be the first Man born into the World; to

be sure he could not have many to juggle with him; the whole Race made up but a small handful; One would have thôt they should then have had all one Soul, embrac'd each other with the greatest Tenderness, and regarded one another as so many Parts of themselves; that there could have been no such thing as Envy and Ill Will, no Grudgings, no Backwardness to any Instance of Love or Service to have been found amongst them: But behold and wonder; even then do we find one setting up for himself, in Opposition to all others, and openly proclaiming his Disregard to his Brethren, in the pursuit of his own Way, and Will, and Humour. Tell not me of my Brother, crys he, for I'll stand alone. Were I continually to look after him, and see what becomes of him, I should have enough to do; my Fatigue would be endless. I'll therefore mind my self, and take my own Way, come of him what will. Make but a Pause in considering this early Instance of sullen Selfishness; and can you wonder to see any thing of the like Nature in After-Ages?

Ages? If honest *Abel's* mildness, in an *Age of so much Simplicity*, could not screen him from the Malice of his churlish Brother, need it seem strange that in *an Age of refined Wickedness*, there should be a considerable number of Selfish Persons to be met with, who partly discountenance, and partly oppose and traduce, Generous Designs of an extensive Good?

*Thirdly*, Note further, *How apt Men are to excuse their Fault, and shift off their Duty*. Notwithstanding the palpable Evidence of the Obligation, Cain had so perversly argu'd himself into stoutness, and so steel'd himself with Resolution, that he had left no room for Conviction. He was altogether unconcern'd, though deeply Guilty; and seems to think to come off by the prevalence of his foolish Plea, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* Every Man (says he) must stand upon his own Bottom. I must look at Home, and let my Brother do the like. Let every Man keep one, and then all will be safe. 'Tis eno' for me to mind my own Concerns.

cerns. The Affairs of others belong not to me; how then can I be blam'd for my Backwardness to be Troublesome? Thus he seeks to palliate his Fault, and extinguish the fense of his Duty; in which I am sure he doth not stand alone.

My Way being thus clear'd, I reduce my Discourse to the following Heads.

I. I'll give you some Account of this *Cainish* Temper, and make some Remarks upon it, which may help to lay open its *Malignity*.

II. I'll shew you upon what *Grounds* we are oblig'd to contribute our utmost to the true *Welfare of our Brethren*; and how *Extensive* that Care ought to be.

III. I'll set before you the *Encouragement* we have herein to discharge our Duty, whatever *Difficulties* we may meet with.

And then in the Close will add a few *Reflections*, suiting the special Design of this Exercise.

I. I begin with the Consideration of that Unnatural and Selfish Temper which my Text Exemplifies; which is by many made light of, as if of no great Moment; whenas in reality 'tis to be detested as a Fatal Infection. How many are there who might usefully be employ'd in pursuit of a Publick Good, to the Benefit of many, who give way to a listless *Indifference*; they are not for meddling; others may take their Course for them; for they are for sleeping in a whole Skin; and if this be a Fault, it is so natural, and so common, and so small, that they can't apprehend it deserves any great blame. Put them upon stirring in their respective Places, to Prosecute Vice, inform against open Offenders, execute the Law upon them, and bring them to Con-dign Punishment, or to assist by their Contributions those who are vigorously Active in so good a Work, and are more capable of it than they are, and have more leisure for it than they can command; they presently put in *Cain's* Caveat, Are we the *Keepers* of our *Brethren?*

*thren?* Wherein (say they) are we concern'd? A Question methinks that much better fits the Mouth of an *Hobbist*, than of a *Sober Christian*. *Hobbs* indeed *De Cive.* supposes all Men in a *State of Nature*, to be Free and at Liberty to do what they please; to be under no other Engagement than to mind their own Interest; to be at Enmity, and in a *War* with each other; to have no Rule of Duty, no Obligation to their Brethren; and to have nothing to do, but to secure their own Satisfaction and Repose; having no Reason to be concern'd, who is overlook'd and disregarded, or oppos'd and prejudic'd, so that be but compass'd. Which is a sort of Philosophy, that is directly Calculated to the Meridian of *Cain* and his Descendants. That which he calls the *State of Nature*, is to them generally so agreeable, that by their Good Will they'd never get out of it. No Ties or Bonds which he Attempts afterwards to superinduce, can work any such Change upon them, as that their own *Personal Interest* should not still remain the Governing Principle, and the Spring  
of

all their Motions. And this is easily accounted for. But for any that make a Profession of the Christian Religion, and pretend to be concern'd for the Credit of it, to talk at such a Rate as this, is strange and monstrous. For the Temper which such Language speaks, would if given way to, at once extinguish *Humanity, Piety, and Civil Society*. This will be sufficiently clear'd by the Considerations following.

1. *This Temper* is highly *Dishonourable to the Blessed God*. He hath made us for Society, and furnish'd us with Ability to be helpful to our Brethren. He hath entrusted us with a Variety of Talents, designing they should be a Common Stock. He so fixes every ones Circumstances, that he hath many round him that need his Help. None can complain that he wants a Capacity of being some way serviceable to others, for Body and Soul. Now for any Man to Engross all that he can lay hands on, as purely his own, to look only at Home, making Self his Center, with the neglect of those whom it was in his Power to Succour, is a robbing God of  
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the Honour of his Blessings, which lies in their Spreading and Diffusiveness. 'Tis withal, a representing him as unfit to be a Pattern and Example to us. He is Liberal and Open-handed; and tender in his Regard to all his Creatures, though he needeth none of them. No Perfection of his is more resplendent, than his Communicativeness, and Universal Concern. He makes his Sun to shine on all, on the Just and Unjust; and both in *Nature* and *Grace* discovers himself more delighted with nothing, than with promoting the Welfare of those that come within the reach of his Compassions. For any then to shut up their Bowels towards their Brethren, when either their Bodies or Souls are in Danger, and they could relieve them; to confine their Care to themselves, when it might and should be extensive, is to ridicule his overflowing Benignity as a Weakness, and therefore unworthy their Imitation: Than which, a greater Dishonour could not easily be done him. Nay further, so great and tender is God's Regard to the Good of his Creatures, that he'll rather be the loser, than



than they shall be depriv'd of the Benefit which might be accruing to them: He'll rather dispense with the Duties owing to himself immediately, than they shall be neglected: He is better pleased with Acts of Charity (especially Spiritual, belonging to the rescuing and saving of Souls) than with the strictest Performance of the Solemnities of his Worship. For *he will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice, Matth. 9.13.* As for those then who reckon it more ado than needs, to be in their Sphere the *Keepers of their Brethren*; who stick at a little Pains, Charge or Trouble, for their manifest Benefit, and the Furtherance of a Common Good; they do as it were Counterstrive the great Governor of the World, and what in them lies undermine the great Design, whereon he appears most earnestly intent, to his manifest Dishonour and Reproach. And the nearer the Relation is which Persons stand in to him, the greater their Pretensions are to an Interest in him, the greater is the Dishonour hereby done him.

2. *This*

2. *This Temper is also directly contrary to the great Law of Love.* As small a matter as it may seem for any, Forbearing all Injuries, but to neglect their Brethren by suffering Sin upon them, it is interpretatively real Hatred. Therefore was that solemn Charge given of old; *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart, thou shalt in any wise Rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him,* Lev. 19.17. And is it not Hatred in effect, whatever be intended, to suffer Persons to run headlong into the greatest Dangers, either without any Concern at all, or without any such concern as Prompts to endeavours by way of Prevention, where there is room and scope for them? Is it consistent with that hearty Affection which is every Man's Due, to see another attempting to be his own Executioner, without stepping in to his Relief? Would it not be unnatural Cruelty for any Man in such a Case to stand off, and say, Let him eeen shift for himself for me; for I must look at Home, and don't love to be meddling, least I be thought impertinent?  
And

And is the Case alter'd, where the Hazard which another is observ'd to run, is unspeakably greater, by Reason of Soul Destroying Immoralities? Where's the *Love* to their *Neighbours*, where's the *Humanity*, of those who know what will be the Consequences, and yet are unconcern'd, and won't interpose? Is this *Loving our Neighbours as our selves*, according to the Royal Law of Scripture? *James 2.8.*

3. *This is a Temper that is also very Pernicious to those who give way to it: And that, not only by depriving them of the Comfort and Pleasure, where-with an Activity in doing Good to others is wont to be attended, and the Benefits to themselves which would be thence accruing; which (if the Report of such as have had Experience be to be credited) are very great; but also by contracting and narrowing their Minds, and at the same time robbing them of the Advantage of help from others when there might be occasion; and on both Accounts disturbing their Repose; and being a con-*

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stant Spring of Uneasiness. *Selfishness* is really its own Torment. A Generous Spirit which is bent for the Good of others, as there is Capacity and Opportunity, is widen'd and enlarg'd; Shares with others in their Happiness and Welfare, bearing a Part therein by a sort of natural Sympathy; and its Enjoyments are as far extended as Good is known to be diffus'd: Whereas a Selfish Mind is enwrapp'd within its own Folds, and shrivel'd up as 'twere to nothing. When it dwells at Home, it wretchedly Pines, under constant porings on its own Sraitness, which minister Occasion of perpetual Dissatisfaction. When it roves Abroad, it is fretted and gall'd with Envy and Discontent, grudging at the Welfare of others, which it naturally reputes a Loss and Damage to it self, because it is not able to grasp and engross it. It is incapable of being easie and satisfy'd. Withal, the Open Hearted and Publick Spirited have a General Benevolence from others: If manifold Obligations can engage it, they to be sure can't want it. If some are so ill natur'd

tur'd as to detract from their Desert, and seek to deprive them of their due Reward; yet generally there are others of whose good Will and Assistance they may be secure, when need requires. Whereas they whose Care and Concern reaches not beyond themselves, are left to stand alone; they have none to assist them, nothing to expect but Universal Disregard and Contempt. So that they who neglect their Brethren, do at the same time neglect themselves; and undermine their own Comfort, Peace and Safety.

4. *This Temper is further Destructive to the Publick Welfare.* Were all for themselves, in Defiance of others, Societies were Dissolv'd, and there would be nothing left but the Notion of a *Common Good*. Magistrates and Officers, who are in their Places the Guardians of the Publick Safety, can do nothing to secure it, unless Private Persons in their several Places give them Assistance. A Selfish Spirit makes both of them useless Cyphers in a Commonwealth, where every one might be Sig-

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nificant

nificant and Serviceable, that would but Discharge his Duty. He that looks upon himself as born for others, and that can deny himself in pursuit of the Common Interest, is a General Blessing. Whereas he that minds only his own Concerns, is an unprofitable Member of a Community. How can his Country be the better for him? He'll let a Fatal Contagion spread, and do nothing towards the checking it. He'll see Flagitious Enormities laying a Foundation for Desolating Calamities, and yet keep close in his own Hive, as no way touch'd: And is he not then chargeable with the Ruin that may ensue? Were all others like him, (and by his Example he doth what he can to make them so) that Ruin would be inevitable. The Spreading of this Temper, (to which every one contributes, who himself gives way to it) were enô to overthrow the most Flourishing Cities, States and Kingdoms. How can that Ship be sav'd that is full of Leaks, which let in the Water on all sides, while those who should be at Work to empty and repair it, lie  
asleep

asleep every Man in his own Cabin, as if no way concern'd? And how can that Nation avoid Ruin, that is overrun with Flagitious Impieties, which Naturally as well as Judicially threaten Destruction, when those who should be at work to Suppress them, are afraid of being over Officious, and unwilling to have their Repose disturb'd by their *Keeping of others*, who they had rather should take their own Course, than that they should be any way troublesome to them? A more Fatal Symptom of approaching Confusion can't well be pitch'd upon. And then,

5. Lastly, *This* is a *Temper*, which, if pursu'd and given way to, would naturally lead to the greatest Extravagancies. He that thinks he was born for himself, and is no farther oblig'd to regard his Brethren, than is consistent with his own Conveniency, bids fair for injuring, opposing, and undermining all that come near him, when he by that means apprehends he might best serve his Interest. This is visible in

Cursed *Cain*. He disdain'd being the *Keeper* of his Brother; and thôt it enô to take care of himself: And therefore stuck not to Assault and Kill him, when he found he out-shin'd and over-topp'd him. 'Tis true, there are a great many Neglects of others, which never have any such Tragical Issues: But that is either owing to the Grace of God, or surrounding Restraints. Let the natural Tendency of things be consider'd, and 'twill appear, That there is no sort of Extravagance to another's Prejudice, which a *Cainish* Selfishness, if let loose, would not lead to. The very same Principle that would induce me, out of a pretence of minding my self, and securing my own Repose, to Neglect another, whose Welfare I were capable of promoting; would also be very apt to influence me, to Acts of Injustice or Violence towards him, if he stood in my way, cross't my Interest, and hinder'd my Advancement: And I could see no Reason why the Latter might not be as warrantable as the Former. And thus would this Temper, should it prevail,  
tend



tend to make Men as *Savage* as Wolves, and Bears, and Tygers to each other; nay, more so, than they are to those of their own kind.

I am not sensible that I have in these Reflections at all exaggerated. If they won't suffice to produce an Abhorrence of the Temper mention'd, 'tis a sign that our Sense of Good and Evil is very Faint and Languid, and in a fair way to being defac'd and obliterated. I now proceed,

II. To lay down the *Grounds* of our *Obligation*, to contribute our utmost to the true *Welfare* of our Brethren, and to show how *Extensive* that Care ought to be. But I can only give Hints, lest I prove tedious and burdensome.

The Ties we are under to be *Keepers* of our Brethren, are both

*Natural,*  
*Moral,* and  
*Political.*

Our *Natural* Engagements hereto, are  
*Relative,* or  
*Real.*

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We have a *Relative Tie* to all of the Humane Race; who had all the same Rise and Original with us, are all of the same Blood, Children of the same Common Father, of the same Make and Frame, and under the Care of the same Providence. This is observ'd by St. *Paul* in his Discourse to the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17.26. *God* (saith he) *hath made of one Blood, all Nations of Men*. And by that Natural Relation and Alliance which he thus hath fixt among the Children of Men, he hath taught them all, Charity and Compassion towards one Another. Which hath been observ'd by Sundry, even of the Sober Heathens.\*

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\* Vide *Marc. Antonin.* Lib. 2. Cum Notis *Gatakeri*.

*Lactantius* Lib. 5. cap. 8. Hoc dictum recitat ex *Cicerone* de Legib. Lib. 1. Sicut unâ eademque naturâ mundus omnibus partibus inter se congruentibus cohæret ac Nititur: Sic omnes Homines inter se naturâ confusi, pravitate dissentiunt; nec intelligunt se esse *Consanguineos*, & subjectos omnes sub unam eandemque tutelam; quod si teneretur, Deorum profectò vitam Homines viverent. Seneca Ep. 95. Natura nos *Cognatos* edidit, cum ex iisdem, & in eadem gigneret. Hæc nobis Amorem indidit mutuum, & sociabiles fecit: illa æquum justumque Composuit.

We are also naturally under *Real*, as well as *Relative*, Bonds to our Brethren. For we all stand in great need of one another. The All-Wise God hath plac'd Men in that Posture towards each other, that no one is or can be Self-sufficient; and therefore we must live by mutual Kindness, and an Exchange of suitable Offices. Every Man's Necessities oblige him to a regard of others. For suppose any particular Persons Stock to be ever so large, should he cast off others, he'd be unavoidably Distress'd and Miserable, for want of Supplies and Assistance from them whom he rejected and slighted, in a Thousand Instances, wherein he could not afford himself any Relief. That Man that would mind none but himself, could reasonably expect no other than to be cast off by all, who have as much right to demand from him, as he from them. He'd have all the World against him, be always insecure and uneasie, eaten up with Jealousies and Suspensions, Troublesome

blesome to himself, and to all about him, and be incapable of ever being Safe or Happy. The sense of this was the Natural Foundation of Societies; the Bands whereof are broken by an indulged Selfishness.

But to rise higher; we are also under *Moral Bonds* to be the *Keepers* of our Brethren: As being under the Government of the same Law, and in Subjection to the same Sovereign; and so oblig'd to adhere to the same Interest: and that whether we are consider'd,

*As Men, or*

*As Christians.*

*As Men*; we are bound to Honour the Rational Nature where-ever we see it; and that because it is the Image of our Common Lord. Whatsoever tends to blur and deface it (as all Vices do most certainly, whether they be Bruitish or Devilish) should draw forth our Compassion, and Abhorrence. Withal, *As Men*, we are oblig'd to follow Reason as a Law: And this evidently Dictates

to every one who is at leisure to listen to it, the necessity of his Contributing as far as he is able, his serious Endeavours to procure the good of all who come within his reach, in order to the securing the Honour of the Supreme and Universal Governour, reaching the Ends of Society, and promoting his own Happiness. The which being minded or neglected, produces those *Excusing* or *Accusing Tho'ts* of Conscience, which the Apostle mentions, Rom. 2.15.

*As Christians*; we are further oblig'd to a peculiar Tenderness of our Brethren. For we are represented as Members one of another, Eph. 4.24. and therefore are to have the same Care of each other, as of our Respective Bodily Members. Christianity, both by Example and Precept, straitly requires of us all possible Concern for our Brethrens Welfare. Our Blessed Saviour was herein our great Example. How ardent was his Zeal for the Good of Mankind? How much did he endure to  
further

further it? What did he ever stick at, that might promote it? 'Tis his Native Character, that *he went about doing Good*, Acts 10.38. Good to the Souls and Bodies of all that came near him. This hath an obliging Force on all his Followers. And his *Example* is backt by his Precept. *This is my Commandment* (says he) *that ye love one another*, John 15.12. which was often also repeated by the Apostles. And in reality, nothing is more opposite to genuine Christianity, than a Selfish Spirit, an Unconcernedness about our Neighbours Welfare, or Backwardness to promote it.

Finally, We are also *Politically* oblig'd to be concern'd for our Brethren, consider'd as Members of the same Civil Societies. The Community is concern'd in the Conduct of every Member. It Flourishes, if each keeps his Place, and seeks the Good of the whole; it is undermin'd by any ones Licentiousness: Which calls upon all to further his being brôt to Condign Punishment,

ment, in Defence of the Publick Safety, lest he spread his Contagion to others. But the Common Peace and Safety is Establish'd and Secur'd, by the hearty Furtherance of each others Weal, in Conjunction with, and Subordination to, the Good of the Body Politick.

These, in short, are our Common Obligations; often strengthen'd by a great many Special Considerations, which could not well be toucht upon, without too far Expatiating. By all these Bonds are we engag'd to be the *Keepers* of our Brethren. And as to the *Extent* of our Care of them, it should be proportion'd to their Necessities, and those of the Publick, and our own, Capacities Calls, and Opportunities: Wherein we may be not a little assisted, by making these our General Measures:

“That the greater Hazard our Bre-  
“thren or the Publick would run by  
“our Negligence; the more important  
“the

“the Matters are wherein our Help is  
 “Call’d for; the more General the E-  
 “vils are which we are in a Capacity  
 “of checking; and the greater, more  
 “Extensive and Lasting the Good is,  
 “which we may contribute to the pro-  
 “moting: The more Assistance is ne-  
 “cessary in order to the compassing of  
 “that Good End; and the more pre-  
 “valent Remisness is grown, among  
 “those who might have bin expected  
 “to have given an Helping Hand; the  
 “Greater should our Concern and Acti-  
 “vity be, in order to our Approving  
 “our selves either to God or Man.

These Measures are I think, just and  
 solid, and will bear the Test: And  
 if so, our Concurrence in our several  
 Spheres, to Prosecute the Laws of the  
 Land against *Debauchery* and *Immoral-  
 ity*, cannot be question’d by any of us  
 to be our Duty. To hearten in which  
 Engagement I now proceed;

III. *Thirdly*, To lay before you the  
*Encouragement* we have herein to Dis-  
 charge



charge our *Duty*, whatsoever *Difficulties* we may meet with. The strict Rules of Method would have requir'd that my Discourse, both under this and the fore-going Heads, should have run more upon Generals, before I descended to Particulars; but I am rather for Usefulness than Niceness and Exactness: and therefore not being able to grasp all, shan't stick to confine my self to that particular Instance of *Keeping our Brethren*, which lies in promoting a *National Reformation*, as to growing Flagitiousness.

Setting our selves hereto in our several Places; some by Contributing to the Expence and Charge of it, and others of us by Acting in it as we are able, with sincere Minds and honest Hearts; *We shall glorifie God*, that God to whom we owe our All: We shall shew our concern for his Honour, which is so prophan'd and trampled on by so many daring Criminals; We shall rightly and acceptably improve the Talents wherewith He hath entrusted us; openly declare

clare our Adherence to the Kingdom of Christ, in opposition to the Devil and his Interest; and approve our selves Publick Spirited, in a wretchedly selfish Age.

Withal, *We shall discharge our Consciences towards our Brethren*, whose impending Ruin calls for help. They indeed defie Heaven, and disdain to be amended; and while they persist in the grossest Wickedness, are little aware whither 'tis they are Posting: But if we Fear God our selves, we are sufficiently sensible in what their Impenitence and Irreclaimableness will issue: By joining in therefore with Endeavours to check and stop them, we take the best course to show our Love to them, that their Circumstances will allow of.

Further, *We shall approve our selves useful Members of the Body Politick*; by contributing hereby to the Fencing against the greatest Dangers whereto our Nation is liable, which arise from abounding Immoralities; which naturally

rally tend to Dispirit, Effeminate, and Debase us, and judicially provoke the offended Majesty of Heaven, to pursue us with the Efforts of his Indignation. We shall show our selves *Lovers of our King and Country*, by helping forward the Execution of those good Laws which are in force among us, against Prophaneness and Debauchery; the general, common, and un-opposed Breach whereof, would open a wide Gap for the most desolating Calamities to enter and over-flow us.

Again; *We shall hereby enter our Protest against Publick Disorders*, and testifie our Abhorrence of those prodigious Enormities whereinto so many are hurried by their Lusts. We shall show that we look upon *Sin* as our *Reproach*, and Prosligate Persons as Publick Pests, diffusing an infecting Contagion wherever they come. We shall bid fair for freeing our selves from a share in the common Guilt; and join with Him whom we profess to have in Supreme Veneration, in proclaiming our utter  
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dislike of those ways and courses which are ruinous and destructive.

We have moreover, *A fair probability of doing more Good hereby than we can easily be aware of.* We may contribute to the Reclaiming of some Offenders. What tho' far the most are incurably Stiff and Obstinate, if but a few are gain'd and recover'd, its well worth all the Pains or Charge we could be at in order to it. A Foundation may be hereby laid for Thanksgivings to God, thrô all the Ages of Eternity. Others may also be stirr'd up by Your Means, who now are Active; the Generations to come may rise up and call you Blessed; and being Excited by your Example, may set themselves vigorously to the rooting up of Vice, with a much greater Success, when present Obstacles are remov'd. Iniquity may be Sham'd, and put out of Countenance, and driven into Corners, and forc'd to Hide and Sculk, instead of meeting us in every Street: And this is no small Advantage. Notorious Offenders may be  
Branded,

Branded, that they may be distinguish'd and shun'd, and their Infection avoided; and the Corruption of the rising Generation may be in great part prevented, and many other Ways may much Good be done, by an Hearty Conjunction of many in such a Work.

Finally, *We shall avoid a Curse, and secure to our selves a Blessing.* We shall hereby take as good a Course to escape in Temporal Calamities, and deliver our selves and our Families in a Time of Common Danger, as we could be able to pitch upon: And may be satisfy'd, that if we approve our selves to God as upright in our Intentions and Endeavours, we shall not be without his Favour, and an ample Reward, either in this Life, or in that to come, or both. While, in the mean time, those on the other side, who were either by their Enormities inflaming the Nations Reckoning, or by their Negligence or Opposition discouraging a *Reformation*, must expect to be smartly Animadverted on by a Jealous God, who is

never at a loss for a Suitable and Proportionable Punishment to any one's Desert.

If all these Considerations afford not sufficient Encouragement to join in so good a Work, it would methinks be very strange. I am sure we rarely enter upon any Engagement with so fair a Prospect; and are many times forward enô, where we have not half so many Rational Inducements to excite us. And yet there are a great many *Pleas and Excuses*, which are urg'd on their own Behalf, by those who stand out: But 'tis so easie to see thro' them, that I am unwilling to enlarge in considering them. *Love* will answer a Thousand of them: For whatever is apprehended, they have their Rise in Enmity to God and Men; the Remains whereof influence the Best, while they are Neglectful of, or Heartless in, so great and good a Work as this.

However, there are *Two Discouragements* which must not be overlookt; because

because at the same time that they keep off some, they may dishearten others who have engag'd, and tempt them to draw back. They are these; *Great Opposition*, and *Want of Success*.

I. *First, For Opposition*. Is it not to be expected? Was there ever any thing Remarkable for the Honour of God, and a Publick Good, done in the World without it? Is it not weak to suppose, that Men should be disturb'd in the Prosecution of their Lusts, without Exclaiming? That their Iniquities should be Sham'd, and they be Silent? That they should be cross'd where they are most Tender, and not endeavour to Asperse and Vilify the Assailants? Can it be imagin'd, that the Devil's Interest in the World should be Assaulted, and Undermin'd, and he not stir up his Agents and Emissaries to make Resistance? Is it likely that he or his would tamely submit? Is it to be wonder'd that Engines that were unthôt off should be set on Work, to baffle a Design, whereby he and his

would be so great Sufferers? But on the other Hand, Is not He Stronger who is for you, than he who is against you? Are not they who set themselves in their several Stations to suppress Vice, pleading the Cause of God? And is not He able to bear them out? Remember *Luther's* Saying; *The more the Devil Rages, the more vehemently will I in the Strength of God oppose him.* Consider Times past; Consult the Sacred Records you have in your Hands: See if those who appear'd for God against the Wicked of the World, did not always meet with United and Vigorous Opposition; have not had the Malitious Tongues of those whom they confronted, bent against them, to Re-proach and Vilify them; and found their Busie Hands eagerly Employ'd in Blocking up their Way, and Embarrassing them with Difficulties, that they might not know how to proceed. It matters not in such a Case, from what Quarter the Difficulties arise. Whoever appears openly, the Enemy of all Good is at the Bottom; and the more he  
Rages



Rages, the more Good may you hope to do, persisting vigorously to batter his Interest. And then,

II. *Secondly*, As for *Want of Success*; That I must confess is very apt to be Disheartning, but it should not cause Despair. Courage, Vigour and Diligence have e'er now carry'd thro' abundance of Difficulties; and the wisht for Success in time hath follow'd. But I'll suppose it should not in the Event be answerable, to what according to general Apprehension might reasonably have bin expected; yet still you have sufficient Encouragement to discharge your Duty, and persist therein: For the God you serve will judge of you, by your Intentions and Endeavours, and not by the Issues, which are not at all at your disposal; neither therefore are you Responsible for them. Remember and take the Prophet's Comfort, *Isai. 49.4. Then I said, I have labour'd in vain, I have spent my Strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my Judgment is with the Lord, and my Work (or Reward)*

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ward)

ward) *with my God*. Should you see no Fruit of your Labour, among a perverse and and incorrigible Generation, and meet with nothing but Contempt, and Reproach, and ill Usage from them; yet God sees and Regards your Fidelity and Diligence in his Work, and will give Judgment for you; and you may assure your selves your Reward is laid up with him, and by him, which he will give you in due time. It is sometimes possible *for a Nation* to arrive at such a pitch of Obstinacy, that it *will not be heal'd*: I won't say this is our Character; tho' there may be ground enô for Fear: But still, doing what we can to *Keep our Brethren*, we shall *Keep our selves*, we shall *Keep in God's Way*; and could not answer for our Neglects, which are not to be excus'd by our Fears about the Issue. We are to follow our Rule, and do what we can, to Honour God, and Promote a Publick Good, leaving the Event to Providence: Doing which, whatever is the Upshot, we may have Peace; which we should have no Reason

son in the World to expect, should we with-hold or flag in our Endeavours.

Waving all Inferences from the Discourse foregoing, I'll subjoin a few *Special Reflections* on that *Reforming Work*, the Encouragement whereof is the Great Design of this *Exercise*.

Blessed be God, that while we have a numerous Generation, who like *Galileo*, care for none of these Things, there are any that are Right Spirited, Zealous for God, and the Publick Good. It is matter of great Joy, to behold and hear of your Hopeful *Societies* in and about this City, for the Suppressing Vice; which are bottom'd on so good a Foundation, manag'd with so much Discretion, animated with so much Vigour, and promoted by so many Contributions. This City, which is the Metropolis of the Nation, is the Place most in View: It is continually receiving from, and sending to, all Parts and Quarters of the Land. Any thing of this nature therefore here set  
on

on foot, soon affects the whole Nation. This City is also generally very influential, either for Good or Ill, by its very Example. Your Example here in Attempting a *Reformation of Manners* among us, hath not been without some good Effects in some Parts of the Country already; which in all probability might be more General, if there were a Compliance with their Common (and I think Reasonable) Desire, that a Particular Narrative might be Publisht to the World, of the Grounds of your Undertaking, and the Rules and Methods of your Proceedings, which would at once both Excite and Direct them. And give me leave to tell you, That this having bin long talkt off, is to my Knowledge earnestly expected by many, whose Hearts are with you; to whom it would be a Matter of Grief, to find that Little, Private, and Particular Considerations should herein be an Hindrance, where the Publick Interest is so much concern'd.

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The whole Land hath great Reason to be Thankful to God for your Courage and Conduct; and to Rejoice, that there are any who will stand up for Him, and appear on his side against the Sons of *Belial*. That tho' our unreasonable Heats and Distances, on the Account of our Disagreement in the smaller Matters of Religion, are not yet at an end, nor our Divisions healed, or indeed abated, by those mutual Concessions and Compliances that might have been expected for the sake of Peace; after such full Convictions, and open Confessions of the Folly and Danger of them, and so wonderful a Deliverance as the Great God hath afforded us; there yet should be such a Common Concern for the Honour of God, and Zeal against Profaneness and Debauchery among us, as that both Parties, without regarding the old Mark of Distinction of *Conformists*, or *Non-Conformists*, should so heartily Join and Concurr in such a Work as you have engag'd in. And would it do any

thing

thing towards the Paving a Way to a *further Coalition*, it might lay a Foundation of our Lasting Happiness.

You also your selves have a great Reason to be Thankful, that God hath in any measure own'd you, that you have got over so many Difficulties, that your Endeavours have succeeded to the Reclaiming of any, and to the bringing such Multitudes to deserved Punishment, to the Discouraging of others: And also, (which is not to be forgotten) that you have bin preserv'd from the many Dangers which some of you have bin expos'd to. That tho' sundry of your Members have bin rudely Treated, and Encompass'd by the Sons of Violence, and often expos'd to their Malice and Fury, yet *none of you have lost either Life or Limb*: Which hath bin a Manifest Appearance of Providence for you.

What need have you then, (my Friends) to matter it, that some Re-  
proach you, others Misinterpret your  
good

good Intentions, and others seek to throw Rubbs in your way. Be not disheartned: For you have God on your side; and good Men on your side also: They heartily Pray for you, and Bless you in the Name of the Lord. And you have also the Laws of the Land on your side, and on them is your Undertaking bottom'd. Whatever some may Whisper, you are but pursuing the Acts of our Wise Legislators, and in your several Places and Stations, helping forward their Execution.

The Vices I observe, which in Prosecution of the Laws you principally set your selves to oppose, are these Four; *Swearing and Cursing, Drunkenness, Uncleanness, and the Prophanation of the Lord's-Day*; all which have taken but too deep Rooting among us.

In the Case of *Fraud and Injustice, Theft or Murther, or any Instance of Open Violence*, Self is so nearly concern'd, that every Man presently stirs, and calls in the help of the Laws, and  
the

the Officers of Justice; and few need to be put upon pursuing such Criminals, till they receive their deserv'd Punishment: But as to the Vices mention'd, where Self is not for the most part so nearly touch'd, but the Consideration of the Honour of God, and a Publick Good, must be the prevailing Inducements to a Prosecution, there needs a Combination of well-dispos'd Active Persons, to hinder the Laws made against them, from being Fruitless and Ineffectual.

The *Swearer* openly affronts the Great Majesty of Heaven, and defies him with a Vehemence to be detested by all that have him in Reverence: And yet would be likely generally to pass unpunish'd, did none make it their Business to Inform against him.

The *Drunkard* Unmans and Sots himself, wastes his Time, weakens his Understanding, impairs his Estate, ruins his Health, unfits himself for the minding either of his Family or the Publick;



lick is boisterous and quarrelsome, often doing Mischief, lying open to all Temptations, and continually enticing others to the like Courses, the prevalence whereof would Ruin the Nation; and yet would generally pass unadverted on, without such a Combination, because few would think it necessary for them to Inform against him.

The *Unclean Person*, Brutifies himself, and Defiles the Land, and yet too often escapes in a Croud. The Punishments which our Law hath provided for Criminals of this Kind, are very small, compar'd with those of many other Nations. There was a Law among the *Romans*, That whosoever attack'd another's Chastity, or prostituted their own, should be Fin'd Two Hundred and Fifty Crowns. (a) A Much greater Mulct than our Laws exact. *Adultery*, (which our Law only Chastises) was among

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(a) Rosini Antiq. Rom. Lib. 8. cap. 24.  
10. Millia Mummûm.

mong the *Jews*, by God's own Order, punish'd with Death. (*b*) Among the *Egyptians*, if a Man perswaded a Woman to commit *Adultery* he had a Thousand Stripes, and she lost her Nose: But if he forc'd a Freewoman, he was punish'd by such a Mutilation as utterly incapacitated him ever to repeat the Crime. (*c*) Among the *Romans* 'twas also punish'd with a Mutilation, especially of the Ears and Nose; (*d*) that the Bodily Deformity of the Criminals, might proclaim the Atrocity of the Wickedness committed. The *Muscovites* are wont to cut *Adulterers* in pieces; (*e*) and sometimes terribly to tear and mangle them: And it hath bin the Custom of some Nations, to tie Stones, with Iron Chains to the Necks of this sort of Criminals, (*f*) that they might become

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(*b*) Levit. xx. 10.

(*c*) Diod. Sic. Lib. 1. τοῦ βιασαμένου γυναῖκα ἐλ[[????]]-θεραν προσέταξαν ἀποκόπτεθαι τὰ ἄδοῖα. (Book 1. c. VI. p. 41.)

(*d*) Adrian. Turneb. Advers. Lib. 28. cap. 46.

(*e*) Sigismundus Baro. in Herberstain. Rerum Moscovit. Comment. pag. 26, 109.

(*f*) Corbel. Scribonii. Graph. Epitom. Lib. 6. c. 12.

become the Derision of all that beheld them. *Opilius Macrinus*, the Roman Emperour, was always wont to have those who were guilty of this Crime, ty'd together, and burnt alive; (g) and many other terrible Punishments were inflicted on them in Former Times. (h) And can the Prosecution of our Laws, which are comparatively so very mild, with any Reason then be complain'd of by any as Cruel, and Severe?

There is one Instance of *Bestiality*, which formerly brôt down Fire from Heaven, on sundry flourishing Cities in the Out Parts of the Land of *Canaan*, which hath hardly bin heard of among us till of late, which methinks deserves to be seriously enquir'd after among your Searches, lest by its spreading among us, it bring upon us a like or as Dreadful a Vengeance. Is it not possible to find out some Haunts of those who are addicted to this abominable  
E Vice?

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(g) Julius Capitolinus in *Vitâ fuâ*.

(h) *Vide Seldeni Uxor. Hebraic. Lib. 3. c. 2. & sequ.*

Vice? and to Trace and Suppress it before it becomes bare-fac'd? If Diligence and Care will do it, I hope you'll not be wanting.

As to the *Profanation of the Lord's Day*, I hope you won't be backward herein to do your utmost. I know none that desire you should attempt a Revival of the Jewish Strictness: For God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice. But it is methinks sad to see how the Fields and Publick Houses are still crouded in many Out Parts, on this Day, which ought to be devoted to higher Purposes. There was an Abatement herein for a while, when you first set out: But it is complain'd it don't hold; there's too General a Return to the wonted Custom. What! can't we spare one Day out of Seven from our Secular Cares and Divertisements, for the minding the Concerns of an Approaching Eternity? At least, is it not fit that those who won't, should be curb'd as to what falls within publick View, lest their Examples be Infectious? Lay out your selves,  
I be-

I beseech you (my Friends, and Brethren) in endeavouring herein to revive the *Glory of our Nation*.

What Wise or Thinking Man can be Aggriev'd at these your Proceedings? Are they not highly *Just*? He that supposes otherwise, highly Asperses the Laws, and their Enactours. Are they not *Honourable*? highly becoming Men and Christians? to set your selves to *Keep your Brethren*, from that which would Ruin them, and make the Land mourn? Are they not *Safe*? Can any thing of such a Nature be suppos'd less liable to Danger? I have, I must confess, in this Respect heard of an Objection; but cannot but apprehend that it Reflects more on those who lay a Stress upon it, than on you whom it is brought against. 'Tis this; That *your way of Procedure opens a Door for Malicious Informations, and tends to encourage them*. But is there any thing so Perfect as to be incapable of being Abus'd? Is it not easie for the Magistrate, who hath the Cognizance of Informations,

by weighing Circumstances, to make a Difference? Are not such things which it must be own'd are possible, capable of being some how or other detected? And would not their Detection, for ever Ruin the Reputation of the Guilty? Is not this as good Security as we have of our Safety in many other Cases, where yet we are not apt to be concerned? For Instance; who that Travels the Road, or Walks the Streets, can be secure that another shan't Swear against him that he Robb'd and Rifled him? Often hath this bin done, to the Damage of the Innocent; and yet this is not reckon'd a sufficient Reason to invalidate the Oath of the *Plaintiff* against his *Aggressor*. Nor is any Man who is satisfy'd of his Innocence, here apt to be fearful. And why there should be Ground of greater Fear from your Societies, I can't imagine.

However, since you have so many Eyes upon you, and so many are apt to be Jealous of you, and would rejoice to catch you tripping, you have the  
more

more need to be *Watchful*. Take heed to your Feet, and be often looking upwards for Conduct. Be careful to *Keep your Selves*, while you set up for *Keepers of Others*: And having put your *Hands to the Plough*, don't draw back, whatever are your Difficulties. Persevere in Well-doing; and *you shall reap in due time if you faint not*.

*Now the Good Lord Guide, Assist, and Strengthen you; enable you to hold on, and more and more Encourage you; Prosper your Endeavours; and Crown them with Success; and amply Reward them both in This and a Better Life. Amen.*

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