

*Comfort and Counsel to
Protestant Dissenters*

by

Edmund Calamy



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Comfort and Counsel
TO
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.
WITH
Some Serious QUERIES

To such as *Hate* and *Cast* them out;
And a Friendly ADMONITION to such
as *Desert* them.

IN TWO
SERMONS,

Preach'd first at *Westminster*, on *March* 30.

And afterwards

At the Merchants Lecture, at *Salters-Hall*,

On *May* the 20th, and *June* the 3d. 1712.

By EDMUND CALAMY, *D.D.*

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TO

Sincere PROTESTANTS, of
all Denominations, into
whose Hands these Pa-
pers shall fall.

My Friends and Brethren,

THE Reason of my thus addressing you, is, because I conceive you have a Common Concern in the Truths here offer'd to Consideration, from the Word of GOD, which we all own for our Rule and Standard. I am not however so ignorant of the Tower and Prevalence of the particular Sentiments by which we are distinguish'd, as to imagine that what is here publish'd will find a like Acceptance with all. But thus much I am with Truth able to say for my self that if I had been sensible that any thing here propos'd could have given just Offence to any true Lovers of the Protestant Religion, I should have studiously wav'd it, and thought that it had been my Duty to do so. Upon which Declaration I think I may be allow'd to hope, That such Parties as have not forgotten the Good Old Rule of doing as they would be done unto, should be sparing in their Censures, tho' I may not be so happy as to have their approbation.

I cannot forbear professing my self an hearty Lamenter of our sad Divisions, at a time when our common Enemies the Papists are so big with Expectations of succeeding in those Designs against us, which they

have so long been forming. Could we but agree to Love one another, my Fears of them would vanish. But it is our Mutual Hatred, and our forwardness to cast out one another, appears to me to give them their greatest Advantage. Whoever they are that cherish this Spirit, (let them be call'd by what Names they will) do, as far as I am able to judge, promote their Designs, whatsoever may be their real Intentions. This is my Apology for the Freedom which I have here us'd. And had I not thought this a sufficient Apology, I should not easily have been perjuaded to send abroad into the World two plain Discourses, at a time when it is so hard to say any thing that shall please, such as are not pleased either with the Person that says it, or with his Way of saying it.

I pretend not, That any Party among us is to be excusd from too great a forwardness to cast out, such as a Gracious GOD is ready to accept. Were not He more Merciful to us All than we have been to one another, we should truly be in a most miserable Condition; and I doubt, had all of us long ere this, been cast out of this good Land, which He hath so many Ways remarkably Favour'd. I durst not, for my part, in the least attempt to plead for, or extenuate, any thing of this kind, whosoever be the guilty Persons: But where the Guilt is greatest, there certainly, there is the most need of Repentance; and I cannot see how that can be expected, while the Fault is either justifyd, lessen'd, or overlook'd.

DID they who are Dissenters from the National Establishment, (to whom I cannot forbear adhering as long as I am convinc'd they have Truth on their side) as generally and freely Censure the Ministry of those whom they differ from, and as
publicly

publicly question the Validity of their Baptisms, and their Capacity of Acceptance with GOD in the Way they take, and as openly declare for the casting and keeping them out, and any way as boldly weaken the Foundations which the Reformation stands upon, as is done by many in the Establish'd Church, (by their asserting a proper Power in Priests to forgive Sins; pleading for the Necessity of acknowledging the Authority and submitting to the Laws and Decrees of the Catholick Church, in order to the avoiding Damnable Schism and urging the indispensable Necessity of Episcopal Ordination to the Being of a Church and Ministry, and the like) I should be as ready to discover my Dislike of such a Temper on their side, as I am on the other. But I bless GOD that it is otherwise. And let others be as Hot as they please, I cannot help thinking, that where there is most Charity, there, there is most of GOD, and greatest likelihood of His Approbation. And it would be strange, if unprejudic'd and impartial Persons should not herein concur.

*IT is a very Dismal thing that there should be such a Spirit at Work among usy as seems to make some severe Scourge necessary to bring us to our selves. May there be many found Steady and Faithful under the forest Trials. When they are over, I hope we shall consider our Differences calmly, and not with Heat and in Haste, and come to understand onee another better, and see that there is Good Reason to make allowance for a Diversity of Sentiments, among those that may be equally capable of approving themselves to GOD as to their Integrity, without casting out such as may be taken in upon Scriptural Grounds. When GOD by his Appearance is pleas'd to usher in these Times, I am persuaded none will need to be urg'd to be asham'd of
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endeavouring to confine the Interest of CHRIST to their own Party, or to support it by such Methods as little become the Followers of the Prince of Peace, who has declar'd for Mercy rather than Sacrifice, and whose undoubted Character it was, not to break the bruised Reed, or quench the smoaking Flax,

IN the mean time, let us in our several Different Ways, unite in a serious and earnest Application to the Father of Mercies and the GOD of all Grace, to reform our Tempers and Manners, and revive the Power of Godliness among us; to secure the Credit of a Faithful Gospel Ministry, and of his own Sacred Institutions; to prevent a return of Popery, and a forfeiture of our Civil and Religious Liberties; to check Scepticism, and Profaneness, Lying, Defrauding, Intemperance, Defamation, Dissimulation, and all the Works of Darkness; and to diffuse among us an Holy Light and Love in a rich abundance: And hereby shall we manifest ourselves better Friends to the Christian Interest, and more true Lovers of our Native Countrey, than by persisting in Biting and Devouring one another, which if the Word of Truth be to be believ'd, is the way to be consumed one of another.

Comfort and Counsel
TO
PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

ISAIAH LXvi. 5.

Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word, Your brethren that hated you, that call you out for my names sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

WHICH way soever the Voice of Almighty GOD is given forth, it is most attentively to be Listen'd to, by all Reasonable Creatures; From Him they all in Common deceive their Beings, and upon him they depend for Life and Happiness; and therefore nothing can be more fit or becoming, than that they should have *Ears to hear*, when He thinks fit to speak. He speaks both by his *Works*, and by his *Word*; and be it in one way or another that He gives any signification of his Pleasure, the not regarding Him is a great Sin, and exposes to his just Resentment. The *Works* of GOD have a Language that is intelligible: And they are to be consider'd, that their Language may be Understood. Some of his Providences loudly proclaim his Clemency, and his particular Regard to such as are devoted to his Fear: while others as sensibly declare his Justice and Severity, and tell all such as observe them with becoming Care, That the Great GOD is provok'd, and that it concerns them to prepare to meet him in the Way of his Judgments;

B which

which cannot: by any Means be so effectually Averted, as by a serious Humiliation and Reformation. And whether He be intent upon magnifying his Justice, of serving the Purposes of his Mercy, if Persons do not observe and study Providence, it cannot be expected that they should Comport with it, and make suitable Improvement.

But GOD speaks yet more distinctly by his *Word*, which is a full signification of his Mind, as far as the knowledge of it is necessary, to his Church in General, or to his particular Servants; Directing them in their Way, and Work, and Duty, admonishing and reprovng, and assisting or encouraging them; according to their differing Circumstances, Necessities and Occasions. And Happy are they that *hear* it, and are suitably impress'd by it, and ready to comply with it.

GOD spake of Old to his Servants the *Patriarchs*, *Prophets*, and *Apostles*, before He made use of them to convey his *Word* to others: But since the Sacred *Canon* has been finish'd, we are upon all Occasions refer'd to the written Word; studying which, we may find suitable and sufficient Direction both as to our Duty and Interest, in every Circumstance that can well be conceiv'd. We are thence at all times to take our Measures of Practice, and our Comforts and Encouragements.

We are at present in a Juncture that bears some Marks that are Peculiar; and too many are at a Loss: and yet even now by recourse to the written *Word* of GOD, and seriously studying it, we may find what will Help to direct, and support, and assist us, in and under what soever we may be call'd of GOD either to do, or to bear. And I am not without Hope that we may be satisfactorily convinc'd of this, by Meditating seriously on the Text propos'd; which represents a very affecting Case, and yet gives light in a dark and gloomy Scene, and affords ample and abundant Incouragement to such as faithfully adher'd to GOD in the way of their Duty.

There are Three Things in the Text which call for our particular Notice: And they are these, The Character of the Persons spoken to; The Charge that is given, them, and, The particular Message sent them from GOD.

I. The

1. The Persons that are here spoken to are remarkable for the Character which is given of them. They are describ'd as *trembling at the Word of God*. They are a People that *stand in awe of God's Word*, as *David* declares of himself, That he did most heartily. And this is truly an Excellent Character. They to whom the Blessed GOD is here speaking, are such as were habitually dispos'd to receive his Word with Reverence, and freely to submit and yield to its Authority. 'Tis such as they, that have a special Message here sent them from Heaven: 'Tis such as they, that are here call'd on to *hear the Word of the Lord*. All indeed should *hear* when He is the Speaker; none should think themselves unconcerned in the Reports and Representations of his *Word*: But to such as *tremble at his Word*, does GOD peculiarly address himself. He has at all times had a more than common Intercourse with Persons of such a Temper. He loves to speak to such; for He knows they *have Ears to hear*. They are of a teachable Disposition, He does not lose his Pains upon them as He does upon others, He speaks to such with Freedom; and is less upon the Reserve with them, than with the rest of Mankind. Nor was this Character peculiar to those to whom the Prophet is here speaking. It is a Genuine Character of the sincere Servants of GOD in all Ages, that is given upon this Occasion: They all *tremble at his Word*, and they are thereby distinguish'd from the Men of the World. And it is because of their *trembling at his Word*, that He loves them, and delights in them, and *looks to them* in a way of Mercy, and Favour, and Pity; as is intimated in the Context; *For to this Man will I look*, says GOD, *even to him that is Poor, and of a Contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word*. They *look* to GOD, and He *looks* to them. They *hear* him, and He *hears* them, and graciously regards them; and is inclin'd to own and favour them, and *appear* for them. Such Persons are particularly singled out to receive the Message here sent, that they might be animated and supported under the Reproach, and Disgrace, and Ill usage they met with. A signal Divine Blessing is here promis'd to them, and to them only; because they alone were fit and qualify'd for it. We cannot wonder that they

Psal. cxix.
161.

Verse 2.

to whom this Character belongs should be selected in this Case, since it is here freely declar'd in the beginning of the Chapter, that such were much more precious in his Eyes, than others; and intimated, that He would *look* to them as to the *Temple* in which He would dwell, rather than to the *Temple at Jerusalem*, of which they, by whom these his Servants were despis'd, were so apt to make their Boasts. GOD has ever had more regard to such as *trembled at his Word*, than to such as valu'd themselvss upon the *Church* they belong'd so.

Secondly, The Charge which is given to these Persons, is also to be taken Notice of. It is short and plain, but very agreeable to their Character. They are bid to *Hear the Word of the Lord*. I come to you, says the Prophet, from the Great GOD, and I expect your Attention; as very well he might. 'Tis as if he had said, "I have something to deliver to you, "and it is of Importance; had it been only the "Word of Man that I had brought you, your regard- "ing it, as far as it was supported by Reasons and "Arguments, would have been as much as could "reasonably have been expected or desir'd; You "might then have receiv'd or rejected it, as you your "selves saw Occasion; and as your depending upon "it, had not been any thing near so safe; so your "making light of it, had not been any thing near so "hazardous, as now, that it is *the Word of the Lord* "that I bring along with me: But since it is his "Wordy it claims your Respect; your very Char- "acter obliges you to *hear it*, comply with it, and "readily receive it".

And indeed, they to whom the Character here given truly belongs; they that *tremble at the Word of God*, need not at any time be much press'd to *hear it*: For they are very fit for it; they are ready and dispos'd for it, and inclin'd to it; they cannot Act like themselves without doing it. Whoever despite or slight it, they will *hear* and they will do so at all Times. They cannot live without it; They love it as the Food of their Souls; They hide it as a rich Treasure in their Hearts; They can say with *David*, That *God's Testimonies have they taken as an Heritage for ever; for they are the Rejoycing of their Hearts*. They know

know there's no such way to Liberty, Peace, and Safety, as that to which the *Word* directs them. And therefore they can't be satisfy'd without *hearing* it, nothing shall hinder or keep them from it; They'll rather a thousand times hearken to GOD than Man; They'll *hear the Word*, be it what it will; and bow down under it, whatever be its Import, Design or Tendency. Its being *the Word of the Lord*, (that is, duly evidenc'd to be such) is sufficient to draw forth their Regard. They'll *hear* it when it Commands or Threatens, as well as when it Promises or Encourages. They'll *hear* it when it makes against them, and therefore to be sure won't neglect and slight it, when it is for their Comfort and Support. The Call or Charge here given to *hear the Word of the Lord*, is not an Intimation of any Backwardness on their Part, to listen and give attention; (notwithstanding that it is evident enough, that even the best Persons that are, are not alike dispos'd for it at all Times) but it is rather an Excitation to a more than ordinary Observation of a peculiar Message now sent them; and an Intimation, that what was about to be deliver'd did much Concern them, and was much to their Advantage.

Tho' such Things as these are not to be overlook'd, yet that in the Third Place, which here principally requires our Notice, is, the particular Message, which the Prophet brought these Persons from the Great GOD; or the *Word* which they were now requir'd to *hear*. Of which we may in general Observe, That it was a very Intelligible Word; it was not Obscure and Enigmatical as the Prophetical Messages often were, but easy to be Understood, It was a suitable Word, and very agreeable to their Circumstance at the Time that was referr'd to. It was a *Word in Season*, which the Wise Man so much commends; it was a comfortable Word to Persons under such a Brand of Infamy as they had fasten'd upon them, and such Scorn and Contempt as they were expos'd to. A special Message is sent them from Heaven upon this Occasion, to raise their Spirits and revive their Hopes, Men slighted them, but GOD was willing they should know how much He favour'd them. They had been hardly us'd by their Fellow

Prov. xxx.
II.

low Creatures; but He that was the Grand Object of their Trust and Dependance, sent them Tydings of great Joy, that they might not be dishearten'd.

The Message that was sent them in this Case, looks several ways at once, which it is a very common Thing for the Word of GOD to do. Tho' it was to his People which GOD here speaks directly; yet what He says has a Glance at their insulting *Brethren*, and has a Reference to GOD himself, as well as unto these Persons, who were particularly call'd upon to *hear* and attend: And it is but requisite that we should view the Prophet's Message distinctly, under each of these Aspects.

I. THE particular Message of GOD to his People, which is contain'd in this Text, refers to their *Brethren*; and that in Three Respects: IT gives their Character; IT describes their Carriage; AND predicts a Difference in their Sentiments, both as to those from whom they were so much alienated, and as to their own Carriage to them too, at the last, from what they were at the first.

1. The Message which GOD here sends to his People, gives the Character of their *Brethren*; and that particularly as to their Disposition towards these Servants of GOD that are apply'd to; and signifies that they *hated them*. For thus run the Words, *Hour Brethren that hated you*. 'Tis grievous to ingenious Minds to be *hated* by any; but worst of all by *Brethren*. And yet this was the unhappy Case of those, of whom, and to whom, my Text speaks. These Servants of GOD had *Brethren*: Persons that they freely own'd in that Relation, and who ought to have return'd them a like Affection; but who instead of it *hated them*. Tho' they were the Servants of the same GOD with themselves, and as desirous to approve themselves to Him as they could be, yet they *hated* them: Nay, they *hated* them, for that for which they ought to have lov'd them; and that is for conscientiously *trembling at God's Word*, and adhering so closely to that, which All ought to take their Measures from, that desire to be found Faithful, and accepted as such. Tho' these Persons had to do with *Brethren*, yet

yet they, instead of any of that Tenderness towards them that might have been expected, despis'd them, and insulted them, and bore hard upon them, and gave them very Unbrotherly Treatment. It is not however to be imagin'd that the *Hatred* was alike in all these *Brethren* mention'd: and yet it prevail'd among them to that degree that a common Character is taken from it. It is said of them in general, that they *hated* the Persons foremention'd. They not only differ'd from them in Sentiments and Practise (which where there is a right Spirit may be manag'd without any Heat or Animosity) but they were too generally possess'd with Rancour against them; they pour'd Contempt upon them, and discover'd such an Ill-will as was very unbecoming Persons that were Related as *Brethren*. Instead of rejecting them, and making allowance, and softening Things, (which is what they undoubtedly would have desired, had the Case been their own) they censur'd them, misinterpreted their Words and Actions, and took all possible Advantages against them, so as to discover a real Malevolence. Some particular Persons, of better natural Tempers, or Acted by a more generous Spirit than the rest, might be otherwise dispos'd; and yet it is intimated, That this was the common and prevalant Disposition of these *Brethren* towards those Servants of GOD that are here particularly Address'd to; *Their Brethren hated them*; and no *Hatred* so cutting as that of *Brethren*; We may with Ease bear that from an *Enemy*, that is hard to be born from a *Brother*: *David* plainly hints it, saying, *It was not an Enemy that reproached me, then I could have born it.* But to be *hated by Brethren* is a Thing that cuts deep. This is in the Text represented as no small aggravation of the Distress which GOD's faithful Servants were now in, that they were *hated by their Brethren*; by those that pretended to Love them, and were by Duty and Interest oblig'd to Love them: They that they had to do with were *Brethren*, and yet were so blinded by Pique and Prejudice, as to *hate* them, and carry it to them as if they were so many Aliens; and that notwithstanding that by so doing, they gratified the Common Enemy, and gave Him no small Advantage. And as this much heighten'd the Sin on one hand, so did it the

Psal. lv.
12.

it the afflictive Exercise on the other; on which accounted it is deservedly taken Notice of. But,

2. THIS Message of GOD to his People, describes the Carriage of these Angry *Brethren*, as well as gives their Character; and it does it by Three several Steps, one of which still rises higher than the other. Such was their Malevolence, that they were not content with venting their Spleen in hasty Words, but they added suitable Actions; they *cast them out*; and they put a fair Gloss upon it, and pretended to do it *for God's Names sake* too; and when they had done, they said, *let the Lord be glorified*; which argu'd their Contempt to be risen to no small height.

They *cast them out*. They reckon'd them such despicable Persons that they'd have nothing to do with them; they would not be mix'd with them; they would not suffer them to share with them in common Benefits; they were for setting a Brand of Infamy upon them, that they might be the more effectually expos'd to a Common Contempt. Having first *cast them out* of their Affections, they at length proceeded *to cast* them out of their Society, and if some could have had their Will, one and the same Land should not have held them, and they should have been *cast out* of all share in the Favour of GOD or Men, unless they would alter their Temper, and become more pliable to their Purposes. Some think that the Prophet here refers to an Ecclesiastical Excommunication, and others to contemptuous treatment in Civil Respects, and in Common Conversation: But I don't see why we should confine our Thoughts to either of them; when both may be taken in very safely. These *Brethren* were one sense as well as another so very full of themselves, that they had no room for others. Tho' 'twas a real Brother, and Child of the same Father they had to do with, their Language was this; *Stand by thy self, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*. They reckon'd it would be a disparagement to Act in concert with them; they shunn'd them as Persons polluted, Persons by whom they were in danger of being infected, unless they would square their Principles and Practices by the Model which they
them-

themselves were fond of, and so desirous to impose upon them. That is the first Step: And then,

2. They thus *cast them out for God's Name's sake*, which was no small Addition. Our Blessed Lord represents the rigorous Treatment which his Disciples met with from the Zealous Jews, as much the worse, because it was *for his Names sake*, and upon the account of Fidelity to him. And this is always the Case, where Rigour is us'd towards any in Matters that Conscience is truly concern'd in: 'Tis for *God's Name's sake*, for *Christ's Names sake*, that any Hardship is endur'd, which Persons cannot escape without suffering the Divine Rights over Conscience to be invaded. And it was thus with these Angry Brethren spoken of in the Text: They *cast out* the upright Servants of GOD for *his Name's sake*, they did it because they would not yield to the *Power of the Church to rule the Conscience of Men*; which tho' it has been brought into the Contents of *Psalm cxlix.* yet has never hitherto (Thanks be to GOD,) crept into the Text. Had these Brethren been severe upon their Fellow Servants for any real Crimes that were proved upon them, it would not have been blam'd: But their doing it *for God's Name's sake*, made it the more inexcusable. They really did it for their Loyalty to GOD, and because they were fearful of offending him, and unwilling to Act, where they could not perceive they had his Warrant. Other Reasons might perhaps be pleaded; but this was the true Cause and original Spring of their Rancour and Contempt; so that they could safely appeal to GOD with *David*, and say as he. *For thy sake, we have born Reproach.* But,

3 They also took yet a farther Step, and said. *Let the Lord be glorified.* They not only acted very unbecomingly, but they justified, and made their Boasts of what they had done. Had it been a meer sudden surprize that had drawn into such Carriage, tho' it would not therefore have been justifiable, yet it would have been less Criminal; and the suddennest of the Temptation would have call'd for some Companion, upon the account of Humane Infirmity: But the persisting in it, and vindicating it, and boasting of it, made it much the more inexcusable. They said, *Let*

the Lord be glorified; and argu'd, that what they had done was for the Glory of GOD, and the Good of their *Church*, and the Common Good. They plead-ed that they had good and solid Grounds for their Proceeding, in sequestering themselves from these Ser-vants of GOD, and *casting them out*; and urg'd that herein they did a piece of Service that was acceptable to GOD, and for the Honour of his Name.

Or die we may take this Saying in the Text, *Let the Lord be glorified*, for an insulting Scoff, and an intimation. That when these Angry *Brethren* treated the upright Servants of GOD so contemptuously, they would afterwards jeer and mock them, and say, *Let God be glorified* in your deliverance and rescue; Let him help you if he sees good. We not only meet with something of this Nature in *David's Case*, now and then hinted at, but it was express'd by those who were so desperately set against our Blessed Savi-our. When the implacable *Jews* had nail'd him to his Cross, *They mocked him, and said, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him*. So it is intimated in the Text before us, that when these Zealous Bigots had compass'd their design, and *cast out* these Servants of GOD who were fixedly bent to retain their Integrity, they would freely insult them, and bid them call upon GOD to help them; that GOD in whose Favour they imagin'd themselves to have so great a Share; crying out to them, Let him shew his Power in doing something remarkable for you, if you are so much his Favourites; flouting at them for their Confidence in the Almighty, and expecting that he would own them, and *appear* for them, and vin-dicate, and ease them of their Burthens, and mani-fest himself displeas'd with those, who set themselves with all their Might to expose them, and run them down. And this argues no small Audaciousness, ad-ded to an Unbrotherly Rancour and Ill-will: Such Carriage as this GOD could not but resent, as is in-timated sufficiently in what follows, But,

3. As this Message of GOD to his People gives the Character of their Brethren and describes their Carriage, so does it also predict a difference, in both their Sentiments, as to those from whom they were so much alienated, and also as to their own Carri-
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Psal. xlii.
3.

Mat. xxvii.
43.

age to them, at the last, from what they were at first; for it declares they should *be ashamed*: When they came at last to see the Foot of their Accounts, they should be so far from pleading for the Temper they had discover'd, or justifying their Carriage, that they should freely acknowledge their Mistake, and be truly concern'd, and have their own Hearts reproaching them for Acting in so very Unbrotherly a manner. *They shall be ashamed*, says the Prophet. *Asham'd* of all their hard Words and Speeches, and contemptuous Treatment; and the more *asham'd* by how much the forwarder they were before to insult and triumph. He imitates, that the Time would come when they should be convinc'd that things had another Tendency than they apprehended; and *Asham'd* of their Self-sufficiency, their Stiffness, and narrow Spiritedness, their doing so much to weaken the Hands of their hearty Friends, and strengthen the Common Enemy; and their running the hazard of Losing all, rather than not have their Wills upon those, who aim'd at nothing but the *keeping Conscience void of Offence, towards God, and towards Men.*

Acts xxiv.
16.

And this is the plain import of this Message of GOD to his People, as it refers to their Angry *Brethren*. But then,

It refers also to the People of GOD themselves, to those that were his Faithful and Upright Servants, GOD here sends a special Message to them as Sufferers, and as Sufferers in a Good Cause; and that notwithstanding all the Contempt of their disturbed *Brethren*, who could not think themselves secure till they were Branded. Men might count them Hypocrites, and represent them as making a great stir, about a Trifle, and pretending one thing while another was intended, and unduly magnifying the Hardships they met with: But in the mean time GOD, *who seeth not Man seeth*, intimates by his Prophet that they were his Confessors, and He would own them as such. All of them are suppos'd to share in the Distress, and Reproach, and Hardship indur'd, tho' not all alike. Some suffer'd more immediately, but all by Sympathy; and upon account of the Contempt that was cast upon their Principles. In this Case there is a Message sent them from the Great GOD; from that

1 Sam. xvi.
7.

GOD to whom they were so concern'd to approve themselves, and in whom they had so much reason to Confide; a Message which contains a most suitable and seasonable, and refreshing Cordial. *God*, says the Prophet, *shall appear to your joy*. He not only declares that this might be, but He gives them a Promise of it. He promises them under their *Reproach*, considering upon what Account it was that they were expos'd to it; and *Joy* upon their Deliverance from it, when a new and brighter Scene of things should open upon them. And the *Joy* promised on their side, he opposes to the *Shame* foretold on the other side, so as to represent their Case upon the whole as much more eligible of the two, in a rational Estimation, upon a fair and equal Comparison. He had been upon this comparative view before, in the Chapter next foregoing, in these remarkable Words; *Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold my Servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my Servant's shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my Servants shall rejoyce, but ye shall be asham'd: Behold, my Servants shall sing for Joy of Heart, but ye shall cry for Sorrow of Heart*. And he here returns to it again: And the intimation of such a difference as this, which they might warrantably depend upon, might justly fill them with no small *Joy* beforehand. It could not but much Cheer and Comfort them under whatsoever they indur'd, to be assur'd, that GOD had other Thoughts of them than their *Brethren*. And when the time should come that such a difference was actually made, it could not but inflame them *with Joy*, to find their Integrity so clear'd and vindicated, and rewarded, by him, to whom they were so concern'd to approve themselves. They could not but reckon this an abundant amends for all the Hardships and Insults they had met with. And then in the Last place,

III. This Message also refers to the Blessed GOD himself, whose *appearing* it is intimated, (tho' the way and manner of it is not particularly express'd) should make as great a difference as this amounts in the Case of those concern'd: *He shall appear*, says the Prophet, and that to purpose: He shall do it like himself: He shall not always keep silence, or seem unconcern'd; No, He assures them, that the Great
GOD

GOD who was well acquainted with their Sincerity, under all the Reproaches which they met with, and who observ'd all the Bitterness of their *Brethren* against them, would certainly in his own Way and Time appear, and manifest himself, and shew his Power in their Favour, and to the rolling away of all their Reproach, and the convincing and silencing, and *shaming* their unkind and angry *Brethren*,

And being thus led into the General Sense and Import of the Text, we may consider it either *Historically* or *Doctrinally*.

1. We may consider it *Historically*. And if we would find out the Time or Season that is particularly here intended we must keep Four Things in our Eye, and at once take in the Character of the Persons concern'd, their different Department, the *Appearance* that is promis'd, and the Retribution that is threaten'd.

1. The different Characters of the Parties concern'd are to be minded. On the one hand stands those who *tremble at the Word of God*, and are remarkable for so doing; making that the just Measure of their Conduct, as conceiving no need of improving meer Humane Additions; and who are at the same time for Loving all that bear the Image of GOD, as far as they can discern it, and embracing all that appear to have any thing of GOD or true Goodness in them: On the other, stand such as *have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge*, and a great concern for the Externals of Religion who are at the same time remarkable for despising their brethren, for differing from them in lesser Matters, while the much greater Things wherein they agreed with them, and on account of agreeing with them in which, they ought to have born them an hearty Affection, are comparatively overlook'd and pass'd by. They are for *casting out* others, and having no concern with them, unless they would intirely fall in with them; and are for monopolizing Spiritual and Civil Privileges to themselves, and those of their own Stamp, and Spirit, and Way. Two such Parties as these must be found out, before we can with any assurance determine the time that this Text intends, if it be *Historically* consider'd.

2. The

2. The different Department of these two Parties, is also to be consider'd: The one reckoning that GOD would be most glorify'd, and his Honour most advanc'd by a Conformity to his Holy Nature and Will, most earnestly aim at that, and study to be his Children in Light and Love; and are for heartily embracing all as *Brethren*, who agree in the same Head, and the same Foundation-Principles, and a suitable Practise: Whereas the other are still crying out, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, and boasting of its material Structure, and pompous Service, and thereupon setting a great value upon themselves; while in the mean time, they despise and insult GODs *Living Temples*, and are as narrow in their Charity, as in their Views they are selfish; representing it, too commonly, to be as great a *Schism* to divide from them, in order to a greater conformity to the Will of GOD, as it would be in any of those who sided with them, to wander from the known Paths of Piety and Purity, if not greater, and more to be detested.

Jer. vii.
4.

3. The Divine *Appearance*, which is promis'd, is distinctly to be consider'd; This must have something in it that shall be remarkable, because it is design'd to serve such a Purpose as GOD's discovering his different Resentment of such Characters and such Carriage respectively. It must be some such display of GOD's Power, and other Perfections, as shall be found signally to discountenance Formality and Bigotry, and a narrow Party-Spirit in Religion, and revive real Purity, and general Charity, and diffuse and spread them in the World.

4. The Retribution that is threaten'd, must also be taken in, and that is *Shame*: Shame in proportion to the Nature and Aggravations of the foregoing Mistakes and Follies. And the Prophet seems plainly to intimate, that this *Shame* should be produc'd by some uncommon, unexpected Desolation, which should give a new and different Turn to their Thoughts from what they had before; for he declares in the very next Verse, that they should be stop'd in their Career, by a *Voice of Noise from the City, a Voice from the Temple, a Voice of the Lord, that rendereth Recompence to his Enemies*. This, to be sure, points

points at something very remarkable in the Retribution intended; and signifies, That the Conviction that would be produc'd of the unsuitableness of their foregoing Carriage would not be more surprizing, than the way in which it would be produc'd. There would be a *Voice of Noise*; it would come on a hidden when it it was little expected; it would be general, there would be a *Noise* from every part; it would be the *Voice of the Lord*, and generally heard; It would reach not only *the City*, but *the Temple* too; that Temple of which these Formalists so much gloried, and in which they put so much Confidence. He intimates. That *Noise* of Desolation and Confusion should be heard, even there, where they thought themselves safest, and out of all danger.

Putting all these things together, we may, I think, be help'd without much difficulty to pass a Judgment as to the accomplishment of this Prediction.

Grotius, and some others with him, refer the fulfilling of this Prophecy, to the time of *Antiochus*; and say, that GOD here promis'd to the upright who adher'd to the High-Priest *Onias*, in Opposition to *Jason* and *Menelaus*, that *Judas Maccabeus* should stand up in their defence, and plead their Cause, and settle their Church and Nation upon a stable Bottom; the History of which may be read in *Josephus*.

Some think, the threatenng in this Context refers to all the Evils and Calamities which GOD brought upon the degenerate and obstinate *Jews* by the *Chaldeans*; and understand the comfortable Promise which is here given out, of the good which he did for the Faithful at their return from *Babylon*.

Others apprehending that these things fall short of answering the Prophet's account and description, conceive, that We are here pointed to the final Ruin of the *Jews* by the *Romans*, on one hand, and the great things which GOD design'd in favour of his faithful Servants, who receiv'd and own'd the *Messiah* upon his Appearance, while so many others stood out against him, and rejected him, on the other hand.

But that which to me appears the most probable Opinion, is, That GOD is here as it were taking his leave of the *Old Synagogue*; and so doing threatens his

his heavy Judgments on such as were pertinaciously adhering to those Rites which He would have superseded; while He promises rich Blessings to such as herein fell in with his Design, and embrac'd his Gospel under great Discouragements and Difficulties, For GOD seems here freely to declare against the *Jewish Rites*, and those that were for retaining them. He proclaims his Contempt of their Ceremonial Sacrifices, saying, *He that kills an Ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he ont off a Dog's Neck, &c.* He was weary of such kind of Oblations, and could bear them no longer: Their Unbelief in the Messiah to whom GOD in so many ways bore Witness, made the Ceremonial Worship, that was at first of Divine Instruction, as odious to GOD as Murder or Idolatry; but they being incurably, fond of their Ancient Mode of Worship, and opposing GOD's Design of introducing one much more Noble and Spiritual, He declares. He would *bring their Fears upon them*, they should hear a *Voice of Noise from the City, a Voice from the Temple*; He would arm the *Romans* against them, of whom they were so fearful, and by their means discharge his Wrath upon them, and that *to the uttermost*; and give up their *City and Temple*, as a Prey to the Fury and Avarice of their Enemies: But in the mean time He promises, that He would appear in Favour of such as adher'd to his Gospel, whatsoever Sufferings and Hardships they might be expos'd to for so doing; He would plead their Cause, and wipe away their Reproach, and manifest himself on their side, and instead of straitness give them enlargement, and a lasting Joy in the room of their Heaviness. And if we take Matters thus, it is abundantly evident. That the Event fully answer'd the Prediction, by the Calamities that befel the *Jews*, some time after our Blessed Lord's Crucifixion, and the great things which GOD did to supplant *Judaism* and fix and settle true *Christianity* in the World. But,

Ver. 3.

Ver. 4.

Ver. 6.

1 Thess. ii.
16.

2. Besides the Primary and Historical Reference of the Text, it may also be consider'd *Doctrinally*, and as it may be accommodated to the People of GOD in any Age for their Instruction and Admonition.

tion. And so to very naturally leads us to such Remarks as these:

1. That such as *tremble at the Word* of GOD, are the fittest to hear it, and the most likely to improve by it. These are Persons that GOD sets a Value upon: He *looks* to such, in such a manner as He does not to others; They are peculiarly dear to GOD. Let them be ever so poor, or low, or despis'd; tho' their Number be small, and their outward Appearance mean, tho' they have not many Mighty or Noble amongst them, few or none of the great Ones of the World to stand by them; yet as long as this Character belongs to them, That they *tremble at the Word of God*, He *looks* to them with delight and pleasure; they stand in his Secret the most of any, and have the most of his Presence, and the most of his Spirit with them, of any Persons whatsoever. To such, GOD will communicate the most of Himself. Let persons have ever such a value for themselves upon the account of their Privileges, if they don't *tremble at the Word*, GOD regards them not. Tho' they give him ever so many fine Words, and pay him pompous Services, yet if they don't *tremble at his Word*, He and they have no real vital Intercourae. Their having the Word of GOD sounding ever so often in their Ears, their taking ever so much pains in order to a distinct understanding it, their giving it ever so ample Commendation, will do them but little Service; 'tis only such as *tremble* at it, that have the design'd Benefit by it: GOD's special Manifestations are to such as *tremble at his Word*. Others are not capable of them, they are not qualify'd for them. To them that are dispos'd to bow down and submit with Reverence, and yield a free and ready Obedience, is the Word most directly apply'd; and to them it is most suited: They are such as *tremble at the Word*, that are the fitted for such Divine Comforts, as are here promis'd; They'd be but thrown away upon others; they are not capable of them, they could not relish them, they'd rather do them hurt than good. It would be a most happy thing, if we had a considerable number of such Persons among us; it will be happy for us, if we can approve ourselves of that number. This is what we are all concern'd

cern'd to mind. We are often engag'd in *hearing* the Word, but if we don't *tremble* at it, we have little Reason to expect it should profit us. Let us learn, to *tremble at the Word of God*, if we would secure his Presence with us, and his *Appearance* in our Favour. Let us have an inward Veneration for it, let us take it as *a Lamp unto our Feet, and a Light unto our paths*, and pay it a thousand fold more Respect than the Judgments, or Decisions, or Counsels of Men; and let us not allow ourselves to go against it in any thing, if we expect it should afford us Comfort in a time of Trouble. And let us, as we have good Reason, count that an happy Providence, whatever may be the Design of the Agents, and tho' it may upon other Accounts have ever so discouraging or threatening an Aspect, that has but this Effect upon us, to bring us to *tremble at the Word of God*, and regard, and yield to, and follow it, more than we did before.

Psal. cxix.
105.

Another *Doctrinal* Instruction which the Text affords us, is this, That the most upright Servants of GOD may be *hated by their Brethren*, and be undeservedly *cast out* by them, and that *for God's Name sake too*. We have Hints of this, at the very beginning of our Bibles, where we are told, that *Cain* hated *Abel*, and *Esau* did the like by *Jacob*; and we find the same Spirit at work, more or less, all along till we come to the latter end of them. St. *Paul* compares things under the Old Testament, and the New together in this respect, and tells us. That *as then, he that was born after the Flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now*. And we throwing in the Experience of the several Ages that have run out since, in Conjunction with what we find and feel in our own Times, may further add, That so it has been from that Day to this, and so it is still. And indeed no other is ordinarily to be expected. The faithful Servants of GOD have not only open Enemies to contend with, but have reason to look for Assaults, even from those that under the Bonds of the same Covenant with themselves, and so ought to cherish a Brotherly Affection to them. They are not to be surpriz'd if they have Ill-will born them, even for their Strictness and Conscientiousness, which is represented as an over Niceness, and a groundless

Scru-

Gal. 4. 29.

Scrupulosity. And yet it's Natural for the Trouble that is hereby accasion'd, to be the greater because they are *Brethren* that do this. It was foretold by our Lord himself, that it should be thus. He signifies to his Disciples, That they should be *reviled, and have all manner of evil spoken against them falsly, for his sake.* And his Apostle thereupon cries out, *If ye be reproach'd for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God and of Glory resteth upon you: On their part he is evil spoken of; but on our part he is glorified.* And therefore *cruel Mockings*, are brought in as no mean part of the Sufferings of GOD's Confessors: And we should none of us think that any new or strange thing happens to us, if we in our Turn, have a taste of such Treatment.

Matth. v.
11.
1 Pet. iv.
14.
Heb. xi. 36.

3. A third Do&trinal Instruction which the Text affords, is this; That when Persons act very irregularly and uncharitably, they yet may say. *Let the Lord be glorified;* they may run into great Extravagancies under the influence of a misguided Zeal, and yet fancy they are honouring GOD all the while. It is indeed an affecting thing to consider, what Criminal Actions Persons may run into, thinking that their doing them for the Glory of GOD will consecrate them; and not only excuse them, but make them laudable and praise-worthy; and of how infatuating a nature fiery Zeal often proves, blinding Men to that degree as to bring them to take evil for good, and good for Evil. One would wonder how such a thought could ever enter into the Minds of Reasonable Creatures, as that which our Saviour mentions. That by *killing their Brethren they should do God service;* and yet He tells his Disciples, that such a *time would come.* And if Men may be hurry'd by their Zeal to kill their *Brethren* with a good Design, much more may they be influenced to lower Instances of Ill-will to their Neighbours, and yet think they do very well, and deserve Commendation, rather than Blame. If Men indeed would be prevail'd with to allow it to be possible for them to be mistaken in their Fits of Zeal, and not unlikely for them to be in the wrong when Heat transports them, it might help to preserve them: but this is a Point that is not easily gain'd of some. They fancy, that what they do in

John xvi.
2.

their Fury is for the Honour of GOD, and think that's enough. But, alas! what Service can it in any case be to GOD, to bespatter, and injure, and bear hard upon others? Its very likely it may be said, That it will serve the *Church* upon Occasion, and so promote the *Cause of GOD*; which is a thing that is highly desirable. But I doubt, in the final issue, it will be found, that that *Church* or Ecclesiastical Constitution had little of GOD in it, that found a need of Un-brotherly Methods to support it; and that that *Church* will not easily obtain the Divine Approbation, which was for *casting out* such as GOD himself receives. Let it then affect us (for it certainly ought) to think that Persons should entertain a fancy of *glorifying GOD*, by those very Methods, by which they highly dishonour him. Let us remember, that Hypocrisy and false Zeal, are the common Attendants of a Persecuting Spirit, and were so, both under the Old Testament and the New. Formalists have still been Despisers and *Haters* of GOD's most Upright Servants, and using the Name of GOD as a cover, have given their Malevolence, the Name of Zeal for *GOD* and his *Church*; seeking with that, as with a Blind, to impose upon themselves and others: But GOD will take care of his own Glory; and not suffer it always to be abus'd with impunity.

4. The last Doctrinal Instruction afforded by this Text, which I shall mention, is this; That when the Upright Servants of GOD are *Hated, and cast out* by their *Brethren, for his Name's sake*, they may safely trust themselves in his Hands, and leave it to him to plead their Cause, humbly hoping, that sooner or later, *He will appear to their Joy*, and so as to make their Enemies *asham'd*. The Nature of GOD, may much encourage this Hope; for tho' He is slow to Anger, yet He is peculiarly inclin'd to right such as are injuriously dealt with. The Promise of GOD, may also encourage this Hope; *Fear not, little Flock*, says our Saviour, *it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom*. And when GOD has conferred his Heavenly Kingdom above upon his Servants, they will most assuredly be clear'd from all Aspersions, unjustly cast upon them by their unkind *Brethren*; nay, they shall be clear'd before, and in this Life too, if GOD

see

see it needful. His Honour is fometimes concern'd that it should be so; and when that is the Case, we may be assur'd it will be so. *For the oppression of the Poor, for the sighing of the Needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his People; He will beautify the Meek, with Salvation. And all Men shall fear, and shall declare the Work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his Doings. The Righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him, and all the upright in Heart shall glory.*

Psal. xii. 5.

Psal. zxlix.

4.

Psal. lxiv.

9, 10.

Without proceeding any farther in General Instructions, I shall now come down to Particulars, and make Inquiry, How far this Mortgage which GOD sent heretofore to his Faithful Servants by the Prophet, is without Force and Violence, applicable to *Conscientious Protestant Dissenters*, in the Circumstances which they are now in. And that we may the better judge of this, it is requisite that we should distinguish between the Case that is here describ'd, and the positive Prediction that is annex'd. Upon an exact comparing of Circumstances, I conceive, it won't need much Pains to prove, that the Case that is here describ'd, is very agreeable to the present Case of *Conscientious Dissenters* from the Ecclesiastical National Constitution in *South-Britain*. And if so, it will be but a natural and just Consequence, That tho' the latter part of the Text be not applicable to them, as a direct Prophetical Prediction; it yet may contribute to their Support and Relief, while they faithfully persist in the way of their Duty.

The Premises being consider'd, I think, I may very safely assert, That the present Case of *Conscientious Protestant Dissenters* among us, is very agreeable with the Case describ'd in the Text. This Agreement runs thro' all the Particulars which are mention'd; For they *tremble at God's Word*, they are *hated* by their *Brethren*, and they are *cast out* too, and that, *for God's Name's sake*, and they who treat them in this Unbrotherly manner, very commonly say, *Let the Lord be glorify'd*. It is hard to conceive a greater Harmony, or a more exact Correspondence in so many several Articles. And this deserves to be carefully observ'd.

1. Conscientious *Protestant Dissenters*, do as really, as those spoken of in the Text, *tremble at the Word of God*. I would not here be mistaken. I don't say, that all *Protestant Dissenters* do it; I heartily wish they did: I am sure if they all did, and did it more, it would be better for them, and they would have the less reason to be concern'd at the Ill-will of others, and might have the more ground to trust in God. But I am free to acknowledge (tho' I cannot do it without Concern,) that even we have too many among us, that can flight and neglect, and deep under, and trifle with the Word of GOD, as if it were of no account, as boldly as their Neighbours, that make no such Pretences as they do; The Good LORD awaken and amend them. Nor do I on the other hand pretend, that none of the Inhabitants of this Land do *tremble at the Word of God*, but such as are *Dissenters*; I abhor any such uncharitable Thought. I am very well satisfy'd, that there are many in the *Establish'd Church of England*, that have as true and sincere a Veneration for the *Word of God* as any Persons whatsoever. All that I assert, is, That the Character given in the Text, does truly belong to Conscientious *Protestant Dissenters*, and as truly to them as to any. Which I take to be very plain, since it is because they so much *stand in awe of the Word* that they are so afraid of Ecclesiastical Impositions, which they cannot find, that the Word will warrant; and it is upon that Account that they are expos'd. I readily grant indeed, that we have valu'd *God's Word*, nor *trembled* at it, so much as we should have done; and for that we have cause to be humbled; and perhaps this may be one Reason, why GOD has seen fit to rebuke us. But still this Character more truly belongs to none, than it does to some among us. And tho' this is often turn'd to our Reproach; yet I take it to be our Happiness; the more we have of this Temper among us, the better is the Prognostick. This is what may very justly yield us Comfort upon Reflection, tho' we should upon that Account be censur'd and traduc'd.

2. The *Diffenters* have been *Hated* by their *Brethren*; and still are so by too many. This admits of so flagrant Proof, that I can't see how it can be deny'd,

deny'd, or even contested. Whence else is it, that they should so often both from the Pulpit and Press, be represented as *Enemies to the Church*, in common with the *Papists* * ? Can there be any want of Ill-will, where Men take such a Liberty? But how can this hold, or be reconcil'd with Truth? For how can they be *Enemies to the Church*, who agree with Her in Her Doctrinal Articles, and in all Essentials of Worship, and in concern for a Reformation of Manners, and in every thing by which the *Church of England* is distinguish'd from the *Church of Rome*? How can they be *Enemies to the Church*, who agree with Her in every thing that is Necessary to make Men good Christians, or good Subjects, or good Neighbours, or help them forward in the way to Heaven? And yet, is it not a sign of *Hatred*, that after all we must often be represented as Common *Enemies to the Church* with the *Papists*? Nay, that it should often be represented as more eligible to go over to the *Papists* than the *Dissenters*? And is it not a sign of *Hatred* that we must upon all Occasions be misrepresented, charg'd with Things to which we are utter Strangers, branded as unfit to be Trusted, and have all imaginable Contempt pour'd upon us, as if we deserv'd no Consideration or Regard, either from our Superiours or Equals? If this does not shew it would be hard in any Case to give good Proof of it.

3. The *Dissenters*, and those who have Acted upon the same Principles with them, have also been *cast out* by their *Brethren*, and that again and again; and that for *trembling at God's Word*, and refusing such Compliances as they could not perceive they could yield to, without Sin. Many eminently Pious Persons were for scrupling strict *Conformity*, *cast out* when the *Canons* took place in 1603, and many several Years afterwards were *cast out* of their Churches for refusing to read *the Book of Sports*; their Consciences not allowing them that way to give publick Liberty to profane the Lord's-Day. And many were *cast out* of the Land into *America*, by Ecclesiastical Rigours and Severities. And have we not had various Ejectments since the Restauration in 1660? Were not two Thousand as valuable Gospel-Ministers, as most Nations

* See Reflections on the present Posture of Affairs, pag. 21. together with many of the late angry Sermons and Pamphlets.

Nations ever produc'd, in 1662, (now just 50 Years ago) *cast out* of their Churches, and driven into Corners? And were not a number of Worthy Persons at that Time, or rather the Year before, *cast out* of the Magistracy in all parts of the Land, because they would not declare their utter Abhorrence and Detestation of a certain Principle, without the Help of which we had never been Bless'd with the late *Glorious Revolution*, (which I hope we shall never forget) nor with a *Protestant Queen* at present on the Throne, nor with our future Hopes from a *Protestant Succession* Legally settled, which is our Comfort, and our Enemies Terror, and may it be ever so. And were not our Ministers afterwards *cast out* of Corporations, and all Places where they might be likely pick up a Subsistance for themselves and their Families? And were not both they and their Families, for many Years together *cast out* of the Protection of the Law, and left to be imprison'd and worry'd, and beggar'd, at the Pleasure of those who generally had as little of Humanity or Companion, as they had of Christianity or real Religion? And tho' we had at last a *Legal Toleration* granted us, for which we are very thankful to GOD, and our Governours, yet were we not *cast out* with Contempt by the *Convocation* in 1689, when we had a Prince upon the Throne, that had it much at Heart to heal our Breaches and compose our Differences, by means of such Concessions as would have discover'd a Brotherly Tenderness? And are not *Protestant Dissenters* now *cast out* from all Places of Profit and Trust, unless they'll quit their Principles, and entirely fall in with the Publiick Establishment?

These are hard Things, If the Agents in them, had been the Patients, they'd have thought them so. They are Things which we apprehend, we have no ways deserv'd. And it cannot be wondred if they grate the more, and cut the deeper, because they don't come from Strangers or Aliens, but *Brethren*: From those who profess the same Faith with us, and adhere to the same Rule of Life; Men of the same Religion, and the same Civil Interest too, Men that have been convinc'd, that they whom they treat in this manner, are as hearty as any for the Good of their Country;

and

and so Steady, that they could never yet, either be Wheedled or Threatened into the betraying it. Again,

4. Have they not been thus *cast out for God's Name's sake*? For where is the Man that can charge us with any thing Criminal, and support his Charge with Proof? What *Occasion can they find against us*, that are *Dissenters, except concerning the Law of our God*? Which was *Daniel's Case*. Is not what is suffer'd. Dan. vi. 5. for the sake of a *good Conscience*, suffer'd for *God's Name's sake*? It has indeed been often said, That the Law has been eluded, and Hypocrisy countenanc'd, by the *Occasional Conformity* of such as have not Conform'd for a constancy. But was not the Law intend'd, Originally design'd to keep out *Papists*, rather than *Protestants*? And when the removal of that Law, would have let in the *Papists*, were not the *Dissenters*, generally speaking (a very few only being excepted) as active and industrious to hinder the Repealing it, as any Men of their Capacity, in the Nation? And how could there be any Hypocrisy, or the least scandal to Religion in it, for Men to do what they always held to be Lawful, and what they actually did at some times, meerly to shew their Charity under their Dissent, when it was (how justly or reasonably I enquire not) requir'd that they should do it for the sake of an Office? Why then must the *Dissenters* be ran down with such a Vehemence for that, which had they meerly consulted their Interest as a Party, they must from the first have altogether forborn? Let the Matter be search'd to the bottom, and (bating the Imprudences of particular Persons, which I pretend not to account for) the Contempt they have this way fallen under, will be found to owe its rise to their not falling in with the Church Established by Law; against which, after the utmost search they can make, Conscience reclaims, for fear they should by so doing abett and support unscriptural Impositions. I cannot see, but that their being this way exposed, is as much for *God's sake*, as any Reproach or Hardship that was endur'd in the Primitive Times, upon the Account of a Consciencions Refusal to joyn *Judaism* and *Christianity* together, even when they

did not stick at being *Occasionally present at Jewish Worship*. And yet, once more;

5. When Conscientious Protestant *Dissenters* have been treated most contemptuously, their Angry *Brethren* have still said, *Let the Lord be glorify'd*. It has been the usual Pica, That the Restraints that have been laid upon them, and the Difference that has been made between them and others, have been in order to their Conviction, and for the Common Good; for the strengthening of the *Church*, and the securing of that from Danger: And when they have been brought under new Difficulties and Hardships, it has been no unheard of thing for those who were the Occasion of them, to say, in an insulting scoffing way, If that which you are engag'd in, be the Cause of GOD, let him *appear* for you. Let us see when, and how He will own you, and what mighty things He will do in your favour? Such sort of Language we have been us'd to; and we have no occasion to labour for an Answer. No other return is needful than this, That we can leave that to GOD. However, the usualness of such Language in our Case, as well as that in the Text, makes the Parallel the plainer. And in reality, it was the exactness of the Correspondence, that was my Inducement to choose these Words for a Subject of Discourse.

Taking it then for granted, That our Case as *Dissenters*, answers the Description here given by the Prophet, of the Case of those to whom he was to bring a comfortable Message from GOD, I seem to myself, to have from hence a very fair Occasion to apply myself a little freely and seriously to Three several sorts of Persons.

I. To our *Brethren* of the *Church of England*.

II. To such as us'd to Worship GOD among the *Dissenters*; but forsake us now, and wholly fall in with the Establish'd Church, to save themselves from Contempt and Hazard. And,

III. To such as are determin'd to continue Conscientious Protestant *Dissenters*, whatsoever their being so may expose them to.

Should

Should any be surpriz'd that I should pretend to apply myself to those of the first and second sort, while there is little likelihood, I have any such within Hearing: I can in return, not only plead my Text, which refers to others, tho' they were the People of GOD to whom it was immediately directed; but have this also to say, That I know I am speaking to some that are very able to make a Report of what is suggested, both to one and t'other: And that the things I have to offer are so much the Subject of Common Conversation, that we can hardly any of us be too well provided with fit Matter of Discourse upon it And

I. I begin with our *Brethren* of the *Church of England*, with whom I think we have fair Ground of Expostulating, tho' I would manage it with all the Calmness in the World. *Brethren* I will call them, and as such I will own them (and hope we shall all do so) carefully endeavouring to keep up a Brotherly Affection to them, whether they will own us, and carry it to us as *Brethren*, Yea, or No. To such I would put a few plain, but close and serious Questions, which to me appear to deserve to be consider'd of.

1. Why should you *Hate* us? Are we not *Brethren*? Have we not one and the same GOD and Father, to whom we owe our All, and whose Favour must be our Final Happiness? And have we not one and the same JESUS CHRIST, the common Saviour to trust in, and depend upon? And one and the same Holy Spirit to influence and animate us in an Holy Course, and from whom we derive all Grace and Peace? Are we not of one and the same Religion? For how is it possible there should be two different Religions, where there is the same Head, and the same Vital Spirit; the same End, and Rule, and Prospect? Has real Vital Religion any concern in those things in which the Difference properly lies between You and Us? And will not one and the same Heaven at last hold us all? Why then should you *Hate* us? Is it a thing becoming? Or can you justify it?

We can solemnly Profess, That we don't *Hate* you. Tho' we differ from you, and cannot help doing so, and think we have as good a Right to do

so, as you have no differ from us, yet we Honour and Love you: We bless GOD for your valuable Gifts and Endowments, and can heartily Rejoyce in your Usefulness: We take part in your Happiness, and should sensibly share in your Dangers: Why should you then reckon us your Enemies, or carry it tous as if we were such? Have we any Friends, that are not your true Friends as well as ours? Have we any Foreign Interest in view, that you can suppose can have any Influence upon us? Have we any Prince to bring in, to Support and Head us, from whom you have any Aversion? Or have you any Enemies that are not our Enemies as well as yours? Should the *Romanists* carry their Point (which GOD forbid) and prevail to extirpate the *Northern Heresy*, can you be so weak, as to imagine that for any length of Time they'd make much difference, between *Conscientious Church-Men*, and *Pious Dissenters*? And tho' we in several Things differ from you, yet do we not agree with you in all the Essentials of Christianity? And are we not as Hearty in Opposition to *Poper*y, and as firm in our Adherence to Queen ANNE, as our Rightful Sovereign, and to the *Succession* in the Illustrious House of *Hannover*, as any Men whatsoever? Why should you then affect to pour Contempt upon us, and see us aside as needless and useless Persons?

Does not St. *Paul's* Argument deserve your Consideration? might it not Strike you? *The Eye*, says he, *cannot say unto the Hand I have no need of thee; nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no need of you.* And if it cannot be so in the Body Natural, why should it be so in the Body Politick? And how unseemly is it that there should be any thing like it, in the Mystical Body of Christ? We contend not with you for Pre-eminence: We are ready to allow you the Preference in all respects, scarce to keep close to the Rule of the Word, and Fidelity to the common Interest only excepted:) But why must we therefore be thrown aside as Usless? We are ready to allow you to be *the Head*, while we are but *the Feet*; yet still *the Feet* are useful, and, cannot be missing in their proper Place without great Inconvenience and Prejudice to the whole Body. Why should they be contemn'd,

1 Cor. xii.
21.

temn'd, because they are not uppermost? In their Place they are very serviceable: Time may come that you may need us: And therefore we beseech you, don't bear too Hard upon us; we won't say, *Lest Nature should rebel against Principle* (you know very well whole Language that has been) but least the whole Body should suffer.

2. It is a Commendation of the *Church* you belong to, and the Ecclesiastical Constitution of which you are so fond, that it is always *in Danger*, if others remain unmolested? That it cannot be secur'd till others are born hard upon? What a *Church* is that, that can bear neither with Natives nor Foreigners, if they in the least falter in the *Shibboleth*? Is that *Church* to be Boasted of, that will have little or no regard to *The Communion of Saints*, except what she discovers by keeping it in her *Creed*? Is that *Church* of a right Spirit that can't be secure without pouring Contempt upon all others? and without exposing a Number of Persons to Want and Beggary, because they won't stand still to have their Ears boar'd in token of perpetual Servitude? Does not that *Church* expose herself, that over and over declares she can't be securer, unless she gives Measures in Matters Political, and is supported by Rigour and Severity towards others? It would be justly to be wondred at, if this should not at length stir upenquiring Thoughts in those who have any thing of freedom of Spirit left. For my part, I should think it as great an Hardship to be cramp'd in my Affections, as in my Intellectuals: And therefore, if I were a stated Member of such a *Church*, a *Church* that cherish'd such a Spirit, I could not help questioning, Whether it did not become both a Rational and a Christian Man to desire to breathe in a little freer Air. Again,

3. Has it not been publicly and freely own'd, by Some of the most Celebrated Writers on the *Church* side, and Bishop *Stillington* * in particular. That it was the *Romanists* who secretly influenc'd to the Rigours of King *Charles's* Reign? And did you see such Blessed Fruits of those Proceedings, as to discern any Reason for a Desire to return to them? Is not this what our enemies would rejoyce in? Shall we offer to tread in the same Track as before, when it is so evident

* See his Charge to his Clergy in his Primary Visitation, pag. 35.

evident that the Danger of *Popery* is as great now as ever; nay, when so many even among you yourselves publickly Proclaim it to be much Greater?

Would you not Repent your Despising these your *Brethren*, and *casting them out*, should you ever live to see things come to Extremity? Was it not thus after all foregoing Severeties, at the Close of the Reign of the late King *James*? Was it not then the common Talk even of those that had born hardest upon the *Dissenters*, That they had a *Tenderness* for them, and were ready to come to a *Temper* towards them? Were we not publickly told, that they *saw their Errour*, † and that if the *Church of England* after she got out of that Storm, should return to hearken to the Church *Peevishness* of some fowre Men, she would be abandon'd both of *God and Man*, and would set both *Heaven and Earth* against her? Well! we have since seen how Mens Thoughts have differ'd in a Storm, and in a Calm. However, what has been may be again; and that in a grater degree than before; as Circumstances may differ. Let me then put a Case, and make a Supposition, that a New Storm should arise; would the late Carriage of the very same Persons as formerly were so awaken'd, afford Matter for Comfortable Reflection? Let me suppose that the Time should come; that you should see an open Conceit between a *Protestant Successor*, and a *Popish Prince*, back'd with a *French Power*, (the Supposition may, I think, be very well allow'd me, as Circumstances stand) will it be a Comfort to you then to think that you have done what in you lay to tie up so many Hands, as would chearfully have been employ'd for the Common Safety, to gratify you knew not who, and compass you knew not what? Will you then Boast of *securing your Church*, by such Methods as are found to help forward *Popery* and *Slavery*? And may not this deserve to be consider'd?

5. Would you like it, or could you forbear resenting it, should we carry it to you, as you have done, and still do, to us? Should we with one consent withdraw our Voluntary Subscriptions from your Lecturers, (not to mention other things) which you know are very generous in this City, and in some other parts of the Kingdom, (and who can wonder if

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† See *An Apology for the Church of England, with Relation to the Spirit of Persecution of which she is accus'd: And the Marquis of Halifax's Letter of Advice to a Dissenter.*

we should) would you not feel it? Or, should we upon all Occasions diminish and undervalue you, should we smother our Respect for you, and be backward to joyn with you, in what might manifestly be for the good of the Publick, for fear of being thought too much to Esteem and Favour you; should we Sacrifice you (what in us lay,) tho' we knew your Fidelity to the common Interest, to such as neither valu'd you nor us, nor would do any thing even for the publick Safety, but just in their own way; or should we run the farther from you, the nearer you approach'd to us, and Condemn you for not doing what you were not convinc'd is Lawful, because you were free to go as far as you could perceive you Lawfully might, and express your Charity in a way that was manifestly against your Interest; would you not Cry out upon us as very unreasonable? And why then will you not give your selves leave to consider, what we may justly think of such Carriage as this, in you towards us? Tho' there is a difference between Superiors and Inferiors, yet the former may know that what in the latter would to them appear Insolent, and Arrogant, and Intolerable, would to the latter from the former be very Grating and Galling, and apt to exasperate. And it is. a Thought that I conceive is very fit to be entertain'd, even where there is the greatest Distance.

6. May not GOD justly bring their own upon you? And may He not the rather hasten them, for your taking Methods to escape them that bear hard upon your *Brethren*? Is not that an affecting Threatning, which we meet with in the very Verse before my Text? *I also, says GOD, choose their Delusion, and will bring their Fears upon them.* And may not this be your very Case Have you any security that it won't? Did nor the *Jews* plead fear of the *Romans* when they put our Lord to Death? Did they not declare, that they did it to prevent an Invasion? But were they ever the farther from it? Nay, did they not hasten it upon themselves? And was it nor the more terrible when it came?

Such Thoughts as these might have so good a tendency, if they were but seriously pursu'd, that I must confess, I han't the Heart to beg pardon for the freedom

Ver. 4.

dom

dom of them. I had not started them, if I had not thought it my Duty. But without farther enlarging, I now go on,

II. To suggest somewhat that may deserve the Consideration of such as us'd to Worship GOD among the *Dissenters*, but now forsake us, and wholly fall in with the Establish'd Church, to save themselves from Contempt and Hazard. Such as you are, may be assur'd, that we can dispence with your absence from, our Assemblies without regretting the loss of you, provided you your selves are gainers in the Issue. If the step you have taken, will bear your sober Reflection, and prove for your real Advantage, may you go on and prosper. So well do we love you, that we heartily wish, that you may find the Way you have taken to be for your real Edification; and that you may more *tremble at the Word of God*, and have more of his Presence, and more Acquaintance with real Vital Religion, and more of a true Catholick Spirit, than ever you had while you were among us. This is what we for your sakes should heartily rejoice in tho' I must confess, as far as past Observations can help us to form a Judgment, we see but little Reason to expect it. For tho' we han't the least Doubt, but that there are among those who have been bred up in the Way of the *Church of England*, a number of as Good Christians, and as Pious Persons as any upon Earth; yet we can seldom find that such as have been strictly educated among the *Dissenters*, upon their going afterwards over to the *Establish'd Church*, do grow better Christians than they were before. And because this is not very common, and we have had multiply'd Instances to the contrary, we think it the more becomes you your selves with Soberness and Impartiality to consider the Principle whence your Change proceeded, that you may see whether no Secular Views had an undue hand in it; and whether what you have done, be fit to be persisted in. It may be worth your while to consider with your selves, how little *Demas* or his Companions gain'd, when they *forsook* the Apostle *Paul*, for the *Love of this present World*; and how sorry an Exchange they made. But if upon Inquiry, you are satisfy'd in the Grounds
upon

upon which you have proceeded, and can answer for your Conduct at the Bar of Conscience now, and at the Bar of GOD hereafter; yet give me leave in the Spirit of Meekness to admonish you, to take heed of running too far from those whom you have quitted, and of doing things out of a Spirit of Opposition. Beware of that which has been the Snare of many *New Converts*; be afraid of being draw a into Fits of furious and bitter Zeal against those whom you have left, to satisfy those whom you are gone over to, of your Heartiness in their Interest. Such Flames of Zeal, have in the Case of many prov'd most miserable Wild-fire. Be content with being Passive for a while at least. Ben't hastily drawn in to be Active, against those whom you know, (if you know any thing of them) to be desirous to serve GOD according to their Consciences. Tho' you have deferred us, yet I beseech you don't *Hate* us. Remember that True Religion allows no such thing, and Pure Religion of all things least needs it; and the Practise of it will have no great tendency to recommend the Way you have taken, to observant Spectators. Speak nothing but Truth of us, and what you have seen and observ'd among us; or else, you not only won't do us Justice, but you will but ill secure your own Creditor Usefulness. Be rather Advocates for us, as you have opportunity, than forward to take pleasure in misrepresenting us, which would discover but an ill Spirit, and yield you little Comfort upon Reflection. Think soberly and calmly with your selves, what a Wound is given to Christian Charity, by the Carriage of that *Church*, which cannot reckon itself secure unless all in any Places of Profit and Trust have her particular Mark upon them; and is at the same time, too apt to be satisfy'd with that, tho' there be nothing of Christianity but the Name. Ben't too forward in commending and applauding that *Church* that can be easy, while known *Deists*, *Socinians*, *Arrians*, and even such as are grosly Lewd and Profane, have Places in their Possession; or at least can reckon itself safe, tho' they are not incapacitated and Disabled from holding Places; but reckons itself in danger of being overthrown, if *Dissenters* should not be incapable of any Places, tho' they are

ever so sound in the Faith, or ever so exemplary in their Lives and Practise. Take heed of encouraging any thing of this kind, and of imbibing from the *Church* which you have fallen in with any of that narrowness and uncharitableness of Spirit, which when it is soberly reflected on, will appear real matter of *Shame* and which all will actually be *asham'd* of, when that Catholick Spirit comes to be diffus'd through the Christian Church, which we are waiting, and praying, and hoping, and longing for. And now,

III. I shall with yet more freedom, and Closeness, and Particularity, take occasion from the Premises, to Address myself to such as are determin'd to continue Proteftant *Dissenters*, (as long as there is occasion for it) whatsoever their being so may expose them to. And the Advice that I would hence recommend to them, is this:

1. Take Care that you be Conscientious in your Dissent; and yet don't place the main of Religion in it. If you don't Dissent Conscientiously, it will be hard for you to bear to be *hated*, and *cast out*, and kept out, and despis'd and reproach'd because of your Dissenting, And yet it is evident, That it is a very possible thing, for Persons to be *Hated*, and *cast out* by Brethren for *God's Name's sake*, and meet with Hardships for not complying with those who think they have a Right to give Measures to others, and yet be strangers to that Character which is given in my Text, of the Persons whom God accepts and approves, and will appear for. Men may suffer for Non-conformity, and yet not *tremble at the Word of God*, and be strangers to real Religion. But this is what you should dread the thoughts of; and if you have any thing of a right Spirit in you, you must and will do so; you cannot help it. Tho' it is sufficiently evident from Scripture, that our Lord has not given any of his Servants a Right to impose a Yoke upon the Necks of their Brethren, and you therefore do well to refuse to submit to any; yet if you think that such a Refusal, and your therein acting Right, will make the least Compensation for Moral Irregularities, for any defects in those Things in which Vital Religion lies, you impose upon your selves in the grossest manner that could be conceiv'd.

2. Ben't

2. Ben't mov'd by Clamours and Reproaches, whilst you are satisfied you are in the way of your Duty. Remember that St. *Paul* was told where-ever he came, that *Bonds and Afflictions did abide him*, or wait for him. *But*, says he, *none of these things move me*. It should be the same also with us, when once we have fix'd our Principles upon solid Grounds: And to prevent any undue Commotion, we should think often of those affecting Words of our Blessed Saviour; *Whosoever shall be asham'd of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be asham'd when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels.*

Acts xx.
23, 24.

Mark viii.
38.

3. Live in hope of GOD's appearing in your Favour, if you faithfully persist in the way of your Duty. Let not the Boasts or Triumphs of your Enemies terrify or sink you. Be not dishearten'd, but put your Trust in GOD. Be not *afraid of evil Tidings*; but let *your Hearts be fixed, trusting in the Lord*. As far as your Case answers that in the Text, you may comfortably Hope, That there will be a Divine Appearance in your Favour, sooner or later, notwithstanding that you have no such express particular Promise of it as is here given.

Psal. cxii.
7.

And that I may give you what Assistance I am able, as to this, in a narrow Compass, I shall briefly enquire into Three Things, and see.

1. Upon what such a Hope and Expectation, may in the Case of Conscientious Protestant *Dissenters*, be safely bottom'd.

2. How such a Hope and Expectation in their Case should be guarded or limited, so as to be kept from being irregular or exorbitant. And,

3. How they should carry it in the mean time, and while their Hope is deferred, and GOD's *appearing* in their Favour is delay'd.

1. Then, Let us see upon what such an Hope and Expectation, in the Case of Protestant *Dissenters*, may be safely bottom'd. All that I pretend to affirm is, that they may upon good grounds Hope that GOD will *appear* for them, and that so as shall be to their great *Joy*, and the *Shame* of those who have taken

the most pleasure in Insulting them, and bearing Hard upon them. And I think I may warrantably infer it from the Premises which have been advanc'd. However, I don't much question, but that you'll meet with many who will be forward to argue against any such Expectation. I shall therefore just give you an Hint of some things which I apprehend will support and warrant such an Expectation. And,

1. The first thing which I would here have consider'd, is the utter Unwarrantableness of narrowing the Terms of *Christian Communion*. Some are in strange Confusion about this Matter: They either can't or won't distinguish between fixing Circumstances, the fixing which is so necessary, that without they are some way or other fix'd. Divine Worship can't be kept up, and the making *Terms of Communion*, of such things as are not truly needful to the regular or orderly Management of Divine Worship, nor can in the least promote the Ends of Worship, and which the Great Law-giver has given none a Right or Warrant to impose. But tho' Men should unhappily confound these Things in their Thoughts and Discourse, yet they are in reality widely different. The making New Terms of *Christian Communion*, or narrowing those Terms which our Lord himself has fix'd, is what the Word of GOD very freely declares against. It is what the Honour of CHRIST, as King in his Church, is very nearly concern'd in: And it is the evident Unjustifiableness of this, that I take to be a main Principle of Conscientious *Non-conformity*. This is the Principle that the Old *Puritans*, and We, entirely agree in; tho' they were many of them dispos'd, it must be confess'd, to farther Compliances with the National Establishment, than many of us are now free to; having more hopes of a farther Reformation by Consent, than we can now see grounds for, when things seem fix'd for Perpetuity; and all the Bars that may be laid in the Way of any Alterations and Amendments, tho' they should be ever so needful. And this Principle that the *Terms of Communion* are not to be narrow'd, is so truly Scriptural, and so agreeable to the Nature of Christianity, which was not intended to be a Topical and National Religion, like that of the

Jews,

Jews, but was design'd for a Religion than should obtain Universally; that tho' it has been long conrelied, yet He that hath all along, first or last, appear'd for his own Truths in his Church, when there has been a Debate about them, will in all probability remarkably clear this, before the Conceit comes to an End. Withal,

2. The usual Method of Divine Providence in *appearing* in Favour of any People, deserves also to be here consider'd. Whosoever will take the Pains to trace the Methods of Divine Providence may easily be able to Observe, That it has been common with GOD to *appear* for his Servants, when they have been in the lowest Circumstances, and when they that bore hard upon them, were most confident of carrying their Point, and surest of Success. Then from the Beginning has a remarkable *Appearance* of GOD in Favour of any, most usually been afforded; then has it been most taken Notice of; then has it been most for the Honour of God; and then has it also made the most lasting Impressions, and been improv'd to the serving of the best Purposes. And farther;

3. The flourishing State of the Church of Christ, that we may I think upon good Grounds apprehend is now approaching, deserves also to be consider'd. We have a general Expectation of the Ruin of the Kingdom, and the final Period of the Reign of *Antichrist*; the fall of *Babylon*; the Conversion of the *Jews*; and a more glorious State of the Church of CHRIST here upon Earth, than has ever yet been seen or known, and I think the Word of GOD gives sufficient ground for such an Expectation: And according to those Calculations which appear the best and the most probable, we cannot now be very far from those Times. When they come, they'll be eminent and remarkable for Purity, and an Universal Charity, not confin'd to particular Modes of Worship or Parties of Men. When these Times shall come, none that *tremble at the Word of God*, will be *hated* by any of their *Brethren*, or *cast out for God's Name's sake*, but all such dividing Ways and Methods, will be abhorr'd, and the matter of *Shame*. And the more Reason We upon search can find, to apprehend We are upon the Borders of those Times, the more ground
may

may such *Dissenters* as are Conscientious have to Hope that GOD will *appear to their Joy*, and in such a manner as that they that have born them the most Ill-will, upon the account of their steady Adherence to the *Word of God*, shall be *asham'd* of treating them with so much Contempt. Let me now,

3. Shew you how such a hope and expectation, in the Case of the Persons of whom I am speaking, should be guarded or limited, that it may be kept from being Irregular and Exorbitant, And here I desire that such things as these may be observ'd.

They have no ground to be Positive, as to the particular way of GOD's *appearing*. He can *appear* and exert his Power in a great Variety of Ways and Methods that shall effectually reach his End. He can make use of Instruments, or Act without them. He can make strong and sudden Impressions upon the Minds of Men, the Effects of which shall be very visible, tho' the way of producing those Impressions shall be altogether undesernable. He can produce Convictions by the methods of his Providence, abate Prejudices, give Light, pour forth his Spirit, widen Mens narrow Minds, and mellow their Hearts with Love, and cure them of their Selfishness and Stiffness by gentle Methods: Or, He can work upon them by down right Necessity, which is the only way in which some are to be convinc'd. We should not pretend in the least: to Dictate to GOD as to the Way and Method, bur should leave that entirely to him; and be satisfied and contented, yea, and thankful too, if He *appears* in our Favour in one way or another.

2. Neither have they any ground for Positiveness, as to the particular Time of GOD's *appearing*. I can't perceive they have any certain Warrant to go upon in positively Saying, How soon such an *Appearance* will be afforded, or how long it may be deferr'd. GOD's Time, as well as his Way, is the fittest and best. Sore Tryals, may for any thing we know, go before it: Perhaps as great as have ever been met with yet, if not greater. Nay, they may be necessary to usher in and pave the Way for the great things which GOD intends to Effect: But be that as it will at GOD's own Time; at the Time that

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He hath appointed, He *will appear*; and it becomes us to wait with Patience in Expectation of it.

They have no need to be particular as to the degree of *Shame* that they shall be under, that have appeared against them, and *hated* them, and *cast* them out. The magnifying of that, or so much as in our Thoughts, desiring that it should be magnified, may discover a Vindictiveness of Spirit, which is very unbecoming, and ought to be carefully watch'd against. 'Tis enough if instead of justifying themselves here, and Acting as if they would do it at GOD's Tribunal too, they are brought publickly, and generally, and in a Body, to own that they were in the wrong; and to be free and ready for a Brotherly Coalition and Union upon reasonable Terms; I mean such Terms as shall leave none that *tremble at the Word of God*, any cause to complain that they are born Hard upon. This is enough to shew GOD's Favour, and to prevent a return to the like Follies-afterwards, which are the main things that in such a Case are to be desir'd, and on which the stress is to be laid.

And with such Limitations as these, I think *Conscientious Protestant Dissenters*, may very warrantably cherish a general Expectation and Hope, that GOD will appear to their Joy, and to the Shame of their Angry Brethren that have Actcd so unbecomingly. And now.

Lastly, I'll shew you, how the *Dissenters* ought to carry it in the mean time, and while their Hope is deferred, and GOD's *appearing* for them is delay'd. Such as would approve themselves to GOD, ought at all times to study, and mind, and practise their present Duty. I take this to be the Great Concern of *Dissenting Protestants*, as such, in the Juncture we are now in. Justly enough may they, with the Prophet, call this *a cloudy and a dark Day*. However, let them mind and do their Duty, and they'll have Peace, and be prepar'd for all Events; and at *time of Evening*, it may *be light*. Let them but follow such Directions as I have to recommend to them, and they may safely leave the Issue to GOD; that GOD, who *knows the end from the beginning*, and has often *declar'd* it.

Ez. xxxiv.
12.
Zech. xiv.
7.

Isa. xlvi.
10.

Mic. vii.9.

1. Let us bow down under the Hand of the Almighty, and carry in with Submission to Him, and cry out with the Church of old, *will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him.* We should carefully recollect our Sins and Miscarriages, as having more reason to be concern'd for them than for all the Ill-will and Heat of our Enemies. It little becomes us to pretend to excuse ourselves; for even we have sinned against the LORD in a provoking manner, and He is Angry with us. We have not duly improv'd the many Years Liberty which we have enjoy'd. We have been secure and wanton, and captious, and quarrelsome, and have very much lost our first Love; and as for that Zeal that was discernable under former Hardships, it is now but rarely to be met with. We are grown too like the rest of the World in Vanity, and come not up to the strictness our Progenitors in Morality and Piety. Our Enemies freely upbraid us with this upon Occasion, and it is a vain thing for us to pretend to deny or palliate it; it is evident, there is too much Truth in it. This is the Cause of the Wrath against us from the LORD. And it is this that has given our Angry Brethren their main Advantage against us. This loudly calls to Humiliation. It becomes us to take warning, and to *do our first Works*, least this be but an inlet to yet more severe Methods of Discipline.

Revel. ii.
5.

2. The *Dissenters* should not only carry it with Submission towards GOD, but also with Patience and Meekness towards Men. Let them take heed of being sowr'd and exasperated, which is not capable of doing any Kindness, but may do much Mischief. It is a very possible thing to see that in the Carriage of others that is very galling and grating, and shew that we are not senseless, and yet check any Resentment that is unbecoming: And so to do would be the wisest, and best, and safest Method. We ought not to be exasperated against our Rulers. We should bless GOD that they continue our Liberty, and endeavour, to carry it in such a manner, as that they may be always encourag'd to do so; and never have any the least inducement to go about to abridge us of it. We should not be exasperated against former Friends, who may have sufficient Opportunity to
Repent

Repent at leisure, or their forwarding in haste, what may perhaps be as great a Damage to the full to themselves as to us. Upon this Account, they may deserve our Pity. What could we gain by Invectives against them? We might possibly gratify their Enemies and ours; but I cannot see that that would make our Burden a jot the more light, our Case at all the better, or our Remedy the more easy, Should we be so set against them as to be backward to concur with them upon occasion for a Common Good; would not that be to seek to Revenge ourselves at the Expence of the publick? We should not contemn the privileges we have, because we can't have all that we may think desirable, or reckon we might have reason enough to have expected. If even in our present Circumstances, we are capable of doing any Service to our Country in the Choice of Magistrates, or of Representative, upon occasion, let us not allow ourselves sullenly to sit still, because we have been born hard on; for what were this, but to let our Resentments run so far as to cause us to take our Revenge upon ourselves, and upon the Publick, which is a thing that would but ill become Men of Thought and Sense. Neither should we be exasperated against the Body of our *Brethren*, tho' they have dealt unkindly by us. We should *possess our Souls in Patience and Peace*; and as our Lord himself did before us, *commit our Cause to God, that judgeth righteously*.

Luke xxi.
19.
1 Pet. ii.
23.

3. Let us still exercise Charity and a becoming Tenderness. Tho' I don't see that it would become us any longer to exercise actual Communion with them, while they persist in putting so unkind and unbrotherly an Interpretation upon that Practise, yet let us still Love them as *Brethren*; and be ready to come into a closer Union with them than ever, when they appear dispos'd for it. Let us upon all Occasions declare our readiness to coalesce with them, whenever they'll be free to admit all that *tremble at God's Word*, without *casting out* any which that orders to be receiv'd and imbrac'd. Let us not while we complain of them, take Example of them, and do as they. Let us not think that their breaking in upon the *Communion of Saints* one way, will justify us for doing it in another way. Let us not so much study

to be even with them, as in Brotherly Love to outdo them. Let us pity them for being Members of a *Church* that has so little Charity: Reckoning that it will much more become us to pity, than to insult them. Let us return them Love for Hatred; and not *be overcome of Evil; but overcome Evil with Good*. And ye let us make a difference between some and others among them; between such as heartily lament, and such as justify as far as in them lies, those rigorous and severe Methods, which to us appear to be so Unbrotherly.

Rom. xiii.
21.

4. Let us carry it with Courage and Magnanimity; so as to shew that we are not Dispirited nor Dejected, and that we neither Distrust our Cause, nor our GOD. The more we appear Discourag'd, the more will some Triumph. Let us not that way imbolden them. If they have *Power* on their side, and that puffs them up; Jet us Act as it becomes those that are on the side of *Truth* and *Charity*; which may justly give Courage and keep us from being afraid of looking any Man in the Face.

5. Let us carry it with Steadfastness and Fidelity. We are never like to gain by yielding, as long as we have to do with Persons that Act as if they were possess'd of an Absolute Infallibility. Let us stand to our Principles, which are for Scriptural Terms of Communion, and an extensive Charity, and against *casting out* any whom GOD is ready to accept and own: And yet let us refuse nothing that either Truth or purity will allow of; for our Principles will there bear us our, without our being justly liable to a Charge of warping.

Eph. v. 15.
1 Cor. x.
32.
Rom. xii.
18.

6. Let us carry it with Prudence, and endeavour to behave our selves wisely. Let us *walk circumspectly*; resolving with the Apostle, that it shall be our Endeavour to *give no Offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God. As for us in us lies, let us live peaceably with all Men*. And let us therefore be the more cautious, because we may be assur'd, that we have those that *watch for our halting*.

Jer. xx. 10.

In short: Let us be more careful of our Carriage now than ever. Let us behave our selves humbly and submissively towards GOD, bowing down under his Hand, and owning the Righteous-

ness

ness of his Dealings. Let us carry it to our Rulers with humble Respect, and pray heartily to GOD for them, even when they bear the hardest upon us. Let us behave our selves reward each other, with more Love and Tenderness, and with more Freedom and openness than ever: stirring up one another to be more serious in Religion, and more attentive to listen to Divine Calls. Let us be the more studious of each others Welfare, by how much the harder others bear upon us; and be more Watchful than ever, against Divisions, and Grudges, and Heart-burnings, and little Piques and Animosities among our selves. Let us carry it Charitably towards our Brethren, in the midst of all their Unkindness; and take all proper and fitting Ways, to shew that we bear them an hearty Good-will, tho' we are griev'd that they *Hate* us, and that, as far as we can judge, without Cause. Let us carry it with Tenderness towards those who now desert us, pitying them that they should meet with such pressing Temptations, without insulting them. Let us Govern and Manage our selves with Prudence, and wait with Patience, and be much in Prayer, which the Circumstances we are in, peculiarly call for, and we may safely and comfortably depend upon GOD, and apply to our selves such Scriptures as these; *Then shall thy Light break forth as the Morning, and thine Health shall spring forth speedily: and thy Righteousness shall go before thee, and the Glory of the LORD shall be thy Rereward. And, he shall bring forth thy Righteousness as the Light, and thy Judgment as the Noon-day.* And this in the Text, *He shall appear to your Joy, and they shall be ashamed.*

Isai. lviii.
8.

Ps. xxxvii.
6.

FINIS.

Advertisement.

WHEREAS it has been the Desire of many that have purchas'd *The Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times*, that the Additions to the *Second Edition* of that Work, which is intended, might be so manag'd as that they might be purchas'd separately; their Desire as far as it was practicable had been readily comply'd with, had it not been thought more likely to give General Satisfaction, and to add to the Beauty of the Work, for it to be cast into a *New Form*.

Whereas therefore, it is shortly going to the Press, it is design'd .to make Two Volumes: The First of which will be *The proper Abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Folio, with Remarks on such as have cast their retractions on the Dissenters, and their in the several Parts of the History since the Restoration; and the Addition of an Account of some of the most Remarkable Controversial Writings on both Sides, and a Continuation of the History down to this last Session of Parliament, and the Act which pass'd against Occasional Conformity.*

The Second Volume will be, *Account of the Characters and Works, of the Sufferers for Non-conformity*, which is now the Ninth Chapter of the *Abridgment*, put in a more convenient Method, with considerable *Amendments* of former Mistakes; and, The Additional *Characters* of some Hundreds, who were before only mention'd as *Ejected*.

Any *Informations* that are well attested, that may either help to prevent Mistakes, or preserve and embalm the *Memory* of any of those Worthy Persons, will be yet Thankfully receiv'd, and inferred in their proper Places, if they are transmitted before it be too late.

And whereas there has been long in the Press, *An Account of the Sufferings on the other Side*, if, when it comes to be publish'd, it shall be found (be it in ever so Angry a way) to give Light towards the rectifying *Mistakes*, as to any of those who were *Ejected* for *Non-conformity*, or to contain any such *Reflections* as require farther *Elucidation*, such Additions, as may be this way made to the Work intended, shall be published separately, so as that the Purchasers of this *New Edition* shall receive no Detriment, as far as it was in my Power to prevent it.

Witness my Hand,

EDMUND CALAMY.