

God's Concern for his Glory
in the British Isles;
AND
The Security of Christ's
Church from the Gates of Hell.

BY

EDMUND CALAMY



GOD'S *Concern for his Glory*
in the BRITISH Isles;

AND

The Security of CHRIST'S
Church from the Gates of Hell:

IN THREE

SERMONS

AT THE

MERCHANTS LECTURE

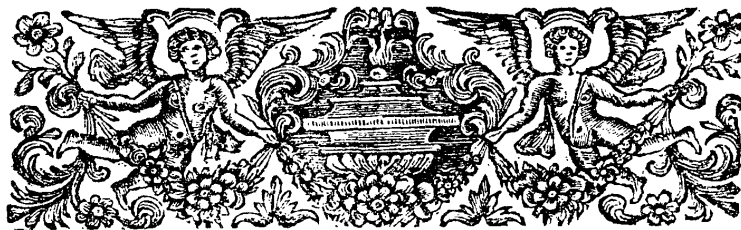
IN

SALTERS-HALL.

By EDMUND CALAMY, D.D.

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trey. 1715.



To the Much HONOURED
THE
Lady LEVET.

Madam,



My Design in pre-
fixing your La-
dyship's Name
to these DIS-
COURSES, is publickly to

A 2

re-

return you Thanks, for a continu'd Succession of Uncommon Favours, which having fallen under General Observation, call for Publick Acknowledgment.

THE intimate Friendship with which you were pleas'd to honour my Dear Mother Deceased, your constant Tenderness to her for so many Years while living, your Sorrowful Lamenting her Removal, and your Generous Kindness to all that she has left behind her, have made too
deep

deep Impressions ever to be forgotten.

WE her Children that had the strongest Natural Right to her that is now at Rest, must (as much as we Honour'd her) have Acted an unnatural Part towards her while she continu'd with us, had we made the least Difficulty of so far denying ourselves, as to resign her to so Peculiar a Friend as your LADYSHIP, whose endearing Love accompany'd her to the last Hours of her Life, follow'd

low'd her to her Grave, and
out-lives her Funeral.

As her Executor, entrusted
to take care of her Concerns,
and so oblig'd both to do Ju-
stice, and to manage with
what Decency I am able, I
do first in her Name, next in
my own, and then in the
Name of all her Surviving
Relations and Friends, in the
Face of the World, (but with
real inward Gratitude) return
Thanks to your LADYSHIP,
for multiply'd Kindnesses,
that are in reality too big for
Expression. AND

And since it has pleas'd
GOD by her Removal, to
take a Companion from your
LADYSHIP, to whom your
Heart was so closely knit,
that to those who knew you
best, you seem'd as it were to
have but one Soul between
you, I hope you will consi-
der, that he has taken away
but what he gave, and with-
drawn nothing from you,
but what He from himself
can abundantly supply; and,
that immoderate Grief in
one of your Eminence, would
Discourage and Dishearten
many. GOD

GOD has been with you (MADAM) in many Publick and Private Difficulties: He has remarkably assisted you in adorning your Profession by a very Exemplary Behaviour, in the most Honourable Stations that any Lady could rise to, in one of the most Populous and Flourishing Cities in the Universe: He has enabled you to make light of those Temptations by which others have been insnar'd and ruin'd: And supported you under Trials that have been very shocking to
Na-

Nature, by which many would have been depress'd and sunk: And I doubt not but He *will perfect that which concerneth you*. He is always the same and changeth not; and that *Covenant* of His, which I am satisfy'd is *all your Salvation and all your Desire, is order'd in all Things and sure*.

YOUR LADYSHIP'S remarkable Steadiness in opposition to Ecclesiastical Impositions, join'd with a visible Concern for real Holiness, a Catholick
a Spirit

honour the Great GOD, in
your Conduct, with your Sub-
fiance, and in every Capacity,
may be attended with a Grow-
ing Honour here on Earth,
and a Glorious Advancement
hereafter in a better World,
is and will be the Hearty

Prayer of,

My Lady,

Your Ladyship's

most Obedient Servant,

August 1.
1715.

Edm. Calamy.

ISAIAH LXVI. 18, 19.

— I will gather all Nations and Tongues, and they shall come and see my Glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them, unto the Nations, to Tarshish, Pul and Lud that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the Isles afar of that have not heard my Fame, neither have seen my Glory; and they shall declare my Glory among the Gentiles.



THESE Words are a plain Prediction of the spreading of the Gospel among the Gentile Nations, who were all to see the Glory of the LORD. The Jews who were of Old GOD's peculiar People, and to whom *the Glory* was appropriated, strangely over-valu'd themselves on the Account of the Privileges with which they were distinguish'd; and were so lifted up with Pride, that they despis'd all other Nations as impure: But the Blessed God whose usual Method it is to withdraw those favours which are abus'd to Pride and Presumpcion, here signifies by his Prophet, (and He often did the same upon other Occasions) that He had Mercy in store

Rom. ix.

B

for

for the Inhabitants of other Countries, whom the Jews so much contemn'd, and fully intended to favour them with a Sight of *His Glory*, of the Continuance of which among them that haughty and ungrateful People were so unworthy.

THE Prophecy began to be made good, when at *Antioch in Pisidia*, St. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, upon the Contradiction and Blasphemy of the envious Jews, turn'd from them to the *Gentiles*: And they intimate as much, in declaring that they did this in Compliance with a Divine Command or Prediction, by which it was signify'd, That the *Messiah* should be a *Light of the Gentiles, and for Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*. And the same Prophecy was accomplish'd yet more fully, after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, when the Apostles and their Converts among the *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, went up and down the World, from one Country to another, publishing to all People the Everlasting Gospel, which is in the Text said to be a *Declaring the Glory of the Lord among them*.

THE Apostles took great Pains in executing their Commission, and neither they nor their fellow-labourers wanted Fidelity or Diligence; and great Success attended them: And yet I dare not say, as some, That every particular Nation of the Earth, had in those Times the Happiness of *Seeing God's Glory*, or having the Gospel publish'd in it. I know not but there may be some Parts, for whom that Blessing is reserv'd in Times that are yet to come. However, we may safely say with St. *Paul*, That *their Sound went into all the Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of the World*. As their Commission was Universal, so *the Law that went forth out of Zion, and the Word of the Lord that came from Jerusalem,*

Acts xxi.46

ver. 47.
Isa. xlix.
6.—

Rom. x.
18.

Psa. ii. 5.

rusalem, was convey'd by them and their Agents even to some of the remotest Parts of the World that were at that Time known. And where-ever the Gospel came, it was a great Blessing: And whoever considers the wretched Condition of the several Nations of the Earth, before Christianity reach'd them, cannot be insensible of it. For this was their common Cafe; They were *without Christ, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenant of Promise: having no Hope, and without God in the World.* But where-ever the Gospel came the People were so favour'd as to have the *Glory of the LORD rising and seen upon them. His Glory was declared amongst them.* Which made a blessed Alteration.

Eph.
12.

Isa.lx.i

This Prophecy takes particular Notice of several Countries that were to be thus favour'd. *Tarshish* is mention'd, which is generally thought to refer to *Cilicia*, and the Coast of the *Mediterranean-Sea*, that was opposite to *Judea*: Tho' others thereby understand *Spain*, in which there was a Place call'd *Tartesus*. By *Pul* some think *Africa* is meant; while others apply it to *Assyria* and *Parthia*, which was eminent for *drawing the Bow*. *Lud* seems to signify the *Lesser-Asia*: And by *Tubal* and *Javan*, all underhand *Italy* and *Greece*. And I see not why *the Isles afar off*, should not be allowed to take in all the Islands remote from *Judea*, which of Barbarous became Christian, upon having the Gospel publish'd in them: And among the rest these *Isles of Britain* must be included, if they were not principally intended; which yet is what some (and those no inconsiderable Persons neither) have apprehended.

As for the *Islands*, which are naturally surrounded with the Sea, God seems from the first to have taken them under his special Protection. As He wall'd them with his Providence, so it is here declar'd, that He intended to favour them with the Knowledge of his Truth. The *Psalmist* calls upon them to rejoyce in his Government. *The Lord, saith he, reigneth, let the Earth rejoyce, let the Multitude of Isles be glad thereof.* And our Prophet stirs People up to *sing a new Song, and to give glory unto the Lord, and declare his Praise in the Islands:* And declares, that the *Isles* should wait for his Law. And another says, *Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye Nations, and declare it in the Isles afar off.* And it has been thought by some, that Fishermen were the rather chosen to be the first Preachers and Publishers of the Blessed Gospel, because being used to Sailing, they would on that Account be fitter than others to convey the Truth to the Islands, by their Voyages.

WHEN the *Isles* are so often mention'd in our fa ere d Writers, and *the Isles afar off* singled out as Objects of God's special Care, with respect to Evangelical Light and Grace, 'tis not unlikely but these *British Isles* may be particularly intended: the rather, because there is good Evidence that God hath eminently savour'd them. He made early Provision for the Planting *Britain* with Inhabitants. Moses in his History, speaking of the Sons of *Javan* says, That by these were the Isles of the Gentiles divided in their Lands, every One after his Tongue, after their Families, in their Nations. 'Tis generally agreed, that the Sons of *Javan* peopled *Greece*, and that Colonies from thence help'd to people *Gaul*, from whence the first Inhabitants came into *Britain*;
than

Psa. xcvi.
1.

Isai. xlii.
10, 12.

ver. 4.
Jer. xxxi.
10.

Gen. 2. 5.

than which no Island of any Consequence, that God hath on any Account peculiarly favour'd in spiritual Respects, is in its Situation farther distant from *Judea*. When therefore *the Isles afar off*, for which it many Ways appears GOD had great Blessings in store, are in my Text joyn'd with *Javan*, it is most probable the *British Islands* are meant, which are the most distant Parts that were first peopled by *Javan's* Posterity, that have been admitted to see *God's Glory*, and had it declared among them.

AND supposing the Prediction in the Text to have a particular Respect to our native Country of *Britain*, we cannot but say. It has been fully accomplish'd; and it may be well worth our While to observe and consider how remarkably it has been verify'd by the Event. Hardly any Nation upon Earth has *seen* more of the *Glory of God* than this Island which we inhabit, which for a long Time *had not heard his Fame*: And consider'd as Inhabitants of this Land, nothing becomes us more, than to take particular Notice of, and with Thankfulness to own and adore, the Goodness of Almighty GOD, in which we have had so great a Share; and carefully to improve his Angular Blessings. That I may herein give some Assistance, I propose

I. To consider the first Publication of Christianity in this Island, which before was Barbarous, and full of Darkness and Idolatry.

II. To take notice of the Continuance of Christianity in this Country ever since; in different Circumstances indeed, in several Periods of Time, and yet so as that the *Glory of the Lord hath been dec;ared among us*, from one Age to another

other, down to this present Day. And here, I shall distinctly consider the State of Christianity in this Island,

I. FROM the first Plantation of the *British* Churches in the Time of the *Romans*, to the

Conversion of the *Saxons*.

2. AMONG the *Saxons*, after the *Romans* left this Island, to the *Norman* Conquest.

3. FROM the Reign of William the Conqueror, down to the *Reformation* from Popery. And

4. FROM the *Reformation*, to the Times wherein we live.

MORE than Hints cannot be expected, when such a Compass is taken: But, I hope, it will appear in the Sequel, that they are improveable to very good Purposes.

I begin then,

I. WITH the first Publication of Christianity in this Island, which before was as full of Barbarity as other Countries. *Gildas*, who wrote about the Year of Christ 564, (that is, between eleven and twelve Hundred Years ago) says. That *Christ shewing his bright Light to all the World, afforded his Rays, that is his Precepts, in the latter End of the Reign, as we know, of Tiberius Cæsar, when his Religion was propagated without any Hindrance*. And if he meant this of the Publication of the Gospel in *Britain*, which has been the most prevailing Opinion, we must allow him to had better Advantages for the *knowing* this with

with Certainty then, than we can have at this Distance. According to this Account, this Island had Christianity preach'd in it, within five Years of our Saviour's Crucifixion, which was very early: Perhaps too early, all Circumstances consider'd, for a Place that lay so remote. A late Learned Writer therefore asserts that those Words of *Gildas* have been misunderstood, and apply'd to the particular Preaching of the Gospel in *Britain*, whereas they were meant of the general Liberty of Preaching it throughout the World. But be it as it will as to that, all Ancient Writers agree. That Christianity was planted in this Land very soon, considering its Distance from *Judea*. And if we do but consider how miserably the Followers of Christ were there harass'd and persecuted, it cannot appear an improbable Thing, that some of them might be for flying to the remotest *Western* Parts, where they might hope to publish the Faith of their Crucify'd Master with more Safety than they could in the *East*. However, in a Matter of this Nature, we must be content with Probabilities, which are not wanting in Proof of the Preaching of the Gospel in this Island, during the Times of the very Apostles of our Saviour. For *Eusebius*, who is our most ancient Church Historian, speaking of the Pains of the Apostles, does expressly assert, That some of them in pursuit of that *Design. passed over the Ocean, to those which are call'd the British Islands*. And *Theodoret* another ancient Writer of Ecclesiastical History, among the Nations converted by the Apostles, expressly names the *Britons*. *Tertullian* and *Origen* also who lived in the third Century, both of them speak of Christianity as then receiv'd in this Land. The former says, *There are Places*

Stillington,
fleet, Orig.
Brit. Book
I. chap. 1.

Demonst.
Evang. L
3. c. 7. p.
113.

Theod. To
4. Sermon 9.
p. 610.

Tert. adv.
[[?????]]
cap. [[?????]]

of

Orig. in
Luc. c.1.
Homil. 6.

of the Britons which were inaccessible to the Romans, but yet subdu'd to Christ: And the latter says, The Tower of God our Saviour is even with them which in Britain are divided from our World. Which Passages being consider'd, he must be very unreasonable that should call in question the early Receipt of Christianity among the Inhabitants of this Island.

BUT as to the first Publishers of Christianity in this our Native Country, we have very different Accounts. The *Romanists* generally assert. That it was St. *Peter* who here first publish'd the Faith of a Crucify'd Jesus; and they are the more zealous in affirming and defending it too (as far as they are able) that they may from thence have a Claim upon us, as first receiving our Christianity from their Bishop, and by Consequence depending upon his Successors in that See, in Matters of Religion. But they are hard put to it to give any tolerable Proof that St. *Peter* ever was at *Rome*; and 'tis yet more difficult for them to prove that the Bishops of *Rome* are his Successors. However, supposing that his having been at *Rome* was unquestionable, and his being the first Converter of this Island to Christianity was fully prov'd, I cannot see but his Converts and those who came after them, would have had as good a Right to take all their Measures in Religious Matters from the Sacred Scriptures, (without being bound to regard his Successors in any Thing not bottom'd upon those Sacred Oracles) as if they had been converted by any other Preacher. But after all this Stir that has been made, the Authors which are produc'd by the *Romanists* to prove that St. *Peter* preached the Gospel here in *Britain*, (such as *Eysingrenius*, and *Innocent* the first, and *Simeon* the Meraphrast, who

is

is very particular, and will have *Peter* found Churches here, and ordain Bishops, Priests and Deacons) are comparatively Modern, and therefore but little to be regarded. And I think Bp. *Stillingfleet* has very plainly prov'd that his Business lay quite another Way, and that there is no probable Evidence of his ever coming hither.

Orig. Brit.
p 45, &c.

OTHERS say. That St. *James* the Son of *Zebedee*, and Brother of St. *John*, here first publish'd the Gospel of Christ: But that could not be, because he was cut off at *Jerusalem* by the Sword of *Herod*. Others have asserted it of *Simon* the *Canaanite*, spoken of in the Gospel, and others of *Aristobulus*, who is by St. *Paul* taken Notice of with *his Houshold*: But they that are for the Tradition as to either of them, are destitute of any antient Testimony or Probability, Others have affirm'd. That *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, who was so kind as to lay our Saviour in his own Tomb, came afterwards with *Lazarus*, *Mary Magdalene*, &c. to *Gaul*, and from thence into these Parts, to preach the Gospel to the Barbarous *Britons*. But that famous Story which seems to have been first started after the *Norman Conquest*, is deservedly discarded by Bp. *Stillingfleet*, as an Invention of the Monks of *Glastonbury*, to serve their own Interests, by advancing the Reputation of their Monastery.

Vid. Usser.
Brit. Eccles.
Antiq. c. 1.
p. 3.
Acts xii.
2.
Mat. x. 4.
Rom. xvi.
10.

Matth.
xxvii. 57.
&c.
Usser. Brit.
Ecl. Ant.
cap. 2.

Orig. Brit.
p. 6.

OF all the Apostles, St. *Paul* appears the most likely to have been the Publisher of Christianity in this Island, and that he was so, is asserted by several Ancient Writers. *Theodoret* says, That St. *Paul* brought Salvation to the Islands that lie in the Ocean: And that after his Release at Rome, he went to Spain, and from

Godwinus
de Conv.
Britan. ad
Christ. Rel.
Theod. To
1. in *Psal.*
cxvi.
p. 870.
in 2 *Tim.*
iv. v. 17.

thence carry'd the Light of the Gospel to other Nations. And it appears much more likely that he should then travel into these Western Parts, than return back into the East, where he had taken so much pains to Spread the Gospel before. And St. Jerom says, That having been in Spain, he went from one Ocean to another, imitating the Motion and Course of the Sun of Righteousness, of whom it is said. His going forth is from the End of Heaven, and his Circuit unto the Ends of it: And that his Diligence in Preaching extended as far as the Earth itself: And that he preached the Gospel in the Western Parts. And Bp. Stillingfleet hath I think fairly made it out, that this Apostle had Leisure and Opportunity enough to have come hither; and that here was Incouragement and Invitation enough for him to come.

*In Amos
Cap. v.*

*Orig Brit,
p. 39, &c.*

BUT whosoever was the first Publisher of the Christian Religion in this Land, we have Reason to take Notice of it as a singular Mercy, that it came hither so soon: And some Things that contributed to it, deserve to be consider'd and observ'd.

THIS Island was first entred by the Romans under *Julius Cæsar*, a little above fifty Years before our Blessed Saviour's Incarnation, and that made Way for Christianity. By being a Conquest of the Roman Empire, we got so much the earlier to be Subjects to Christ. That Warlike People, who with a most amazing Success, had (according to foregoing Divine Predictions) spread their Victorious Arms in all Parts, first came and beat the Inhabitants into Civility, and a little polish'd them, and then they were fitter to receive the Christian Institution, than in the Time of their former Barbarity.

For

For it is agreed on all Hands, That *Britain*, like other Countries, before the Coming of the *Romans*, was full of Barbarism and Brutishness. The People liv'd rude, and dispers'd among Woods and Marshes, having no fix'd Dwellings, but frequently changing their Habitations for Conveniency. They were divided into several little Governments, and full of Quarrels and Animosities among themselves, and therefore easily subdu'd by a greater and more united Force. Their Cities were only a few little Hutts, built close together, with a Barricade of Trees about them; and some Fortifications of Woods, and Boggs, and Ditches. They had no Advantages for the Cultivation or Improvement of their Minds. In Divine Things their Notions were most gross and senseless. The *Druids*, who reckon'd it unlawful to commit any Thing to Writing, were their Instructors. Their Devotion (such as it was) was divided amongst a great Variety of Objects. They offer'd up Humane Sacrifices. *Gildas* tells us, That their Idols were more numerous than those of *Egypt*, and strangely featur'd; and that some of them continu'd in his Days. Their Idolatry seems to have been of the grosser Sort. Their Manners were most impure. Ten or twelve Men among them would possess one Woman as their common Wife, tho' she was of nearest kin. Mother, Daughter, or Sister. And as for their Civil Knowledge, the utmost Height of it, of which we have any Account, lay in the Poetical Composures of their Bards, chiefly design'd to perpetuate the Memory of their Ancestors, and their most glorious Achievements: Unless we take in the Magical Arts for which *Pliny* represents the *Britons* as

Dio Cassius
in *Nerone*.

Plin. sec.
Nat. Hist.

more famous, even than the *Persians* themselves. And on these Accounts the coming of Christianity hither, was the greater Mercy; and at the same time the Providence of GOD in paving the Way for it, by the Means of the *Romans*, is the more to be admir'd.

BUT it deserves Observation, That tho' the *Romans* had made their Way to *Britain*, before the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, yet was not their Power fully settled here, nor their Government fix'd, till some Time after. *Cæsar*, as *Tacitus* says, rather shew'd this Country to the *Romans* than subdu'd it. In the Time of *Augustus* (in whose Reign our Saviour was born) the *Britons* sent Presents to the Capitol; but no *Roman* Garrisons or Colonies were fix'd here, nor Magistrates and Jurisdictions settled, as in other Parts of the Empire. And the Case was much the same under *Tiberius*, and *Caligula*. But *Claudius* came hither in Person, and reduc'd the Country into the Form of a Province, under *A. Plautius* his Lieutenant. From that Time the Island became *Roman*. While Things were in this State, there was the less Danger of Opposition in attempting to spread Christianity. They that ingag'd in it before the Time of the Emperor *Claudius*, would only have to do with the Natives, who were not likely to fet themselves against them with so much Zeal or Cruicity, as was usual among the *Romans*, in Case of Innovations in Matters of Religion. And afterwards, the *British* Captives at *Rome* who were converted to Christianity, would in all Probability forward the Christianizing their Native Country. And if *Claudia*, the Wife of *Pudens* the *Roman* Senator, was she that was spoken of by *St. Paul*; and *Pomponia Græcina*
Wife

Wife to *A. Plautius* the Lieutenant, was also a Christian, (as is most likely from the Character given of her by *Tacitus*) their Religion could not but encline them, therein to give what Encouragement and Assistance they were able.

AND withal, we have good Evidence, that there was a Correspondence between *Greece*, and those Parts of Gaul that border'd upon the *Mediterranean-Sea*, where *Marseilles* was a noted Greek Colony. Thither came many Christians from the Eastern Parts, as is plain from the early Settlement of Christian Churches in that Quarter: And the cruel Treatment they met with there, might probably enough induce some of them to seek a mere quiet Region, and so bring them hither to *Britain*, where there does not appear to have been so much Opposition to Christianity at its first: Publication, as in *Gaul*.

SUCH Things as these may very fitly be taken notice of, as advantagious Circumstances attending and forwarding the first *declaring the Glory of God*, in this Island, by the Spreading of Christianity here, according to the Prediction of the Prophet. But I proceed

II. To consider the Continuance of Christianity in this our Native Country, ever since it first gat Footing here; in different Circumstances indeed, in several Periods of Time, and yet so as that *the Glory of the Lord has still been declar'd among us*, from one Age to another, down to this present Day. This I am to view in Four several Periods. And,

I. I BEGIN with the State of Christianity among the Ancient *Britons*, as to which we have
not

not many Writers remaining, to give us Light, *Gildas* our most ancient Author (who liv'd soon after tho' not under the *Roman Empire*) tells us. That *tho' the Precepts of Christ were receiv'd but lukewarmly of the Inhabitants, yet they remain'd intirely with some, less sincerely with others, even until the nine Years of Perfection under Diocletian*. It deserves to be lamented, that we have so few Remains of the first Christians in this Island. *Gildas* gives us the plain Reason of it. *The Monuments (says he) of our Country, or Writings (if there were any) appear not. They were either burnt by the Fire of Enemies, or transported far off by our banish'd Country-Men.*

*Usser. Brit.
Ecl. Anti.
c. 3,4,5,6.*

SEVERAL have said much of one King *Lucius*, (who is represented as the first Christian prince that ever reign'd) and the great Things he did in Favour of Religion about the Year of Christ 180: But whether their Grounds are firm, is dubious. The Account comes from *Bede*, who takes not the least Notice of any Christians in this Island before, where we have so much Reason to think they were by that Time pretty numerous. And there is so much of the Fable in the Particulars of the Account (as in his being General Monarch of the whole Island, and fixing Twenty-eight Bishops and Archbishops in the Twenty-eight Cities of it, in the Room of so many Flamins and Archflamins of the *Pagans*, &c.) that taking that away, its hard to say what of Truth might remain. *Gildas* takes no more Notice of this King *Lucius*, than if he had never heard of him, which is scarce to be suppos'd if there ever were such a Person. But if there really was such a Prince, he either liv'd out of the *Roman Pale*, or had too narrow a

Terri--

Territory to be capable of those great Things, which many have ascrib'd to him.

HOWEVER, 'tis evident. That after Christianity obtain'd here, a great Part of the Inhabitants still continu'd *Pagans*: And yet our Holy Religion made a Progress. As it got Ground, the Temples of their antient Idols, were some of them destroy'd, and others of them dedicated to the True and Living GOD. We have no Account of such Severities here in the Primitive Times, against the Followers of a Crucify'd Jesus as in other Countries. That which was the last of the Ten Persecutions under the *Roman* Emperours, seems to have been the first that affected this Island. But in that general Calamity, in the Reign of *Diocletian*, and *Maximian*, about the Year 303, the Christians here were very great Sufferers. 'Tis said, That *Maximian almost rooted out the Christian Religion from Britain, and that they who suffer'd Martyrdom were almost beyond Number. Gildas* tells us, That *their Churches were thrown down, and all the Books of Holy Scriptures that could be found, were burnt in the Streets; and the chosen Priests of the Flock of our Lord, together with the innocent Sheep murder'd. St. Alban of Verulam, and Aaron, and Julius of Carlisle upon Usk in Monmouthshire, and many others, seal'd the Truth of Christianity with their Blood.*

*Usser. Brit.
Ec. Antiq.
cap. 7.*

BUT when the Storm was over, which did not last much above a Year, the Christians here (as well as in other Parts) fled out of the Woods and Dens, and Caves, where they had hid themselves, and re built their demolish'd Churches, and flourish'd to a great Degree both in Peace and Unity. They were much favour'd by *Constantius*, the Father of *Constantine*, who
continu'd

Euseb. de
Vit Const.
M. l. i. c.
13. Soz.
Hist. Eccl.
i. i. c. 6.

continu'd for the latter Part of his Life here in *Britain*, and would suffer no Man to die for his Religion in his Dominions. It was here also that *Constantine* himself (who was a Native of this Island) first declar'd himself a Christian or inclin'd that Way, which it is not like he would have publickly done, had not a good Part of his Army been of that Religion. And upon his Advancement to the Imperial Throne, 'tis not to be wonder'd at, if more Splendour attended Christianity as it was here profess'd, than had been known before: But I have not upon the strictest Enquiry I have been able to make, hitherto been able to discern sufficient Ground to apprehend, that from the Beginning, Churches or Places of Worship were so nobly adorn'd, or Church-Government so modell'd in this Island, as some Time after; or that the Prelatical Form of Government was any Part of that *Glory* that was at first declar'd in this Island, according to the Prediction of my Text.

I KNOW indeed, that a venerable Prelate of the Church of England, hath publish'd a Discourse, intituled, *An Historical Account of Church Government, as it was in Great Britain and Ireland, when they first receiv'd the Christian Religion*; in which he undertakes to prove, That it was much the same from the First, that it is at Present: But he that reads over *Gildas* without Prejudice, will I am apt to think be inclin'd to other Sentiments. It is a Thing that deserves our Observation, That he who is the most ancient Writer we have extant, in his Account of the State of Britain as to Ecclesiastical Matters in former Times, mentions Priests, and Clerks or Doctors, but takes not the least Notice

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tice of *Bishops* advanc'd above Priests with any such Super-eminence as was afterwards common, till he came to speak of Times in which Things had taken another Turn *

* I shall endeavour to set this Matter in as clear a

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Light as I am able in a narrow Compass. I have read over the two remaining Discourses of *Gildas* with some Care. I observe that in his Preface to the first of them, which is *concerning the Destruction of Britain*, he promises to treat of *Religion, of Persecution, of the Holy Martyrs. and of divers Heresies, &c.* but not a Word of the Ancient *Bishops* of the *Britans*, as to whom we might rationally have expected he should have given us what Light he could. In the Discourse it self, the first time he speaks of any that were engag'd in administring the sacred Offices of Religion, is under the Persecution of Dioclesian; when he tells us, not that the *Bishops* with their Clergy and the People, but *the chosen Priests of the Flock of the Lord, with the innocent Sheep were slain.* And complaining afterwards of the general Corruption of the *Britans*, notwithstanding they were so severely handled by the *Picts* and *Scots*, he says, that *not only Secular Men, But even the Flock of God and its Pastors,* (he had been likely enough to have said *Bishops* had he known them to have had any at that time among them) *who ought to have been Examples to all the People,* were as bad as any; and he gives affecting Instances of it. And afterwards, speaking of the Cruelties of the *Saxons*, he says, *That all the Colonies were destroy'd with their Battering Rams, and all the Inhabitants with the Governours of the Church, the Priests and People, were cut off, with glittering Swords and crackling Flames, &c.* His words are, *Cum Præpositis Ecclesiæ, sacerdotibus, ac populo.* Methinks he must have a very good Will to it, that can find in his Heart to make any more of these *Præpositi Ecclesiæ*, than Pastors of Churches, with their Assistants, call'd *Sacerdotes*, Priests. And yet a little after, intimating how the Successes God was pleas'd to afford the *Britans* against the *Saxons* were resented, he says, *That their Kings, their publick and private Persons, their Priests, and their Ecclesiasticks, all kept their proper Order,* I cannot see what Right any have at this Distance, to turn these *Priests* into *Bishops*, whatever becomes of the *Ecclesiasticks* mention'd. And afterwards speaking freely to one of the Princes of that Time, of his gross Enormities, he says, *What Priest, not what Bishop, whose Heart is right with God, hearing these things can forbear crying out with the Prophet, O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a River of Tears,* See. And having dealt with the Princes of his Time, and drawing to the Close of his First Discourse, he expresses himself thus: *How willingly would I here, like one toss'd about with the Waves of the Sea that had reach'd the Port, be at rest, if I did not see such and so great Mountains*

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THE State of Religion at first in *Britain*. scarce allow'd of such a Settlement: Nor have we (as far as I can perceive) sufficient Evidence of it remaining, to warrant a positive Affirmation.

Bishop *Stillingfleet* † frankly owns. That by the *Loss of the Records of the British Churches*, we cannot draw down the *Succession of Bishops from the Apostles Time*: But then he adds, *We have great Reason*

† *Orig. Britan.*
pag. 77.

of *Malice*, rais'd in our Order, against God, by Bishops or other Priests, or Clerks? Whereupon he proceeds to add a sharp Rebuke to the *Ecclesiastical Order* in a Second Discourse.

BP. *Lloyd* (in his Account of the Ancient Government of the *British Church*, Ch. 3. §. 3.) says, That *Gildas* in the 4th Passage above, mention'd, by the *Governors of the Church*, (*the Præpositi Ecclesiæ*) means *Bishops*. This he says appears, by what follows soon after. For (says he) *he shews that the Britans that escap'd out of the hands of the Saxons had still the three Orders remaining among them, of Bishops or other Sacerdotes or Clerks: and these he calls Ecclesiastical Orders or Degrees*. Sir *James Dalrymple*. (in his Collections concerning the *Scottish History*, p. 80.) observes, that *Gildas* uses the words *Episcopus*, *Sacerdos*, *Clericus*, and *Presbyter*, to signifie the same Thing: and declares he thought it strange that that Learned Prelate stumbled on his Ecclesiastical Steps and Degrees here, where there is nothing but a plain Level. But it seems he was willing *Gildas* should be acquainted with his Order. However I beg Leave to observe, that in my Book, *Gildas* in that Clause where he mentions *Bishops or other Priests or Clerks*, calls them *our Order*, not *Orders or Degrees*. It must indeed be own'd that in his next Discourse, intitul'd *A severe Rebuke to the Ecclesiastick Order* (for with him all Ecclesiasticks were of one and the same Order) he does mention *Ecclesiastical Degrees*: But then in the very same Breath, he blames his Cotemporary Ecclesiasticks, for being *more ambitious of those Degrees, than of the Kingdom of Heaven; and for defending those Degrees when they had taken them* [Tyrannical ritu] which I know not how to translate better than in a *Tyrannical manner*. And if he thought there was any thing or *Tyranny*, in these *Ecclesiastical Degrees* its a Sign he look'd upon them as Innovations and impositions: For he could not suppose, nor does he give us the least Hint, that there was *Tyranny* in the Church from the Beginning. And for the farther Satisfaction of such Readers as are willing to be open to Light, That *Gildas* (who never speaks but of one Order, tho' he owns *Ecclesiastical Degrees*) was not so clear as

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Reason to presume such a Succession. Others are of a contrary Opinion, and want not for rational Probabilities to support it. Methinks however, it can be no great Service to Christianity, to represent that as a Fundamental of our Religion, (as *Diocesan Episcopacy* must be esteem'd, by such as hold it to be necessary to Valid Orders, and Valid Ordinances, and particularly to Valid Baptisms) which at last amounts but to a *Presumption*, according to the Account of One so deservedly celebrated for his Learning as Bishop *Stillingfleet*.

BUT let us see the Bottom upon which this remarkable *Presumption* stands, according to the Account given by its most celebrated Advocates.

'Tis pleaded, ★ That there were three British Bishops at the Council assembled at *Arles*, *An.* 314; one out of each Province, with one Bishop and one Deacon: And these Bishops are by the Subscription which remains, said to be

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Eborius

★ *Histor.*
Account. p.
72. & *Still.*
Orig. Br. p. 74.
&c.

to the three Orders as that Learned Prelate represents him, I recommend to his Consideration the Entrance upon his Second Discourse, where he expresses himself thus: *Britain hath Priests, but some of them are foolish; It hath abundance of Ministers, but no any of 'em are impudent; It hath Clerks, but some of them are ravenous and deceitful: It hath such as are call'd Pastors, but they are as ready as Wolves to murder Souls, &c.* These *Priests* and *Ministers*, *Clerks* and *Pastors*, were all of the *Ecclesiastick Order*: and if they at that Time differ'd in *Degree*, *Gildas* does not seem to have thought that that made any Difference as to their *Order*. And after all, supposing what the Bishop contends for were granted him, *viz.* That there can be no Doubt what the Church Government was among the *Britans* in *Gildas* his Time, yet that being about the Year 560, is far from proving that there were *Bishops* here from the Beginning of Christianity. Still I can find no suitable Evidence, that there was any fix'd Order of *Ecclesiasticks* superior to *Presbyters* in the *British Churches*, before the coming of *Germanus* and *Lupus*, about the Year of Christ 440, of which the subsequent Pages give a farther Account.

Eborius Bishop of York, *Restitutus* Bishop of London, and *Adolphius de Civitate Colonia Londinensium*. But the Learned Dr. Cave † (after several others) freely owns, That there are a great many Faults in the Names subscrib'd to that council. its as lively there might be a Mistake in the Names of the *British* Bishops, as in any of the rest. For different Copies are observ'd to vary very remarkably about their several Names and Titles *. And the Learned have been not a little put to it to find out where these three Bishops should be seated †. For any Thing that as yet appears, they might all of them come from some Places in *Gaul* †, as those did who are mention'd before them; and there might be some Fault in the Transcribers, in representing them as coming from *Britain*.

BESIDES

vincia Britannia. Restitutus Episcopus de Civitate Londinensi, Provincia supra scripta. Adelsius Episcopus de Civitate Colonia Londinensium, Exinde Sacerdos Presbyter; Arminius Diaconus. And the Subscription is the same in *Spelman*. In *Isidore Mercator's* Collektion, the Subscription is thus: *Ex Provincia Bitania Eburius Episcopus; ex Civitate Culpnia. Adelfhius.* In *Peter Crabb's* Edition thus: *Ex Provinciâ Britannia, Civitate Londinens. Restitutus Episcopus. Ex Provinciâ Byzacena Civit. Tubernicen-Eburius Episcopus. Ex eadem Provin. Civitate Culucitana Adelfhius.* This diversity of the Subscription much abates of the certainty pretended.

† As for *Colonia Londinensium* from whence *Adelfhius* is said to come, in the *Paris* Edition, and in *Sir Hen. Spelman*, Archbishop *Usher* says 'tis *Colchester. Brit. Eccl. Antiqu.* p. 104. The Learned *Selden* takes it to be *Camalodunum*, and written *Camalodon*, which the ignorant Scribes chang'd into *Colonia London*, or *Londin. Notæ in Eutichium*, p. 118. and *Spelman* is of the same Mind. *BP. Stillingfleet*, Or. *Brit.* p. 76. says, this *Adelsius* came *Ex Civit. Col Leg.* 11. which the ignorant Transcribers might easily turn to *Ex Civit. Col. Londin.* But the *BP.* of *St. Asaph* (now of *Worcester*) says that this *Adelsius* came from *Caerleon. Hist. Acc. of Church Government, &c.* pag. 72.

‡ Thus *Eberacensis* might be for *Eborrocensis*, and might mean the Bishop of *Eureux* in *Gaul*. And this is not improbable, because of a like Mistake we know of, before this time: Some making *Taurinus* of *Eureux*, who was a Martyr in the Second Century, Bishop of *York*. See *Usser. Brit. Eccles. Antiqu.* Cap. 3. p. 17.

† *Hist. Litteraria*,
Vol. II.
p. 105.

* The *Paris* Edition of the Councils *An.* 1629, expresses their Names thus: *Eborius Episcopus de Civitate Eboracensi Pro-*

BESIDES, if there were British Bishops at *Constantines* Council of *Arles*, and one out of each Province, there should have been more than three there. For Bishop *Lloyd* himself acknowledges, That there was four Provinces in *Britain* in *Constantine's* Time, viz. *Britannia prima*, *Britannia secunda*, *Maxima Cæsariensis*, and *Flavia Cæsariensis* *.

BUT it is with me an Evidence, that there Account. were neither three Bishops nor more, from *Britain*, at this Council, because of the first Canon that pass'd in it, by which it was agreed, That *Easter should be celebrated on the same Sunday, in all the Churches of the World* †. It seems more rational to suppose, there were no *British* Bishops there, than to imagine they should agree to that Canon, when the Practice of the *British* Churches is well-known to have been different from that of some other Churches, for a long Time after. If the *British* Churches consented to this Canon by their Bishops, how came they afterwards so stiffly to adhere to their ancient Traditions, in Opposition to *St. Austin* and the *Romans*? As little Difficulties as these are, have before now prevail'd with Men of Letters, to quit Notions more plausibly supported, than this Presence of the *British* Bishops at this Council of *Arles* can be pretended to be.

BUT suppose there were three Bishops there present, (tho' no Mortal can prove it) all that can fairly be from thence collected, is only this, That after the Time of the Emperour *Constantine*, *Britain* became conformable to the other Provinces of the *Roman Empire*, but not that there were Diocesan Bishops here in *Britain*, from the first Plantation of Christianity.

* *Historical Account.*
pag. 5.

† *Spelman. Concil.* vol. I. p. 40.

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AND therefore it deserves Observation, That *Restitutus*, who is said to have been at this Council of *Arles* as Bishop of *London*, is the very first in the Catalogue of *London* Bishops, publish'd by Mr. *Wharton*: And as for that Catalogue of the Bishops that was drawn up by *Joceline* of [[?????]] *nes*, Bp. *Stillingfleet* himself owns. That it is not worth mentioning. 'Tis to be seen in Bishop *Usher*. But the Learned Mr. *Wharton* very candidly represents it as *a Collection of the filthy Forgeries of a lying Monk* *. And methinks it appears no great Evidence of the Antiquity of Diocesan Episcopacy in this Country, that [[?????]] not only should not have the Name of any one Bishop of *London* preserv'd, before the Days of Constantine, but that we should have no solid Proof that there was any fix'd Bishop superior to Presbyters, even in such a City as that, which is by all own'd to have been the Metropolis, before that Time; (that is, for above three hundred Years after our Saviour) when we had Christianity here so long before.

'Tis further pleaded. That there were *British* Bishops at the Council of *Nice*, *An.* 325, and Bp. *Stillingfleet* very strenuously argues for the probability of it, from several Considerations. But they rather seem to me to render it probable that there were no Diocesan Bishops at that Time in *Britain*; since no better Proof can be produc'd that any of them were at that Council where it is so likely some of them would have appear'd, if there had been any then in being. But that there were no *British* Bishops at that Council seems to me most likely, from the Silence of the Subscription to it, and from the Silence of *Eusebius* also, who mentions Bishop: that were there from other Parts of *Europe*, and parti-

Orig. Brit.
p. 77.
Brit. Ecl.
Ant. cap. 5.
p. 36,37.
* *Hist. de*
Episc. Lond.
pag. 5.

Orig. Brit.
pag. 89.

De vita
Constant.
L. 3. c 7.

particularly from *Spain*, without saying a Word of any from *Britain*. Had there been any there from our Country, it would be no easy Matter to give an Account how it should come about that the Controversy concerning *Easter* should be so long kept on Foot, in Opposition to the Determination of that Council, one Design of the Calling of which was to determine that Matter. And therefore I think Bp. *Stillingfleet's* Argument may here be very fairly turn'd upon him. For one of his main Proofs of the Antiquity of Episcopacy in this Island, lies thus: He says. That *tho' we cannot deduce a Lineal Succession of Bishops, yet as soon as through the Churches Peace, they came to have Intercourse with foreign Churches, they appear'd with a proportionable Number of Bishops, with those of other Provinces. And what Canons pass'd* (he says) *did no doubt as much concern the British Churches to observe, as any other Churches whose Bishops were there present.* By this Rule I cannot see that we had any Bishops either at *Arles* or *Nice*, because their *Canons* about *Easter* were not observ'd. They had other Traditions which they reckon'd they receiv'd with Christianity, to which they for many Years after firmly adher'd, whatever the *Canons* of those celebrated Councils, or the several Popes of *Rome*, or their Emissaries said to the contrary. This to me appears a better Argument they had no Bishops there, than any the great *Stillingfleet* has produced in Proof that they had. And therefore tho' with a great deal of Learning he canvasses the Decrees of the Council of *Nice*, in order to the better discovering the Rights and Privileges of the British Churches, yet he has given no just Proof that they had of a long Time the least Regard to the *Canons* of that Council, or
of

Orig. Brit.
p. 83.

of the Council of *Arles* that was held before it.

SOME will have *British* Bishops to have been present also in the Council of *Sardica*, *An.* 347; Bishop *Lloyd* there very fairly gives out: But Bishop *Stillingfleet* still holds on. The Synodical Epistle of that Council mentions only Bishops coming thither out of *Italy*, *Spain*, and *Gaul*: But he will have it. That the Bishops of *Britain* are comprehended under those of *Gaul* Tho' why the Churches of *Britain* should be comprehended under those of *Gaul*, in this more than in other Cases, is hard to say.

Histor. Acc.
p. 76.

Orig. Brit.
p. 135.

AT the Council of *Ariminum* held. *An.* 349 it is expressly asserted by *Sulpicius Severus*, That there were *British* Bishops present: But then 'tis added. That not being able to maintain themselves, they made Use of the publick Allowance, rather than they would be chargeable to their Brethren. And if Episcopacy had always been at that low Ebb, it would not have created such Debates. Certainly, their Bishopricks must have been but newly erected, and not so well endow'd as they have been since. Such Bishops as these look so like Presbyters, that it is no easy Thing to know them asunder.

Eccles. Hist.
L. II.

BUT it has been farther pleaded on the Behalf of Diocesan Episcopacy in this Land, That *Christianity was the Establish'd Religion of the Roman Empire; and that it was in all Joints the same Christianity, that was in this and all the other Provinces.* But tho' it was the same Christianity, yet it does not therefore follow, that we had Bishops here in *Britain*, before the *Roman* Emperors concern'd themselves in the ordering and managing of what related to Christianity,

Hist. Acc.
pag. 50

as they did not in this Island, to be sure, till the Time, of *Constantine*, when Christianity first became the Establish'd Religion of the Empire: Nor certainly is Christianity so concern'd in Diocesan Episcopacy, as that it could not subsist without it.

AND finally, 'tis pleaded, that *Tertullian* puts the Proof of *Apostolical Churches*, upon the hucceffion of *Bishops* from the Apostles. But the Proof is to the full as strong, it it be put upon *Presbyters*, which is the Way of *Irenæus* *, whose Authority I should think might be allow'd to go as far as *Tertullian's*.

Orig. Brit.
p. 77.

* *Adversus.*
Hæres. Lib.
III. c. 2.

But whether the Old *British* Christians had, from the first, Diocesan Bishops among them, yea or no, 'tis evident, that they (as well as their Brethren in other Parts) had considerable Trouble from the *Arians* and the *Pelagians*, into the Particulars whereof I have no Inclination (at present) to enter. As to the latter of these Errors, our Historians generally agree. That *Germanus* and *Lupus*, who came over hither from *Gaul*, gave them considerable Assistance. But whatever Service they did the *Britons* by their Arguments, the Writers of their Legend (as is observ'd by Bp. *Burnet* †) took care to adorn their Mission with many very wonderful Miracles, of which. The gathering all the Pieces of a Calf, some of which had been dress'd, and the putting them together in its Skin, and restoring it again to Life, is none of the least.

† See *His*
Exposition
of the 39
Articles of
the Church
of England,
p. 148.

THERE is one Thing however, which I can't but take Notice of, which is this; That while we read of Bishops from *Gaul* that came once and attain to convert the *Pelagians*, we have no Account that can be credited, either of Bishops in *Britain* that were infected, or

that were recover'd: Nor indeed can I meet with any distinct Account of Bishops in *Britain* till the coming of *St. Germanus* and his Companions out of Gaul, under the Pretence of helping their Neighbours against the *Pelagians* about the Year of Christ 440 *.

BP. *Stillingfleet* takes Notice of several Kindnesses they did to the *British* Churches, by their coming hither; and he particularly dilates of two, *viz.* That they instituted Schools of Learning among the Britons, and introduc'd the *Gallican Liturgy*. And to these two I conceive we may upon very probable grounds add a thirds, *viz.* That they made the *Britons*, who before kept to their Ancient Simplicity, more conformable to the *Gallican* Churches, as to *Episcopacy* and with respect to Government †. And I am herein not a little confirm'd, by observing that the Anonymous Author of the Chronicle in *Leland* say That *Germanus* and *Lupus* consecrated Bishops in several Parts of *Britain*: And that the old Register of *Landaff* says the same; and that they made *Dubricius* Archbishop over all the Britons.

THERE are also several other Things that heighten my Suspicion in this Case. One of them is this: That Archbishop *Usher's* laborious Collections ‡, about the Ancient Hierarchy here in Britain, are so full of Disorder and Confusion

* 'Tis hard to fix the exact Time of *St. German's* two Voyages from *Gaul* to *Britain*. I therefore here mention the Year 440, because it seems to have been between them both. For he was present at a *Gallican* Council, that was conven'd upon account of a Bishop call'd *Chelidonius*, and held in the Year 444.

† BP. *Godwin* himself owns it very frankly to have been to him very evident, that there were very few Bishops in this Countrey before *Germanus* and *Lupus* came over hither. *De Convers. Brit.* [[[?????]]] *Christ. Relig.* p. 28.

Orig. Brit.
p. 200, &c.

Collect.
Vol. II.
p. 42
Monast. Anglic.
Vol. III.
p. 188.

‡ *Britan. Ec. Antiq.*
cap. 5.

on *. Another is this; That I take Notice, that most of the celebrated Bishops that are menti- on'd in the History of the Ancient *Britons*, came out of the Schools of *Dubricius* and *Illutus* †, which were settled by St. *German*. I observe also, That as it was in the Time of Pope *Cælestine* that *Palladius* was sent to the *Scots* to intro- duce Episcopacy among them, so it was in the Time and under the Influence of the same Pope, that St. *German* came hither into *Britain* ‡. This to me looks as if St. *German* was design'd to do the very same Service to the *Britons*, that *Pal- ladius* was sent to do to the *Scots*, which was

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* The Reader may see as much Cause to consult the Au- thor's A- pology in his Pre- face, upon occasion of his 5th Chapter, as any o- ther part of his Work. He

there fairly owns, That he had put together all that he could meet with, whether true or false, leaving it to every Man to pass a Judgment for himself. We may say of the Learned Bishop's Collections upon this Subject, as *Giraldus* does of the Episcopal and Metropol- itical Sees in *Britain*, That *there is more in them of Opinion, than certainty of History*. Usser. Brit. Eccl. Antiq. p. 5.

† *Dubricius* himself was not only Consecrated Bishop of *Landaff* by St. *German*, (and is own'd even by Mr. *Collier* in his *Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. B. 1. p. 96.* to have been the first Bishop of *Landaff*, as far as we have any Records to inform us) and remov'd from thence to *Caerleon*; but St. *David*, who first founded a Bishoprick at *Meneva* (which Place afterwards receiv'd his Name, and was call'd *St. Davids*) and then succeeded *Dubricius* at *Caerleon*. was Scholar to *Illutus*. And it was the same also with *Teliam* who succeeded *Dubricius* at *Landaff*; and *Daniel* who was the first Bishop of *Bangor*, and Consecrated by *Dubricius*. This I think quite cuts off *BP. Lloyd's* Argument from the Lives of *Dubricius*, *David*, *Paternus*, and other of the Old *British* Bishops. *Hist. Acc.* pag. 78. They all of 'em came after St. *German's* Visit to the *Britons*, and therefore can't prove there was Bishops here before.

‡ *Baronius* ad An. 429, says that there were in this Case two Mis- sions; the one of *Palladius*, the other of St. *German*: But that the latter had its rise from the former, and both sprang from one and the same Fountain, that is from Pope *Cælestine* He lays that St. *German's* Mission hither had its rise from *Palladius*, and it was con- cluded on in a Synod of the Bishops of *France*. This I must confess confirms me in a Suspicion, that something more was hereby de- sign'd, than the opposing the Pelagians.

afterwards finish'd by St. *Patrick*, To me also it seems pretty strange, that we should have so particular an Account given us by our Historians, of a Number of Bishops after St. *German's* coming, and no distinct Account before of any one Bishop, as to his Birth, Education, Life or Actions, See or Government, Death or Burial *.

St. *German* and his Companions seem also as likely to six Bishops in *Britain*, as St. *Patrick* in St. Ireland, where he was labouring much about the same Time. An Agreement with the *French* in *Episcopacy*, might seem to the full as needful, as an Agreement with them in their *Liturgy* †. And withal, I find it was not till after their Coming, that *Gildas* makes his Complaint, That

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* We read indeed of one *Fastidius* who liv'd before St. *German's* coming hither, whom *Gennadius* calls a Bishop of the *Britons*, at the

same time mentioning some of his Writings. And because *Gennadius* call'd him Bishop of the *Britons*, *Bale* makes him Primate of *Britain*, and *Pits* will have him to be Archbishop of *London*, &c. But Bishop *Usher* (Brit. Eccles. Antiq. cap. 11) frankly owns. That such Accounts are not worth a rush, since we know nothing of him from Ancient Monuments, but what is hinted by *Gennadius*. And the same may be said of all that are mention'd as Bishops in *Britain*, before St. *German's* Mission. We have no Account of them that is worth a rush: none that gives us any just reason to believe, there were any such Bishops in this Island before that time, as there were afterwards. We read indeed in *Prosper's* Chronicle, That *Agricola* who had a considerable hand in spreading Pelagianism in this Island was the Son of *Severianus* a Pelagian Bishop; but are not told where *Severianus* was Bishop. *Bale* (Centur. 1. p. 45.) says he was *Sulpitius Severus* the *Aquitan*, who wrote the Life of St. *Martin*; which B. *Usher* represents as not improbable: and if so, no Proof can be fetch'd from him, of any Ecclesiastical Bishops here in this Island before St. *German's* coming.

† It appears to me very probable, that Diocesan or Prelatical *Episcopacy*, and a stinted *Liturgy*, had their Rise in this Island together, and that the one is neither more primitive, nor more necessary than the other. I cannot forbear observing, that when B^P. *Stillingfleet* hath taken a great deal of Learned Pains (*Orig. Brit. c. 4.*) to state the difference between the *Gallican* and the *Roman* Liturgy, he owns it to have been the Ancient Custom of the Church, to be-

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the Clergy of *Britain* were more ambitious of Degrees in the Church, than of the Kingdom of Heaven.

BRITAIN was also sadly infested with the *Picts* and *Scots*, which alter various Struggles, when no more Help could be had from the *Romans*, was the Occasion of Calling the *Saxons* in to their Assistance. These *Saxons*, whom *Gildas* calls, *A Nation odious both to God and Man*, came hither to be a scourge to the *Britons*, about the Year of Christ 450. They were at first receiv'd as Guests, and treated as Stipendiaries, in Opposition to the Barbarians: But at length found themselves strong enough to set up for Masters, laid the whole Country waste, and drove the Old *British* Christians into the barren Mountains of *Wales*, and occasion'd such Confusion and Desolation as *Gildas* (who wrote a few Years after) thought could never be enough lamented.

gin the Publick Service with the Lessons, after which the Sermon follow'd. Had that Custom been continu'd, the Publick Service had been liable to no Objection, which it appears the Duty and Interest of every Church to desire and endeavour. But I could not but make this Remark on that Discourse of his (which has more in it of the true History of *Liturgies*, than I have met with elsewhere) that tho' the Learned Bishop is very nice and particular in his Account of the several Offices in the Publick Service in the British Churches, following the *Gallican*, from the time of St. *German*, yet I don't find that he so much as offers to insinuate, that there was any *Liturgy* at all in use in this Island, before that time, which was about the Year 440. And therefore supposing the *Dissenters* should (as he intimates) have been mistaken in charging the *Church of England* with taking her Offices from the *Church of Rome*; and supposing it agreed, that where the *Gallican* and *Roman* *Liturgy* differ'd, the *Church of England*, has not follow'd the *Roman* but the other: I yet cannot discern how it can be thought unreasonable by impartial Men, for the *Dissenters* rather to desire to return to the Primitive Simplicity, than to be confin'd to a Way of Worship, which the Christians in this Island were for some hundreds of Years Strangers to, while yet serious Piety flourish'd amongst them.

mented. That Writer describes their Cruelties, and the Judgment of Heaven upon a sinful People, which they were the Instruments of inflicting, in such a Manner, as must needs affect all that read his Account. He says. That *all the Towns with the Beating of the Rams, and all the Townsmen, Pastors, Priests and People, with naked Swords, that glitter'd on all sides, and crackling Flames, were together whirl'd to the Ground.* And our Historians * say. That they scarce left the Face of Christianity where they prevail'd. And yet Pure Religion was not even then extirpated out of the Island, as we shall see under the next Head: For I go on,

* *Ranulph. Nig. in Chronic. & Mat Westmonast.*
A.D. 586,
596.

2. To consider the State of Christianity in this Island, in the Time of the *Saxons*, till the *Norman Conquest*. And here *Bede*, who wrote his History about the Year 731, gives us a great deal of Light, tho' Allowance must be made for his being himself a *Saxon*, and not very friendly to the *British Churches*; and for his having a *Monastick Tincture*. Christianity, in a new Edition of it, with great Improvements as to outward Pomp, was during this Period receiv'd from *Rome*, through the Hands of *Austin* the Monk, about the Year 598. But there was a purer Christianity in the Island before, that was much freer from Adulterations and Corruptions, than that which was now introduc'd under the same Name. There were great Contests between those of the Old Stamp, and those of the New. The former liv'd in *Wales* and *Scotland*, and the latter in the Heart of the Country. So that there were considerable Debates on Foot in this Island, between *Conformists* and *Non-conformists*, in Ancient as well as in

in Modern Times: And the one Sort was apt to carry it with an high Hand, and the other was forc'd to be satisfy'd with the Conscience of their own Integrity, then, as well as now. The *Conformists* then, were in all Things for the Methods of the Church of *Rome*, and the *Non-conformists* were for the Ways and Methods of the Ancient Christians, and disowning Impositions. And *they were call'd too, the Schismatics of Britain and Ireland, because they would not receive the Romish Alterations, nor submit to the Authority by which they were impos'd.*

Historical Account.
pag. 69.

IN the Year 601, there was a Synod call'd by *Austin* to which *Bede* tells us, the Bishops or Doctors of the next Province of the *Britons* were summon'd: In which the Abbot of *Bangor* gave him a free Answer to his Demand of Conformity to *Rome*. He told him. That *They, the Ancient Christians of this Island, were obedient and Subjects to the Church of God, and to the Pope of Rome, and to every godly Christian, to love every One in his Degree, in perfect Charity, and to help every One of them by Word and Deed to be the Children of God: And other Obedience than this he knew not to be due to him whom he call'd the Pope, &c.* And many of the poor Monks not long after lost their Lives, in return for this Freedom and Resolution. But still there was a great Contest about *Easter*, which *Bede* says the Old *Britons* did not observe regularly, but from the 14th to the 20th Moon. This Controversy, (the hot Management whereof at first between Pope *Victor* and the *Asiatics*, and afterwards between the *Romans* and *Britons* in this Island, may justly enough be styl'd a Lunacy) is thus stated by the Learned *Usher*. * *As for the Romans (says he) they kept Easter on that Sunday which fell between*

Eccles. Hist.
Lib. II.
cap. 2.

Eccles. Hist.
ibid.

* The Religion of the Ancient *Irish*.
c. 9. p. 63.

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the 15th and 21st Day of the Moon (both Terms included) next after the 21st Day of March, which they accounted to be the Seat of the Vernal Equinoctial: And in reckoning the Age of the Moon, they follow'd the Alexandrian Cycle of nineteen Years, as it was explain'd unto them by Dionysius Exiguus. The Britons kept Easter upon the Sunday that fell betwixt the 14th and 20th Day of the Moon, following in their Account thereof not the nineteen Years Computation of Anatolius, but Sulpitius Severus's Circle of eighty-four Years.

POPE *Honorius* about the Year 635, wrote to the Scots about an Uniformity in this Point; and very j gravely admonish'd them. *Not to think that such a small Member as they were, in the Ends of the Earth, were wiser than the Ancient and Modern Churches of Christ through the World: And not to celebrate another Easter, against the Paschal Computations, and Decrees of the Synodal Pontiffs of the whole World, &c.* Pope *John* also that came after *Severinus* who succeeded *Honorius* wrote a Letter to them on the same Subject, telling them. *That they ought to enquire for the Lord's-Day, for Easter-Day, from the 15th to the 21st, which was approv'd by the Council of Nice.* Which (by the Way) is an Evidence that they differ'd from that Council in their Practice, tho' they agreed with the Old *British* Christians. Some time after, there was a Conference about this Difference, at *Whitby* in *Yorkshire*, where King *Ofwy* determin'd to adhere to the Successor of *St. Peter*; for fear lest that Saint, who he was told kept the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, should at last deny him an Admission there. *Bede* gives large Account of the Conference; but it was in that that it issu'd. And for this doughty Reason the Notions of the Old *British* and *Scottish* Christians

Christians, which they profess'd to have receiv'd out of *Greece*, from the Disciples of *St. John*, *St. Polycarp*, &c. were rejected with Contempt; and those of the *Roman* Stamp admitted, as much more safe and modish. And the whole Matter was yet more fully settled in the Synod of *Herudford*, under Archbishop *Theodore*, *An.* 673 *. In which Synod it is observable, that many of the Canons of the Councils of *Arles* and *Nice*, (that were held long before in the Years 314, and 325) were fix'd and settled as standing Rules for the British Churches, without the least Intimation that they ever obtain'd here before.

BUT it ought not to be forgotten, That the Difference between these Old *Conformists* and *Non-conformists*, did not lie only in the Time of keeping *Easter*: They differ'd also about *Baptism*. For that was one of the three Things *Austin* insisted on in his Conversation with the *British* Doctors, That they should for the future administer *Baptism* after the Manner of the Church of *Rome*; which is an Argument they did not use to do so before †. They differ'd also about the Tonsure of Priests. But the Power of

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by Archbishop *Theodore* has these Words. *These Terms of Communion lie so open to Reproachful Reflections on the Truth and Honour of the Churches wherein the greatest Part of the English People had receiv'd their Baptism, that it is hard to say whether there was more Insolence in imposing on the the Side, or more Mortification on the other, in submitting to them. Thus did Theodore unite the Churches of the Scottish and Roman Establishments, and bring those who had long refus'd it, to join in Communion with the Church planted in England by the Missionaries from Rome. And if Judgment be made by the Penitential, or as the Judicious and Learned Monsieur du Pin more properly calls it the Ritual of Theodore, the English had a Multitude of Burdensome and trifling Ceremonies, in Exchange for a Worship much more agreeable to the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel.*

† Wherein the Difference between the Old *Britons* and the *Romans* pro-

* Dr. Inet
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in his *Origines Anglicanae*,
Ch. 6. §. 1.
speaking
of the Set-
tlement
now made

imposing upon Fellow-Christians, was a main Part of the Controversy. Each Side ran pretty high. Those of the *Roman Stamp* would not receive Imposition of Hands from those of the other Party; who were not behind-hand with them in Stiffness: Of which the Letter of *Laurentius* (who succeeded *Austin* in the Archbishoprick of *Canterbury*) to the *Scots* in *Ireland*, furnishes us with an Instance. For it is there brought in as a Complaint, That *Dagamus* (their Abbot or Bishop) when he was with some of the *Roman Stamp*, not only would not eat with them, but would not so much as eat in the same Inn with them *.

Bed. Eccl.
Hist. L. II.
cap. 4.

BUT

properly lay about *Baptism* is not so evident. *Pits* frankly owns he did nor know what it was. *Relat. Hist. de Rebus Anglicis.* p. 19. Nor does *Bede* explain it; nor any of our Ancient Writers that I have convers'd with. Some have thought they differ'd about the *Subjects of Baptism*; and that whereas the *Romans* baptiz'd Infants, the *Britons* were against Infant Baptism; and an Argument has been drawn from thence by the *Antipædobaptists*: But an Answer is return'd to it by Mr. *Wall* in his *History of Infant Baptism*, p.327. where he observes, that *Pelagius* being a Native of *Britain*, his declaring that he never heard of any Christian, Catholick or Sectary that denied Infant Baptism, is a good Evidence that his Countrymen did not do it. It seems more likely, that this Difference should have been about the *Mode of Baptism*; and the very Words of *Austin* as *Bede* relates the Matter, seem to look that way. For he would have them administer Baptism for the future, *after the Manner of the Church of Rome*. Now I know of nothing so remarkable in the Manner of Baptizing, in the Church of *Rome* at that Time, as the *trine Immersion*. That this was customary in that Church, is asserted by *Walafridus Strabo de rebus Ecclesiæ*, cap. 26 And tho' we have no positive Evidence as I know of, that a single Immersion or Aspersion, or Pouring of Water was us'd among the Ancient *Britons*, in their Baptisms, yet till something else is mention'd with a surer Appearance of probability. I am inclin'd to believe this was the Matter of that Part of the Difference.

* Some Time after, *viz. An. 816*, there was a Synod at *Celichyth* or [[?????]] whose 5th Canon would not allow the *Scottish* Clergy who

BUT as much as these Old *Britons*, and the *Scots* that adher'd to them were reflected on by those who differ'd from them in their Sentiments, we have Reason to believe, they were many of them very excellent Persons, and that GOD by their Means kept up true Christianity in this Island, to a greater Degree than it would otherwise have been preserv'd. Even *Bede* himself represents *Aidan*, and *Finan*, and *Colman*, who were chief Leaders of the *Scots*, and famous Preachers in *Northumberland*, as eminent for their great Continency, and the Love of GOD, and a Regular Life; and great Observers of the Works of Piety and Chastity, which they learn'd out of the Prophetick and Apostolick Writings. And we may from his History very easily gather, that there were then in this Land a very great Number of Persons, who stood up for the Purity of Christianity, and admitted of Nothing but what was warranted by the Holy Scriptures, the Writings of the Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists, and were diligent and fruitful in the Works of Piety and Chastity, wherein they maintain'd themselves a long Time against the Canons and Ordinances of the *Romish* Councils. And I think it is not

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who travel'd hither, the Exercise of any Part of the Sacerdotal Office: and this was after the *Scots* had conform'd in the Point of *Easter*. Mr *Collier* (*Eccl. Hist. of Great Britain, Book II. pag. 150*) hence gathers (and very justly) that the *Scots* thought the *English* had gone too far in their Submissions to the See of *Rome*; and that they themselves maintain'd their Ancient Privileges, and stood off from the modern Servitude. The Reason mention'd in the Canon why the *Scots* were not admitted to Officiate, is because 'twas uncertain whether or by whom they were Ordain'd. From whence (says he) 'tis plain they did not admit of Ordination from all Hands; and that the *Scottish* Clergy did not travel with Dimissory Letters, or a Certificate of their Orders. From all which, and by the last Words in the Canon, we may conclude, there was a very cool Understanding between these two Churches.

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to be wondred at, that they who then convers'd diligently with the Holy Scriptures, should not any more than they who at this Day take the same Course, relish Religion in the *Roman* Form,

BUT I go on,

3. To touch upon the State of Christianity in this Island, from the Time of the *Norman Conquest* to the *Reformation*.

THE Clergy in this Period, tho' they own'd the Pope of *Rome* for their Head, were yet upon many Occasions great Supporters of Civil Liberty, and Checks to Tyranny; which whatever it proceeded from, was a Angular Providence: Tho' at the same time they grasp'd so much Power in Ecclesiastical Matters, (while Nothing was generally less minded among them than real Religion) as made both Princes and People their Slaves. Christianity however still continued here, tho' King *John* offer'd to forsake it, and become *Mahumetan*, if he could have obtain'd Assistance in his Designs from *Miramumalim* the *Moor*, the great King of *Africa*, *Morocco* and *Spain*: But it was a very corrupt Christianity which prevail'd in those Times. Religion was full of Superstition, Idolatry and Ignorance; and Ecclesiastical Tyranny and Cruelty prevail'd. And yet even then, when Things were at the worst, there wanted not some that had brighter and more scriptural Notions of Things Divine, and were zealous for a Pure and Scriptural Worship. Particularly, in the Reign of *Edward III*, between the Years 1370 and 1380, that great Man *Wickliff* was rais'd up by GOD in this Land, to oppose the Corruptions of Religion,
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and he had many Followers *. They very strenuously opposed Pilgrimages to Images, the Celibacy of Priests, Transubstantiation, Prayers for the Dead, Auricular Confession, and other such-like Additions to Christianity, as were brought in and cherish'd by the Church of *Rome*: And we had many such among us, (call'd *Lollards* by way of Contempt) down to the Time of the *Reformation*, that were so inflam'd with Zeal, that no Severities used against them were able to extirpate them. Several of our Princes and great Men favour'd them, in Opposition to the Pope and his tyrannical Incroachments, of which they were weary. The Scripture was translated into our Mother-Tongue and read by many; and such Seeds of facred Truth were dispers'd and Town in various Quarters of the Land, as sprang up many Years after, and help'd to produce a plentiful Harvest, when Almighty GOD in order to the *shewing forth his Glory among us* a-new, in a most amazing Manner brought about that *Reformation* from Popery, the Benefit of which we yet enjoy, and GOD grant we may do so long, and that our Posterity after us may do the same. I go on then,

* Our Late Ecclesiastical Historian, shews himself no great Friend to Reformation, when he censures *Wickliff's* Tenents, as *Striking at the Government and Property of the Church.* *Eccles. Hist. of Gr. Brit. Vol. I pag. 564.*

4. To Consider the State of Religion among us in this last Period, from the Reformation down to the present Time, which upon many Accounts deserves our special Notice and Regard. In the Compass of this Period, it has pleas'd GOD to discover a peculiar Concern for His Glory among us in this Island, above what can be said of any other Country that I know of.

WELL may it be esteem'd a lingular Providence, That Henry VIII, tho' a declar'd Enemy
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to the Truth of the Gospel, and a zealous Writer against *Luther*, should be the first Instrument of bringing this Nation out of Darkness to Light. Long before his Time, many Complaints had been made in Parliament, against the Jurisdiction of the Bishop of *Rome*; and several Laws were made against it, in the Reigns of *Edward III*, and *Richard II*, and some other Princes; and the Exactions that were so heavy upon the Land, in order to the filling the Pope's Coffers, were a general Grievance: But it was King *Henry VIII* that abolish'd the usurp'd Power of the Pope of *Rome* in this Kingdom, and put the first considerable Stop to Ecclesiastical Tyranny. And GOD's influencing such a Prince as he was to take this Step, and succeeding him in it, is a very plain Evidence, that a yet more compleat Reformation cannot be so unlikely, but He can raise up Instruments to act in it; and that when his Time for it is come, no Difficulty shall be insuperable, or hinder the desir'd Success.

THIS high-spirited Prince quite cast off the Pope with Disdain that he should keep him and his People in Slavery; and he brought the Body of the Clergy, who before were under the Awe of a Foreigner, to own his Supremacy, (which is the Foundation upon which the *Reformation* as far as it is Legal is bottom'd) in *Convocation*, He seiz'd also upon the Monasteries, that were inhabited by a Crew of superstitious implacable People, who, if not rooted out, would have effectually prevented any Reformation. And he so dispos'd of what fell into his Hands upon the Overthrow of so many wealthy Foundations, that were Nurseries of Superstition, Sedition, and all manner of Wickedness, that is
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has help'd to defend and support the *Reformation* ever since, which ought to be thankfully acknowledg'd to be a great Mercy.

His Divorce from his Queen, (in which Affair he found the Pope egregiously trifled with him; which he could not but highly resent) was the visible Occasion of his breaking with him, and intirely renouncing his Authority. And here there is a Passage reported by our Historians, that ought never to be forgotten; which was this: Our King *Henry* had desir'd *Francis* I. of *France* to interpose with the Pope in his Behalf. The Pope and King *Francis* had agreed, That King *Henry* should refer his Cause to the Consistory of Cardinals, and return to his Obedience to the See of *Rome*; and then Sentence about the Divorce should be given in his Favour. King *Henry* consented to it, and sent a Courier to *Rome* on purpose to signify it, and make his Submission in Form. The Courier who had the Sea and the *Alps* to pass in Winter time, arriv'd not at the Day prefix'd, on which he was expected. King *Francis's* Agent at *Rome*, mov'd for a Delay of a few Days, but could not prevail. The Pope hastily pass'd Sentence against King *Henry*, and two Days after came the Courier with the Submission in Form. The Pope thought it too difgraceful to recall his Sentence; and this determin'd the King in his Resolution to shake off his Yoke. What great Things do often depend upon little Matters! Who can tell how long our Reformation might have been retarded, had it not been for that hasty Step, of one that seldom acts against his own Interest!

See *Abridgment of the History of the Reformation*. p. 99, &c.

It has been usual with the Romanists to ridicule our Reformation, because of King *Henry's* Concern

Concern in it, who never discover'd any great Love to real Religion: But let his Views have been what they will, he was an Instrument in the Hand of GOD of much Good to this Land; and the Great Manager of the Hearts of Princes serv'd the Purposes of his own Glory among us by him. For in his Time, and by his Allowance, the Holy Scriptures were translated into *English*, and Bibles (that were before great Rarities) were freely us'd; and many convers'd diligently and carefully with the Word of GOD, out of which they discover'd the gross Errors of Popery, of which they came to have such an Abhorrence, that nothing could reconcile them to that Religion again ever after. It cannot be deny'd but that this King *Henry* was a very unsteady, fanciful, and humoursome Prince (witness his burning Persons in the same Fire for opposing the Errors of Popery, and for refusing to own his Supremacy, in Opposition to the Papal Power; some suffering as Martyrs of Christ, and others as Martyrs of Anti-christ, at the same time;) and yet GOD by him laid a Foundation for the shining forth of *His Glory* in this Land, with such a Lustre, as has been the Envy of the *Romanists* ever since.

HIS Son, King *Edward VI*, that succeeded him, was One of eminent Piety, tho' but a Youth. In his Time, useful Learning and serious Religion was much encourag'd. The Primitive Christian Doctrine was reviv'd, and the publick Worship purg'd of many of its grosser Corruptions: And a farther Advance had been made, but for that Prince's untimely Death; at which therefore it is not to be wondred that such as were against any farther Reformation rejoyc'd.

IN the Days of Queen *Mary*, who succeeded her Brother King *Edward*, an hearty Attempt was made for the Revival of Popery, by a Breach of most solemn Promises, (the reminding of which, was resented as a Thing intolerable, and threaten'd as highly Criminal) and a Train of Sanguinary Laws, which are the common Ways of propagating a Religion that has not Force enough to make Way for Acceptance by its own intrinsick Evidence. *England* was now with great Formality reconcil'd again to the Pope, and Cardinal *Pool* came over hither for that Purpose, and gave the whole Nation in Parliament a Plenary Absolution. Fire and Faggot, which are the Rated Engines of Popery when once it becomes triumphant, were vigorously made use of, to propagate the Religion of the Prince that reign'd, which was as different from the Religion taught in the Holy Scriptures, as the Methods used to spread it were from the Means there recommended for the Spreading true Religion. And yet in her Time GOD was pleas'd to discover a Concern for *His Glory* in this Land partly by shortning her Reign, which lasted but five Years, four Months, and eleven Days; and partly by disappointing the Hopes of her having a Child, (which must have been far gone, since her Delivery was daily expected) which prov'd a false Conception; and partly also by so spiriting his Servants, that they courageously endur'd the most bitter and cruel Sufferings, rather than they would revolt to Popery. In lest than four Years Space there were Two hundred seventy-seven Protestants destroy'd under Form of Law: Of which five were Bishops, twenty-one Ministers, eight Gentlemen, forty-eight Artificers, one

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hundred Husband men. Servants and Labourers, twenty-six Wives, twenty Widows, nine Virgins, two Boys, and two Infants. But the *Reformation* was so far from being hereby extinguish'd, that it rather spread daily more and more. Popery was but the more abhorr'd, for these Barbarities; and the Zeal of the Protestants grew the warmer. They had frequent Meetings, and their Ministers * tho' they expos'd themselves, were not afraid to instruct them. They who before could not agree about Ministers Ceremonies, were now easily reconcil'd at a Stake: And they who fled into foreign Parts, took Care to send over many Books for the Instruction and Comfort of such as they left behind. There was also another notable Instance of GOD'S Care of this Land in her Reign, which ought not to be over-look'd, *viz.* That her Sister *Elizabeth* for whom she had no great Affection, upon whom the Eyes, and Hopes, and Hearts of the Lovers of pure Religion were fix'd, tho' she was imprison'd in the Tower, and by some design'd for the Scaffold, was preserv'd, at the Mediation of K. *Philip*, Queen *Mary's* Husband, not so much out of Kindness to the Princess, as upon a Politick Account, and out of fear least she being once cut off, *Mary* Queen of *Scots*, (who was a Creature of *France*, and therefore his Enemy in course) should have succeed-ed. This Way was a Successor providentially preserv'd, to secure the *Protestant Religion* and *Interest* both at Home and Abroad.

IN the Time of Queen *Elizabeth*, tho' she affected Magnificence in Religion, and inclin'd still to keep up Images in Churches, and discountenanc'd many worthy and pious Persons, that were for greater Simplicity, and a more Scriptural

* I cannot here forebear Querying why their Ministers should be call'd Teachers, by Bishop *Burnet*, in his *Abridgment*. pag. 306.

tural Purity, yet Religion was farther secur'd from the Designs of the Papists, and the Protestant Interest vigorously supported from hence upon all Occasions in other Countries. *Scotland* was freed from the *French*; the *French* Protestants were oft reliev'd, and the *Dutch* assisted in shaking off the Yoke of Popery and Slavery, which was no small Honour to us. At the same time many Societies of serious Christians flourish'd at Home; and we had as pious a Ministry, and as religious a People, and as flourishing a Country, as was to be met with any where. No Money was any more exported to *Rome* for First-fruits, Indulgences, Appeals, Dispensations, Palls, and such-like Trumpery. Publick Prayers were every where offer'd to Almighty GOD in our native Language; the *Mass* was abolish'd, and the Communion administred in both Kinds, as Christ appointed it. The Gospel was faithfully preach'd, Bibles became common, Learning was encourag'd, Sobriety countenanc'd, and the Inhabitants of *England* were the Envy of all their Neighbours. There were several Instances of GOD's special Concern for *His Glory* in this Land during her Reign; two of which were particularly remarkable. One of them related to *Mary Queen of Scots*; and the other to the *Spanish Invasion*. As for *Mary Queen of Scots*, she was first set up by the *French*, and afterwards by the *Spaniards*, in Opposition to *Queen Elizabeth*. She bore her Arms, and took her Title. Being at length imprison'd by her own Subjects, she made her Escape, and fled hither into *England*, where she was detain'd Prisoner for seventeen Years together. During all that Time, there were many Intrigues of the Papists on Foot for her Deliverance: and

several Conspiracies to dethrone the Queen, and set her up in her Room; on which Account the Duke of *Norfolk* and several others were executed. At length it was evident that the Queen and the Nation was in the utmost Danger. Hereupon she was try'd before a considerable Number of noble Peers, commissioned for that Purpose, for Conspiring the Destruction of the Queen's Person, and the Realm of *England*; and the Subversion of Religion. She was adjudg'd Guilty; and that Judgment was approv'd by both Houses of Parliament; who declar'd it to be their common Sense, That Queen *Elizabeth's* Safety could no Way be secur'd, as long as the Queen of *Scots* liv'd. And she was accordingly beheaded, and so the Kingdom and our Religion was preserv'd from Ruin. And not long after, that great *Armada*, which *Spain* look'd on as Invincible, was ruin'd and destroy'd, in such a Manner, that it seem'd as if Heaven fought for our Fore-fathers. It was also owing to this Queen's Conduct, and the Management of her Ready Ministry, that the *Spaniard* fell short of the *Universal Monarchy*, after which he aspir'd.

IN the Reign of her Successor King *James I.* tho' the *Spanish* Intrigues were very prevalent in ours as well as in many other Courts in *Europe*, yet our Parliaments discover'd a just Concern for the true Protestant Interest, and help'd to secure our Religion and Liberty.

IN the Reign of his Son King *Charles I.* tho' *French* Counsels as much prevail'd as the *Spanish* had done in the Reign of his Father, and had at last a fatal Influence to ruin him; yet still a merciful Providence secur'd us from the destructive Designs of Hell and Rome, and we continu'd

tinu'd strong and wealthy, and Religion flourish'd in the Nation.

UPON the Restauration of King *Charles II.* it seems a great Wonder of Providence, that our Religion and Liberty was not entirely complimented away, in a Transport of Joy: But tho' *French* Counsels were still follow'd, and there was a visible Design on Foot to debauch and enslave the Nation; yet it pleas'd GOD at length so to stir up our Parliaments, and so to spirit the People, that they that had Will enough, had not Power sufficient to make us Papists and Slaves.

AND in the Reign of King *James II.* when it was the common Apprehension, That Religion and Liberty, and every Thing that was valuable, was just going, our Nobility and Gentry, Clergy and Commonalty, were at once so influenc'd by Divine Providence, as to call for Help from the Prince of *Orange*, by whose Means we were miraculoufly rescu'd, when upon the very Brink of Ruin. And who can enough admire the Goodness of God to us in so ordering Matters, that when that bigotted Prince had but two Daughters, they should both of them marry Protestants, and so be reserv'd for a Calm after a Storm!

IN the Reign of our Glorious King *William*, (whose Name ought to be ever dear to us,) innumerable Plots were defeated, and our Enemies when they thought nothing could hinder them from compassing their Designs, were still disappointed; till he transmitted the Crown, and our Religion and Liberty to the Custody of Her Majesty, Queen *Anne*; whose Reign God Honour'd with a Train of Victories and Successes, not to be match'd in History. And it we reap not all the happy Fruits thereof that

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we desir'd and wish'd for (and which were sometimes the Matter of our Expectations) it becomes us as Christians, without terminating our Views on second Causes, to lay the Blame on our own Sins; and to say with the Prophet, *That our Iniquities have turn'd away these Things; and our Sins have with-holden good Things from us.* Such has been our Ingratitude both to GOD and Men, our Wickedness has been so very provoking, and our unwillingness to be reform'd so very visible, and accompany'd with such a Malignity, that we may very well wonder that we have any Mercies left, and much more that our Civil and Religious Liberties are yet continu'd; and that by Means of the Protestant Succession in the Illustrious House of *Hanover*, we may hope that they may yet be perpetuated to us, and our Posterity after us.

AND now upon the Account that has been given of the Kindness of Almighty GOD to the Inhabitants of this Island all along, and his Concern for the *declaring* and continuing *His Glory* amongst them, I can appeal to any Man, Whether the following Reflections are not natural, and just, and proper.

I. OUGHT not such a Land as this to be extremely thankful? Justly may we lay of *Britain*, what was said heretofore by *Moses* of the Land of *Canaan*, It is *a Land which the Lord careth for*. He hath cared for it from one Age to another, without ceasing. We receiv'd the Gospel betimes: Before many Countries that are much nearer in Situation to *Judea*, from whence it was propagated: Sooner than many parts of *Germany*: And many Ages before the vast Continent of *America*. Christianity flourish'd

Jerem. v.
25.

Deut. xi.
12.

rished here before it was the Establish'd Religion at *Rome*, which was not till the Reign of *Constantine*. We have enjoy'd the Gospel long: While some Parts of *Africa*, where once there were flourishing Churches, and *Asia the Less*, and *Persia*, and the Parts adjoining, have long since lost it, and are over-run with *Mahumetanism*. Our Civil Liberty has been secur'd under as many Changes of Masters and Governments as any Country can pretend to. We have been pillag'd and plunder'd by the *Romans*, by the *Picts*, by the *Saxons*, by the *Danes*, and by the *Normans*, and yet we are a flourishing People; or at least might be so, if there were not something in our unhappy Tempers that prevented it. When Popery over-ran all these *Western* Parts, and there was a general Declension from Gospel Purity, there were but few Places (if any) in which more Witnesses in proportion were rais'd up to Hand by the Truth, than in these Islands. Withal, we were reformed betimes: And the Manner of our Reformation was thus far Happy, that the Government fell in with and encourag'd it: Tho' had they proceeded farther in it, our Happiness had been the greater. 'Twas otherwise in *France*, where there once was a vast Number of Protestants. They were weary of the wretched Corruptions of Popery, and thereupon purg'd themselves, and form'd themselves into Christian Societies, having the Government mostly against them. Their Princes kept a watchful Eye and a strict Hand over them; and taking their Opportunity, have at last bid fair for extirpating them. But it has not been so with us. Here in Britain, the Law is on the Side of our Religion, and 'tis twisted and interwoven with our
Civil

Civil Constitution, so that none can betray the one, but at the same time they overthrow the other. This ought to be own'd a great Mercy. And then farther. In what an amazing Manner have we been sav'd from a Return of Popery! What a continu'd Conspiracy has there been against us ever since the *Reformation!* How many Attempts have been baffled! How many formidable Projects defeated! It has not been so in *Hungary*, nor *Bohemia*, nor *Silesia*, nor the *Palatinate* of the *Rhine*, nor *Alsace*, nor several other Parts of *Germany*, where the Protestant Religion once flourish'd, but Popery now reigns. In what Country is there greater Plenty of Bibles, or a greater Number of Able Divines, more Purity or Plenty of Gospel Ordinances, greater Care to celebrate the Lord's-Day religiously, more Liberty to excel in true Goodness without hindrance, or a greater Number of serious and sincere Christians? And ought we not then to be very thankful? May we not say, as the *Psalmist* in another Case, *God hath not dealt so with any Nation?* I speak it not in a boasting Way, or to cherish Pride; but to inflame Thankfulness. We of this Land are by our Neighbours commonly reckon'd remarkable enough for an over great Self-valuation, and for despising of others; and I should be glad there were no Ground for the Remark: But still the Favours of GOD ought to be taken notice of; and if they are not, I cannot see how they should be duly priz'd, or how it can be expected a suitable Return should be made for them. There are several Particulars in which other Nations exceed us: But if we take Things together, and consider the Extensiveness, and Comprehensiveness and Lastingness, of the Favours which GOD hath

hath confer'd upon us in Temporals and Spiritu-als, we shall find few that equal us, and I'm sure none that exceed us. And shall we not then be Thankful? Does it not concern us to be-think ourselves what Returns to make to the Donor of all our Blessings? Is it not fit, is it not highly reasonable and equitable, and may it not be justly expected, that there should be National Returns for National Mercies, as well as Personal and Domestical Returns, for Personal and Domestical Mercies? Should not all think themselves concern'd about rendring to the Lord, that Share in the Blessings receiv'd? Or is it at all proper so to confine ourselves to present Mercies, as to overlook those long since past, when the good Fruits and Effects of them remain to this Day? Would this be ingenuous or becoming? Undoubtedly Thankfulness, highly becomes such a People as we, who live in a Land that God has so favour'd and car'd for, from one Period of Time to another. But,

2. COULD any One that should observe the prevailing Temper, and common Carriage of the People of this Island, imagine, that the Gospel had come to us thus early, and continu'd with us thus long? Who would think we had had the Gospel among us for Sixteen hundred Years and more together? At least, how affecting a Thought is it, that it should have been the prevailing Religion here thus long to so little purpose! It is indeed to be hop'd, that it has help'd to send many Thousands and Millions in this Time from this Island to plant the Heavens: But might it not have been hop'd, and reasonably expected, that such a Religion as the LORD

JESUS brought from Heaven, that Religion of which he was the Instituter, should, in all this Time, have had more general, and remarkable, and universal Effects! And yet have we not to this Day many Parts of this Island, where Christianity is as little known as in a Pagan-Country? And where there is Knowledge in Divine Things, how little generally appears of a Gust and Relish? Is it not grown modish to disbelieve the Great Principles on which our Religion is bottom'd? to call in Question the Facts by which Christianity is supported? and argue against the Great Truths which it proposes, in a Cavilling Way? Don't we meet with more or less of this Temper in all Conversation? Is there not a visible Enmity against Real Religion? Are not too many among us so weary of *Revelation*, as to be willing to return back to *Natural Religion*, or *Deism*? Nay, have we not sundry Vices common among us, that Pagans themselves would have been asham'd of? And is not this to be lamented! Should we not heartily bewail our Sins, which are sadly aggravated by the many Mercies we have receiv'd from GOD, and by which we have been distinguish'd from other People? A general Corruption is very visible among us: There's no denying it. All Ranks, and all Parties partake of the Infection, and yet there are but few but what have somewhat to say in their own Vindication, and whereby to throw off the Blame from themselves to Others. Few *see the Plague of their own Hearts*, or are sensible how much they have inflam'd the common Reckoning. If we read over *Gililda's* free Rebuke of the inhabitants of this Land for their Sins, between Eleven and Twelve hun-

hundred Years ago, we shall be apt to think, that the greatest Part of what he says, is directly levell'd against our own Times. And though our Doctrine and Worship is Reformed from Popery, yet we have much the same Sins among us now, as in Popish Times. Our Lives and Manners want Reforming; And this has been long and generally complain'd of, though to but little Purpose. There is but little Seriousness to be discerned in our common Worshipping Assemblies; and great Lightness and Coldness evident in the solemnest Acts of Religion. The Sacraments, which where Seriousness took place, were ever reverenc'd, are, by many, slighted and contemned, and, I doubt, profan'd by more. The Holy Scripture is despis'd and ridicul'd, and the Expressions of it toss'd about in Conversation, in a Way of Banter. The Office of the Ministry is counted mean and despicable, and too many by their Lives and Carriage have contributed to make it so. Sensuality and Impurity is become fashionable, and Sobriety and Regularity is with many a Matter of Reproach; and Profaneness and Hypocrisy Strive which shall out-do each other. Is this like a People that have had such a Current of Mercy and Goodness following them from one Period to another? No, Alas, far from it! Again,

3. WOULD it not be very sad, if, instead of becomingly Thankful, we should be grown weary of our Mercies, or indifferent whether we keep or lose them! Would not this argue very little Value of what GOD had done for us? do we carry it as Persons that count

Gospel Privileges our *Glory*? Is it not a most affecting Thing, to see a People, that have long enjoy'd Christianity, so tir'd with it, as to seem not unwilling to part with it for another Religion! And is not this the Case of many? This is not indeed any just Argument against the Christian Religion itself; but it is such an Evidence of the supine, ungrateful, malignant, inveterate Spirit, of a People that have long been favour'd with it, that it ought to fill such as observe it with Concern, and may justly cover us with Shame. And are we not plainly grown weary of the *Reformation*? Is not our Dread of *Popery* strangely worn off? Have we not many that look upon that as a Word of Course, that has little Significance? There's a Remark that's made by some that know the State of *France* and *Britain* pretty well, that I freely confess, is apt to make my Heart ake, whenever I think on't. 'Tis, That many in *France*, and that of the Clergy as well as other Ranks, earnestly long for a Reformation, and wait but for an Opportunity to discover themselves: While among us, many are for approaching nearer and nearer to *Popery*, and wait but for an Opportunity to shew how little Value they have left for the *Reformation*, in which their Fore-fathers so much rejoyc'd. If this Remark be true, (and I'm inclin'd to believe there may be something in it) it looks very Black upon us. Is it not sad, That in such a Land as this, so many should be fond of reviving the old popish Notions, of the *Priesthood*, and the *daily Sacrifice*, of *auricular Confession*, and the *Succession of Orders*, &c! How sad, That the Memory of our great Deliverer from *Popery* and *Slavery*, should be so vilify'd! How sad,

sad, that any should be so eager to compromise Matters with those who don't reckon any Promises they can make, to such as they are, binding; and who look upon it as a meritorious Thing to ruin or destroy them! This argues, That tho' Almighty God has hitherto signally favour'd us, and strangely preserv'd us, yet we are tired with our Blessings, we are surfeited and glutted, and grown wanton, and bent upon trying the most dangerous Experiments. The Lord in Mercy make us wiser. But,

4. What would become of us should God flop his Hand towards us, or remove *His Glory* from us? and yet may we not very justly fear, that even his Concern for his own Glory, which is so visibly slighted, where his Gospel, after so many Years Enjoyment, is so despised, and has so little Effect, should induce him to animadvert upon such a People with remarkable Severity? Has not this, at least, been his usual Way in Ages pass'd? Has it not been so with other Nations, and with us too? Was there not such a Temper as this remarkable before the Coming of the *Saxons* hither, who laid this Island waste from *South* to *North*! No Man I think can read *Gildas*, and question it. Afterwards there was much the same Temper, when about the Year of Christ 800, the *Danes* made their Inroads into these Islands, filling all Places with Blood, and leaving nothing but Desolation behind them, and that for two hundred Years together. And have we not since been visited with a Variety of Judgments, in the Midst of all the Favours of Heaven, and do We not still remain unamended! Must not our Miseries

Miseries and Calamities be at last peculiarly great and wonderful, to bear any Proportion to such Offences as ours have been, and still continue? And should God remove His Glory, as from his People of Old: should he multiply our Plagues, could we complain with any Justice? Should he at length make a Stop, and signify to us, that he had done enough, and more than enough, for a stupid, senseless, ungrateful, murmuring and disobedient People, and he would do no more for us: Should he tell us as he did his Ancient People in so many Words, That having deliver'd us again and again to little Purpose, he was now grown weary, *and would deliver us no more*: Would it not be doleful? Would not *Woe be to us, if he should depart from us!* Could we that have made so light of his Mercies, either screen ourselves from his Anger, or bear his Indignation? Oh that we were wise and would but Consider! As no Nation has been more favour'd than we, so the Day of GOD'S Wrath must be peculiarly terrible, if it be not pacify'd. And whither can we fly for Refuge, what can we depend upon for Safety, should our God desert us? And might he not justly be jealous of his despised Glory? Let us think of the Fate of *Jerusalem*, GOD'S beloved City of old, and be instructed and amended.

5. CAN it be a vain Thing, that the most faithful Gospel Ministers we have had in this Land, (and we have been bless'd with those that have been as eminent as any Nation whatsoever) should, for a long Time Together, have freely denounc'd the Judgments of GOD
against

Judg. x.
13.
Hosea ix.
12.

against us, if we continu'd impenitent ? I know this is what many make light of : But I query upon what Grounds they do so, and whether they are sufficient to justify and bear them out? Tho' we own Inspiration ceas'd, yet when this has been a very general Thing with those Ministers that have been most upright and Faithful; when it has been the Course and Way of those that have stood most in GOD's Secret, and they have herein acted out of a Conscientious Regard to GOD's Glory, it certainly deserves our Notice. It looks as if the Bitterness of Death were not yet past with us. It becomes us to remember and consider, that the *Asian* Churches were a long while threatn'd, before the Judgments that were denounc'd were inflicted: And it does not follow, that we shall be spar'd, because we have had a Respite. God has try'd the Way of Mercy and Judgment with us, without suitable Effects: He has many Arrows ftill in his Quiver: And 'tis eafy to obferve, that Provoked Patience, often brings on swift Destruction. And yet,

6. MAY not such Favours as we in this Land have receiv'd from God, encourage us to trust him for the future, if we would but repent and amend, and take Care to be found in the Way of our Duty ? That GOD that has had such a peculiar Regard to this Nation for so many Ages, will not be forward or hasty to give us up. He has had a great Concern for *His Glory* among us, and after all our Sins still manifests a great Unwillingness to desert us. Let us but mourn after Him, and He will yet regard us. Let us but seek Him heartily,
and

and He will be found of us. Let but a due Concern for *His Glory*, which has been so slighted, be atirring among us, and I conceive we may yet have hope. That tho' He should sorely rebuke. He will not abandon us; tho' He should see it necessary to Visit us for our Sins and that with some Severity too, yet he will not take his Loving-kindness from us; but as He bless'd our Progenitors from one Age to another, so He will still bless us and our Posterity after us: And so bless us and them, that we shall still have *His Glory declar'd among us* and it shall not be in the Power of our most implacable Enemies, fully to compass their Designs upon us. *Amen.*

MATTH.

MATTH. XVI. 18.

And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church: And the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

FROM the former Part of this Verfe the *Romanists* plead for the Primacy of *St. Peter*, and of the *Pope* as his Successor: From the latter Clause we that are Protestants think we may safely conclude, that our Blessed Saviour will have an Interest on foot here on Earth, whatever Attempts are made against it. And yet as they have their Difficulties, so have we; but with this Difference, that whereas theirs are insuperable, ours are easily accommodated. Our Lord declares in the first Words of the Text, that *upon this Rock* he would *build his Church*. And if *by this Rock* he either meant himself, who is elsewhere represented as *the chief Corner Stone of the Houshold of God*; or if he thereby

Ephes. ii.
20.

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meant the Confession of his being the Son of the LIVING GOD, which St. *Peter* had been just making, which is the Central Point in which all Christians meet; upon either Supposition, any Peculiar Primacy of this Apostle vanishes, and leaves the Primacy of his pretended Successor that is bottom'd upon it, as a Castle in the Air, quite destitute of any Foundation. But when he says that this *Church* of his, that He would *build upon this Rock*, should not be *prevail'd against by the Gates of Hell*, its Strength and Safety must without all question be thereby denoted. And yet there is still some Difficulty remaining, both in fixing the just Meaning of *the Gates of Hell*, and in determining whether the Promise here given be to be apply'd to the Church consider'd collectively, or to its particular Members. *The Gates of Hell*, or of *Hades*, plainly signify the Powers of the Invisible World. The mentioning *Gates*, may remind us of the Ancient Places of Judicature among the *Jews*, which were at the Entrance of their Cities, where their Elders commonly sat, and judg'd of Right and Wrong. And the mentioning *Hades*, which we translate *Hell*, (and might as well term the Invisible World) naturally points us to those Malignant Spirits, who have a sort of Superintendency in the invisible Regions. 'Tis true our Blessed Lord has *the Key of the Hades*, and none enter in or out, without his Allowance or Order; which is an unbreakable Comfort to Pious Persons. We may from thence easily gather, that all the infernal Powers are under his Controul. But suppose we take *Hades* for the state of Death, without relation to Reward or Punishment, Misery or Happiness, which must be own'd its most usual signification, it may yet equally serve
our

our Purpose: and that whether we apply our Saviour's Promise to the Church in General, or to the Particular Members of which it is made up. Take it as meant of the Particular Members of the Church of CHRIST, that is, of the true Members of his Body, the Sense of it is this; That they shall all most certainly overcome Death and the Grave, by a Resurrection to Immortality. And if so, the Immortality of the Faith they profess, which also inferrs the Necessity of the constant Existence of some to profess that Faith, may be easily grafted upon it. But then take the Church in this place Collectively, for the Body of Believers, which is the commonest Sense of the Word Church incur Sacred Records, and the Promise gives a certain Assurance of its Perpetuity. *The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* That is, it shall not be liable to Mortality. It shall never be under the Power of Death, but it shall have an happy Resurrection. A *Church* Christ will always have upon Earth. It never shall be so destroy'd, as totally to perish; but whatever Change it passes under, it shall again lift up its Head. All the United Power and Strength, the utmost Craft and Policy of Earth and Hell, shall not be able to root it out. No Attempts against it shall finally prosper. This I take to be the true Meaning of these Words; and I find it so represented by the Generality of Interpreters and Commentators, whether Ancient or Modern.

The perpetual Duration then of the Christian Church, and that as secur'd by this Promise of its Head and Founder, is the thing which from hence most naturally offers itself to us, as the Subject of our Meditation. And that our thoughts on this Subject may be the more orderly, I propose.

- I. To fix the proper Limits of the Promise, that we may be led to its just Intention.
- II. To shew how fully this Promise has been made good in the several Ages which the Church of Christ has hitherto past through, Which Account shall in the
- III. PLACE be follow'd, with some plain Remarks, which may not be unseasonable in the Times we live in.

I BEGIN with the Limits of the Promise here given: And that the rather because if they are not fix'd, we shall be apt to expect more from it than it contains, and by consequence to charge it with Failures, even when upon a regular Search it would be found to be most punctually and exactly accomplish'd. To prevent this, it may not be amiss just to mention a few Observations, without staying to dilate upon them. And,

1. IT deserves our Notice that it is not here intimated that the Church of Christ shall be so far safe, as to be always quiet, and free from Assaults, and that its Assaults shall be but inconsiderable. It is indeed declar'd that this Church is *built upon a Rock*; but then that Rock stands in the Midst of the Sea, and therefore cannot but be on all hands expos'd to dashing Waves.

2. IT is not said that the Church tho' dtruck at, shall always has a visible Pomp and Splendour attending it. Our Lord does not promise his Followers Riches and Honours if they continue
faith-

faithfully adhering to Him. Instead of that, he plainly tells them, they must expect Hardships and Difficulties; and calls upon them to *take up their Cross*, if they'd approve themselves his true Disciples. Nay,

Matth.
xvi. 24.

3. HE gives no Assurance, that the Infernal Powers that would assault his Church, should never seem to prevail against it. For it was his Intention, in sundry Cases, for wise and weighty Reasons, to permit the Enemies of his Church and Interest, to seem as it were to carry all before them, and bring their Designs to an Head, notwithstanding all Impediments or Obstructions: And in any such Case, his consummate Wisdom becomes the more conspicuous, in baffling their Projects when they are almost compleated, and his Infinite Power becomes the more illustrious, in that He rescues his Church when it is brought to the last Extremity. Again,

4. IT would be a very false Conclusion to infer from this Promise, That the Number of the Professors of the Christian Faith in Truth and Purity, should at all Times and Seasons be great and remarkable. We may from hence collect. That the Truth would always have some to profess it; but not that the Number of those that did it would be always considerable. The true Church of Christ may at some Times, and in some Cases, be obscure, and difficult to find, and yet this Promise may be punctually made good. Nor is there any reconciling the Promise with the Event upon any other Supposition. For Time was, when almost all the World became *Arian*. Must we say, that GOD then

then forsook his Church, and forgot this Promise? No, by no means. There was at that Time a Number that continu'd Faithful, tho' in Obscurity. It was also very plainly foretold from the first, That in the first Part of the Reign of *Antichrist*, all the World should *wonder after the Beast, and worship him*. And yet it is also intimated, that there would be no small Number of Persons that *would not worship the Beast nor his Image, nor receive his Mark upon their Foreheads, or in their Hands*. These put alltogether would, as it is intimated, at last amount to a Multitude, tho' consider'd in the several Ages they liv'd in, they were comparatively but a Few. Now must we say, that God forgot this Promise, and forsook his Church, when Anti-christ thus prevail'd, and drew almost all Men after him? No, far from it. He that in Ancient Times when there was a general Defection from his Truth, and Revolt from his Worship, secur'd to himself seven thousand in *Israel*, who never bow'd their Knees to *Baal*, did in this Case also secure a Number of Adherents to himself, whom neither the Artifice and Subtlety, nor the Power and Cruelty of the Beast, could prevail with to submit to Anti-christian Impositions and Impurities. Every Age had some such; tho' not so many as to make any great Noise, or prove any considerable Body, compar'd with the Rest that yielded.

AND *lastly* Tho' our blessed Lord by the Promise gives Assurance, that He always will have a Church somewhere here upon Earth, yet He hereby gives no Assurance, that the Church should continue always, in any one particular Place. There is not a Part of the Earth, can be
nam'd

nam'd, in which there is any Impossibility of a Failure of God's Church and Interest, tho' the Promise itself can't fail of being fulfill'd. What are become of the seven famous Churches of *Asia*, to whom St. *John* directed his Epistles in the Book of the *Revelation*? And where are those Churches all along the Coasts of *Africa*, that made such a Figure in Primitive Antiquity? And as for the celebrated Churches which there were heretofore in many *Eastern* Parts, where are they now? Have they not long since disappear'd? Can we find any Footsteps of them remaining? What shall we then say? Has this Promise fail'd? No by no means. It stands immoveable as a Rock. Christ will have a Church somewhere or other to the End of the World: But whether it shall be in *Asia* chiefly, as at first; or in *Africa*, as afterwards; or in *Europe*, where it has now most flourish'd for many Ages; or in *America*, where the Gospel is at last publish'd, and has overspread many large Countries, must be left to the Conduct of the Great Governour of the World. This is a Thing which this Promise is not concern'd in. The Gospel Candlestick has often been remov'd from one Place and Country to another, to punish the iniquities of those who have continu'd to abuse the Light with which they have been favour'd. And this may, and should be a Caution to all particular Churches, to the End of Time, to take heed of provoking God to give them up to Confusion and Ruin, by their Incurable-ness and Wantonness, their Dissoluteness and Divisions. This may be the Case of any particular Church upon Earth, without the least Failure in this Promise; which is sufficiently fulfill'd and made good, if as the Church of Christ
decays

decays, or fails, or perishes, in one Branch or Part of it, it revives again in another.

These Limitations being fix'd, which are but just, proper and necessary, I now proceed,

II. To shew how fully this Promise has been made good, in the several Ages which the Church has hitherto pass'd through. And here I shall take the Pains to give a brief View of the State of the Church of Christ from Age to Age, that our Faith, in the Promise that is here made, may be confirm'd, and that we may be stirred up to such a Carriage, and such Expectations, as would be suitable and becoming.

I BEGIN with the Times of the Blessed Apostles of our Lord and Saviour, who were soon undeceiv'd in their Expectations, as to their being call'd to a Life of Ease and Pleasure, and of Temporal Honour and Grandeur. They met with some Difficulties in their Master's Life-time; but they were as nothing to their Hardships after his Decease. It was not long before *Jerusalem* grew too hot to hold them. They were forc'd from thence by severe Perfection; and oblig'd to fly from one City to another, for their own Preservation; publishing the Faith of a Crucified Jesus wherever they came: And thus doing, they had early Converts in *Samaria*, as well as in *Judea*, But still they, for some Time, made their chief Application to the *Jews*, among whom they met with the most inveterate Malice and Spite that could be conceiv'd. Afterwards they address'd themselves to all Sorts of People without Distinction, and went about the World working Miracles to confirm their Doctrine
and

and seeking to disciple the several Nations of the Earth, to one that died upon the Cross; and still they adted in a Believing Dependance upon the Promise that was given them in this Text: And under the utmost Discouragements, and all possible Disadvantages, and Opposition from all Quarters, they had a marvellous Success. The World in general, was up in Arms against them. Earth and Hell conspir'd together to stop the Progress of the Doctrine they publish'd. The *Jews* insulted it, and the Gentiles exploded it. The Philosophers derided it, and the Priests rail'd at it, and loaded its Votaries with all manner of Reproaches: And the Princes and Great ones, in the several Nations where it spread, persecuted the Professors of it, with the utmost Rage and Cruelty. All agreed together to stifle it in the Birth: But an infinitely Wise GOD outwitted them; and his Power was too strong for theirs. Christianity gain'd Ground, and struck its Roots deep. Churches were planted, not only in *Syria*, but in *Egypt*, and *Italy*, and at *Alexandria* and *Rome*, and in many of these *Western* Countries. At length an heavy Vengeance (which also had been particularly foretold) befell the *Jews*, those cursed Enemies of Christ and his Gospel. Their Church and Nation was entirely overthrown by the miserable Destruction of the City of *Jerusalem*, in which there perish'd near Twelve hundred thousand Men, as a Warning to all future Generations, that the Church of Christ will, in the Event, triumph over all insolent Opposers; The Emperors, *Nero* and *Domitian*, bitterly persecuted the Christians in the *Roman Empire*, and yet they increas'd and multiply'd exceedingly.

Cent. II.

Cent. III.

IN the *Second* Century, the *Jews* who surviv'd the Destruction of their Country, stillpursu'd Christianity and its Professors, with an implacable Hatred. The Philosophers made it their Business to run down the Followers of a *Crucify'd Jesus* with Arguments, and the Emperors with Sanguinary Laws, and open Force; and yet the Christian Religion was spread far and near. Many Illustrious Gentiles were converted; as *Justin Martyr*, and *Theophilus of Antioch*, who defended their Holy Religion by their excellent Apologetick Writings. A Flood of Hereticks broke in upon the Infant Church, and threaten'd a Deluge of Error and Confusion. *Gnosticks* appear'd in a Thousand several Shapes, discrediting Christianity before the World, and threatning to swallow up the Truth of the Gospel: But it still surviv'd them. The Emperors *Trajan* and *Adrian* were great Haters of the Christians, and treated them with Cruelty. *Pliny* the Younger (tho' a Pagan) wrote in their Favour in the *East*: And in the *West*, particularly at *Lyons* in *France*, many faithful Martyrs seal'd the Truth with their Blood; and their Bishop (or Senior Presbyter rather) the celebrated *Irenæus* among the rest: And it plainly then appear'd, as well as afterwards, that the Blood of the Martyrs was the Seed of the Church; which still got Ground in *France* and *Spain*, as well as in many Parts both of *Africa* and *Asia*.

IN the *third* Century, the Christians were still persecuted by *Severus*, *Maximinus*, *Decius*, *Valerian* and *Aurelian* the Emperors: And many holy Souls by their bloody Methods were sent weltring in their Gore to Heaven. But so Invincible was the Courage with which God
 endued

endu'd his faithful Servants in those Times, that their Enemies were sooner weary with Tormenting them, than they with Buffering. *Sabellius*, and *Paul the Samosatzenian*, and several others, vented their erroneous Notions as to the Person and the Dignity of the Son of GOD: But the Truth had its Defenders; and the Interest of Christ in the main, prevail'd considerably in the World.

THE *fourth* Century began with a more bloody Persecution than any of those that went before it. The Devil rag'd the more, knowing his Time to be but short, and that this was to be his last Effort against the Church, under Heathen Emperours. *Dioclesian* and *Maximian* were the grand Agents, in this last Attempt of expiring *Paganism*. They for their Part little doubted but they should quite extirpate Christianity out of the World; as appears from certain Money coin'd by *Dioclesian*, wick an Inscription that intimated, that *the Name of Christians, who overthrew the Common-wealth, was destroy'd*. But they found themselves mistaken, and sensibly at length perceiv'd. That an Almighty Power baffled all their Counsels. Monsieur *Godeau* reckons, that in this Perlecucion. there were no fewer than seventeen Thousand Martyrs kill'd in one Month's Space: And he observes, That during the Continuance of it, there were in the bare Province of *Egypt*, no less than One hundred and forty four thousand Persons who died by the violence of their Perseutors; and Seven hundred thousand, who died thro' the Fatigues of Banishment, or of the Publick Works, to which they were condemn'd. This Persecution rag'd much in this Isle or Britain which we inhabit; and many had the Courage here to suf-

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fer Martyrdom. But at length *Constantine*, who succeeded in the Empire, finding it by sad Experience to be an hard Thing to kick against the Pricks, made the Pagan give way to the Christian Rites, throughout his Dominion: And under him the Followers of *Jesus of Nazareth*, who died at *Jerusalem*, publicly gain'd the Field, But at the same time with Prosperity and outward Splendour, did Pride and Riches enter into the Christian Church; and it has been observ'd, that they have more endanger'd it than all its Persecutions. No sooner was there Peace in the Empire and in the Church, than the *Arian* Heresy most miserably distracted and divided it. *Constantius* the Emperor unhappily favour'd that Heresy; and the Christians divided into a great Variety of Sects and Parties: And so the Church was as much troubled and threaten'd, by the Errors and Heresies, the Divisions and Factions of such as profess'd the Name of Christ, as ever it had before been by the open Violence of its most bloody Persecutors: *St. Jerom* takes Notice, (and not without great Concern) That after the Council at *Rimini*, all the World groan'd, and wonder'd to see itself become *Arian*. Corruption of Manners loon after fspread itself like a Gangrene through all Parts; insomuch, that GOD at length faw it needful to send a severe Scourge : And He suffer'd *Julian* the Apostate to ascend the Imperial Throne, who reviv'd Paganism again, and took more crafty and subtle Methods to root out Christianity than any that went before him. 'Tis observ'd concerning him, by such as liv'd in those Times, That he effectually undermin'd the poor Christians, even while he appear'd to be against Severity. Many then thought their
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Case desperate, and beyond Relief; but the Cloud soon pass'd over. They had a serene Sky for a little While under *Jovian*; but his Successor *Valens* fell intirely in with the *Arians*: And in his Time such as adher'd to the Truth of the Gospel, were expos'd to incredible Hardships and particularly the great *Athanasius* and his Followers. But they were again reliev'd under *Theodosius*; who is represented by Historians as an excellent Prince, that improv'd his Power and Authority to his utmost for the Support and Increase of Faith and Purity. And yet there was a visible Degeneracy, and growing Disorder in the Temper and Lives of Christians.

IN the *Fifth* Century, there were woful Stirrs in the Church, occasion'd by the *Donatists* and *TelagianSy* and by *Nestorius* and *Eutyches*, and their Followers. Truth was in danger of suffering Shipwreck, and yet still kept its Head above Water. Two such Men as *St. Jerom* and *St. Austin*, contributed to its Preservation, in many Points that were conceited, and yet appear not to have been themselves wholly free from Corruption. There began to be mighty Differences between the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches, about Pre-eminence and Superiority, which was still the Bone of Contention, and afterwards occasion'd most dreadful Havock and Confusion. The *Vandals* over-ran the *African* Churches, and being imbitter'd *Arians* dealt with the Orthodox there as barbarously as the most Cruel *Pagans* could have done. They ejected four hundred forty-four Christian Bishops: And they in their exil'd State, publish'd the true and primitive Christian Faith, which they could not obtain Allowance to do in their own Country; in which there was scarce any Sort of Inhumanity

nity was left unexercis'd by the Cruel *Genserick*. And here in *Britain*, the '*Picts* and *Scots*, and *Anglosaxons*, who were call'd in on purpose to assist the Natives against them, reviv'd the Gentile Superstition; and the poor Christians were driven amongst the Mountains, where they were much expos'd. And yet in the same Age, the *Burgundians* receiv'd the Christian Faith, and so did the *Francks*, with *Clodowick* their King; and the Irish also.

IN the Sixth Century, the *Hunns*, *Goths* and *Vandals*, and other Barbarous Nations over-ran the greatest Part of Europe, filling all Places where they came with Confusion and Desolation. The Emperors *Justin* and *Justinian* in the mean time did much in favour of the Christian Faith and Church in the *East*, and had done more in the *West*, had not the growing Pride and Insolence of the Bishops of Rome been a Check and an Hindrance. The *Monastick* Life was in this Age introduc'd into these *Western* Parts, where it prov'd a Nursery of Corruption, and all manner of impurity. Christian Worship was in this Age much depriv'd, by the Adoration of images, the Invocation of Saints, and a growing Veneration for their Relicks, and such like Practices : And yet there were some, who wanted not for Resolution, to enter their Protest against them.

IN the Seventh Century, Pope *Boniface* the Third was confirm'd in the Title of *Universal* Bishop, notwithstanding that *Gregory*, his immediate Predecessor, had openly declar'd. That whomever should presume to take that Title, the Fore-runner of *Antichrist*. He that conferr'd this Honour upon his was *Phocas*, who kill'd his Master *Maurice* the Emperor of
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Constantinople. Thus was Antichrist, at last, set up, with a bare Face, at *Rome*, after many had been working under Ground for a long time to make Way for such an Advancement. This effectually divided the *West* from the *East*, and usher'd in Errors and Corruptions of all Sorts in Abundance. Now there was a greater Concern by far, to spread, in all Parts, pompous Ceremonies, the *Latin* Service and Singing, Altars of such a Structure, Organs and Wax-Tapers, and other Ornamental Bawbles, than to promote pure and undefil'd Religion. But least the *Roman Antichrist*, now in full Power, shou'd want a Companion, there arose, not long after, him, that Grand Impostor, *Mahomet*, in the *East*, whose Followers had such Success, that, in the space of a very few Years, they overran all *Egypt*, *Asia*,, *Phœnicia*, *Palestine*, *Syria*, and *Mesopotamia*, and as good as extirpated Christianity wherever they came. In the same Age, the *Frison*s, and *Hollanders*, and their Neighbours, were converted to Christianity. by some Preachers that went from this our Island; and the *Scots* resolutely refus'd to admit the *Roman* Corruptions and Traditions into their Country.

IN the *Eighth* Century, the Church, both in *East* and *West*, was up in Arms, about the Use of Images; the pretended Successors of *St. Peter* continually blowing the Coals: And during this Controversy, they, who never could forget the aggrandizing themselves, wrested from the Emperors of *Constantinople*, all Power and Authority in Italy, and these *Western* Parts, where they were formerly Sovereigns. And tho' Charles the Great herein concurr'd with them, in order to the Advancement of his

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his own Family to the Empire of the *West*, he yet stood up for the Truth, and publish'd a Writing against the Worship of Images, and the *Romish* Idolatry, which he endeavour'd to suppress. In order to it, he, in Opposition to the Second Council of *Nice*, which had establish'd Image-Worship, *Ann.* 767, call'd another Council at *Frankford* in Germany, *An.* 764, which consisted of 300 Bishops. And in this his Son *Louis* also, who succeeded him in the *German* Empire, trod in his Steps. Such eminent Asserters of Christian Truth could not want their Followers; and Image-Worship was heartily oppos'd by many, both in *Germany*, *France* and *England*: But, generally speaking. Religion degenerated into Superstition; Masses and Pilgrimages, and the worshipping Saints and Angels, were the Employment of such as appear'd the most Devout: And the Celibacy of the Clergy, Monastick Vows, and the Prohibition of certain Meats, &c. were added to supply the Place of Real Piety. And yet the Christian Faith was even about this Time propagated among the Swedes, and other Northern People: To which Charles the Great contributed not a little.

Cent. IX.

IN the *Ninth* Century, the Papal Authority was still increasing. They who got into the *Roman* Chair, pretended by the Authority of God and St. *Peter*, to free Persons from the Obligation of the most solemn Oaths, and took upon them to advance what they pleas'd in the most sacred Matters, without any Controul. They were for trampling the Bishops of *Constantinople* under their feet; and arrogated to themselves a Sort of Omnipotence. The gross Fancy of the Corporal Presence of Christ
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in the Sacrament, was in this Age first started; but no sooner vented, than oppos'd, by *Rabanus Maurus*, *Bertram*, *Scotus*, and others. The Christian Faith now took deep Rooting among the *Bohemians*, *Sclavonians*, and *Moravians*, who were not to be beat off from having their Publick Service in the Language of their own Countries. And *Claudius*, Bishop of *Turin*, who flourished about this Time, strenuously oppos'd the *Romish* Errors and the Churches of *Piedmont*, under his Protection, kept their Purity; being Strangers to the Worship of Images, or the Cross, the Invocation of Saints, the Primacy of the Pope; Relicks or Pilgrimages, or any such-like Trash. And they kept their Purity from that Day to this; and having not been tainted with the Popish Superstitions, have had no need of being Reformed from them, which was so necessary in other Countries.

The *Tenth* Century was full of Ignorance, Barbarity, and all Manner of Calamities. Most of the Historians that have written, or given any Judgement concerning it, represent it as an Age of Darkness, Disorder, and Irregularity. Even Cardinal *Baronius* himself, as concern'd as he appears upon all Occasions for the Honour of the *Roman* See, yet could not touch upon this Period of Time, without bitterly exclaiming. He owns, with great Frankness, that several Popes successively, were but so many Monsters, and the Clergy in general were Sots. Some have commended this Age, in that it produced no Hereticks: But others say, they hid themselves among the Priests and Monks, who ingross'd all into their own Hands. 'Tis almost universally agreed,

that Iniquity was then at the utmost Height, Some Popish Writers have not stuck to alters that God, at this Time, forsook his Church: But if St. *Peter* had any peculiar Successor at all, above the rest of the Apostles, it would be very strange that he should have him wanting, at the very Time when such an One was the most needful! However, the *Normans*, *Danes* and *Polanders*, now receiv'd the Christian Faith; but 'twas with a *Romish* Tincture, and as it was corrupted with the Papal Doctrines of Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, and the Meritoriousness of good Works, &c. Many even in this Age stiffly deny'd the bodily Presence of Christ in the Sacrament; and as for the Adoration of the Host, that was not yet heard of: And many People in these *Western* Parts, used diligently to read the Scriptures in their several Mother-Tongues; which could not but help to preserve them from the Infection of those Anti-christian Errors, which so generally prevail'd.

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IN the *Eleventh* Century, the Popes of *Rome* serv'd the Emperors of *Germany* worse than they had before done the Emperors of *Constantinople*, They persecuted them with Fire and Sword, with a Design entirely to ruin their Authority in *Italy*, and bring them to their Feet, and so raise themselves to the higher Pitch of Power and Grandeur. *Gregory VII*, who was a very Monster of Wickedness, depos'd the Emperor *Henry IV*, and absolv'd his Subjects from their Allegiance; and others that came after him in the Papacy, did the like by his Successors in the Empire. This set whole Nations together by the Ears. For there were Multitudes that could not yet brook the Papal Tyranny, but exclaim'd against it, and oppos'd
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it to their utmost. In order to the diminishing the Number of such, and the more effectually to incapacitate the Emperours, from ever recovering the Authority they had lost, the Popes at length set on foot a Cursed Design call'd a *Croisade*, upon pretence of recovering *Palestine*, or the Holy Land, out of the Hands of the *Saracens* that had conquer'd it; but in reality with an Intention to establish their own Grandeur, upon the Ruin of all the Sovereigns in *Europe*. Many an Hundred thousand Men were upon this Pretence dispatch'd out of these *European* Parts, to be Butcher'd in the *East*: while the several successive Popes improv'd the advantageous Oportunity such a Drain afforded them, of insulting such as remain'd at home. This was the Thing that first set the Doctrine of *Indulgences* on foot; the Vice-Christis of *Rome* out of the Plenitude of their Power, pretending to grant freely the Pardon of all their Sins, to such poor Wights as would freely expose themselves upon this Occasion: And this very Doctrine, as Providence order'd it, prov'd afterward the Occasion of an Enquiry into spreading Errors and Corruptions, and so of a Reformation, as we shall see in the Sequel. In Process of Time these *Croisades* that were first begun against the Infidels, and design'd to succour the Christians in the *East*, were publish'd also for the invading Sicily, and for extirpating the *Albigenses*, those renown'd Confessors, who about this Time appear'd, and were taken Notice of, as Persons opposing those Notions about the bodily Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, that were then current; and they were look'd upon to have been an Ancient People. The same papal Engines

were also made use of, against the Noble Emperor *Frederick Barbarossa*, and some of his Successors, and other Christian Princes, who had Spirit and Courage enough to oppose the Papal Pride and Tyranny. *Berenger* in this Age, stiffly oppos'd the Doctrine of Transubstantiation which now prevail'd, and he had many Followers. He recanted indeed through Fear, but afterwards recover'd and persisted in the Truth, and many courageously suffer'd for it.

Cent.XII.

IN the *Twelfth* Century the Popes held on, filling many *European* Nations with Confusion and Slaughter, in Contentions with their several Princes, for the Investiture of the Clergy in their Dignities, and other Rights of their Sovereignty: And they drove that Point to such an Height, that at length the Strength of their Thunders being spent, they became contemptible. Almost all the Religion of this Age, lay in Marching to the Holy Land, where if the insipid Mortals were but so happy as to arrive in Safety, through the intermediate Dangers of the Way, they might as good as depend upon certain Death from the Hands of the Infidels: And then poor Wretches, they thought they went directly to Heaven; nay, merited an Advancement there. The *Scholastical Divinity* and *Canon Law* were now brought in, for the Confirmation and Support of the Papal Authority, and to supply the Place of the Holy Scriptures, which were out of Date in the *Romish* Church, and as far as that could influence. But at the same Time the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses* who were of the Race of the *Vaudois* of *Piedmont*, openly separated from her, Detesting her Idolatry, and Inveighing against her
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her Superstition and Tyranny. They appear'd in *France*, at *Lions*, and *Tholouse*; and in *Languedoc*, *Provence*, *Dauphiny*, and *Picardy*; and afterwards fled into *Bohemia*, and were by Persecution dispers'd, thro' all the Parts of *Europe*. *Reinerius* who was Inquisitor against them, and a bitter Papist, does yet frankly declare, that this People were in being from the Time of the Apostles: And he could charge them with no other Fault than this, that they bitterly inveigh'd against the Church and Clergy, and the Errors and Superstitions of *Rome*. Above One hundred thousand of these Brave Souls, were in a short time dispatch'd and butcher'd by the Pope's Legate, and his *Myrmidons*.

IN the *Thirteenth* Century, the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* was settl'd in the *Lateran* Council; and together with it, Auricular Confession, and many other Errors. At the same time it was Decreed that all that would not obey the Church of *Rome*, should be punisht with Death. The Married Clergy were burnt alive without any Mercy. A great many Orders of Lazy Monks were instituted, who are the *Janizaries* of the Papacy. The Order of *Dominicans* alone, were the *Bouteseus* of *Europe* for many Years, carrying (together with the *Inquisition* which they about this Time erected) Fire and Faggot wherever they came. They gave the first Specimen of their Ability to deal with Hereticks, upon the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, who multiply'st exceedingly, and fill'd all Parts, from the *Alps* to the *Pyrenean* Mountains. Many Princes favour'd them, and they bid *Rome* Defiance: And an innumerable Multitude of them suffer'd a thousand Deaths with a Courage that was invincible. They were scatter'd into *Germany* and all the
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neighbouring Parts, and wheresoever they were caught, they were burnt to Death: But other Confessors rose out of their Ashes, and they wonderfully spread the Truth of the Gospel, even by the Flames that consum'd them.

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IN the *Fourteenth* Century, the Popes were still for aspiring higher, and bent upon engrossing all Civil as well as Ecclesiastical Power to themselves. They pretended to a Right to transfer Monarchies and Empires, from one Person and Family to another, without controul; and indeed to do e'en what they pleas'd. But in this Age GOD rais'd up that great Man *Wickliff*, who vigorously oppos'd the Papacy, in its Hierarchy, Doctrine and Worship. 'Tis not improbable but he might receive his first Light from the *Albigenses*, with whom our Nation then had Intercourse, because of our having the Province of *Guienne* in *France*, which border'd upon them. He translated the Scripture into our Mother-Tongue, and reviv'd pure Religion in the Realm of *England*; and the Seed which he sow'd here, could never be quite rooted out hitherto: and GOD grant it never may. He despis'd all the Thunders and Curses of *Rome*; and we see in him, as well as afterwards in *Martin Luther*, the Greatness of the Power of GOD; in that He should see up such a poor weak Man of no Figure, in Opposition to the Fierceness and Pride of *Anti-christ* and all his Adherents.

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IN the *Fifteenth* Century, the City of *Constantinople* was lost to the *Turks*, and became thence forward the Seat of their Empire. No Assistance could be had upon so important an Occasion, from these *Western* Parts, because the Greeks were net to be prevail'd with to own the Primacy

Primacy of *Rome*: And so the Grecian Empire was ruin'd, and the Right Arm of *Christendom* lost, through the cursed Pride, Malice and Cruelty of the Papacy. And yet even this Loss it self was in some respects gainful to these Parts of the World. It drove many Learned Men out of the *East* into the *West*, and caus'd the Revival of Learning here; which had no small Hand in bringing about that Religious Reformation, which soon after follow'd. Neither was the Art of Printing, which was in this Age first found out, a small Help in the Case: For by Means of that Happy Art, Way was made for the speedy and general Spreading of Divine Truth, as soon as God in his Providence rais'd up fitting Instruments for that Purpose. In this Age the Doctrine of Purgatory was settled as an Article of Faith in the Council of *Florence*; and afterwards the Council of *Constance* took away the Cup from the People in the Sacrament, notwithstanding that they own'd, that the Divine Institution was otherwise. But this was no sooner done, than the *Bohemians* in a Body bore their Testimony against it, as well as against their Perfidiousness to those Noble Heroes *John Husse* and *Jerome of Prague*, who were eminent Opposers of the Papal Usurpations and Superstitions, but most barbarously destroy'd by that infamous Council, after that they had the most solemn Assurance given them of their Safety. The *Bohemians* who follow'd these Brave Worthies, had the World up in Arms against them, but obtain'd incredible Victories under the renown'd *Zisea* their General; insomuch, that Two hundred thousand Men were not able to deal with an Handful, who labour'd under a great Variety
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of Disadvantages: But at last, dividing among themselves, they were routed and baffled by their Enemies, but not quite extirpated: For there were some few of them remaining in the Mountains and Caves of *Silesia*, serving GOD in the Want of all Things, and waiting for a further Reformation. In this Century also, there was a *Croisade* against the *Vaudois* of *Piedmont*, manag'd by Pope *Innocent* the 8th, under the Conduct of *Albert de Capitaneis*, Archdeacon of *Cremona*, but without Success: For an Army of above Twenty thousand Men was lost in the Attempt against them.

IN the *Sixteenth* Century, the Beast receiv'd a fatal Wound, of which he is not likely fully to recover. His Pardon-mongers went through the several Parts of *Europe*, to pick up Money for him and his Minions. Coming among other Places into *Switzerland*, and *Saxony*, where they formerly us'd to find a good Market, they were so shamelesly impudent, in order to the advancing their Gain, as openly to publish, that there was no possible Crime, no not even tho' the Virgin Mother herself had been deflour'd, but their Pardons would be found fully satisfactory. This was oppos'd and derided by *Zwinglius* and *Luther*, whose Spirits rose within them, at the Thoughts of so gross an Abuse. And the more they search'd into it, the more they abhorr'd it, and the more clearly did they discern their Obligation to inveigh against it. The Papal Power and Infallibility, was pleaded in its Defence; which also, when examined, they found to be without Foundation. They that stood upon the rising Ground, and had all the Power in their Hands, thought it intolerable, that Two Persons so mean and contemptible as they were, should

should pretend to question the Grounds of an Authority that had been so long raising, and was at that Time own'd so generally. It was determin'd, that they must be dispatch'd out of the Way, whatever came of it. The resolute Opposition that was made against them, and the Contempt that was pour'd upon them, instead of cooling, inflam'd their Courage. A small Reformation would have satisfy'd them at first; but the farther Search they made into the Depth of those Corruptions that had overspread the Church, the more Light still broke in upon them. They found its Doctrine full of Heresy, and its Worship spoil'd with Superstition and Idolatry, and Christianity was grown very like to Paganism. Under this Conviction, they call'd loudly upon all that had any Concern for their Souls, to go out of *Babylon*, as they would not partake of her Plagues. And God inclin'd the Princes and People of several Parts of *Europe*, to listen to them and break their Chains. Thus *Saxony* reform'd, and many other Parts of *Germany*; Nine of the *Swiss* Cantons, with some of their little Neighbouring Republicks; *France* and *Poland* in part; *Denmark* and *Sweden*, and the *United Provinces*. *England* made a considerable Advance towards it, in the Days of *Henry VIII*, when the Pope's Headship was disown'd, and the Monasteries destroy'd, which maintain'd those Troops of Superfluous Creatures, that would most vigorously have oppos'd a Reformation. But it was done in earnest in the Days of *Edward VI*, and would at that Time, in all Probability, have been fully compleated, and carried to a Pitch that it is nor, even to this

Day, arriv'd at, had it pleas'd GOD to have favoured that Prince with a longer Life.

But the Reformers and their Followers, met with much the same Opposition as attended Christianity in its first Rise. They were laden with all Manner of Reproaches; and met with Assaults from all Quarters. The Pope, the Emperor, and other Princes, combin'd together to extirpate the poor Protestants. They were most miserably butcher'd in *France*, under *Francis* the First, in whose Reign the Remainers of the poor *Vaudois*, that fix'd at *Cabriers* and *Merindol*, and in the Mountains of *Provence*, were cruelly massacre'd. They had miserable Treatment also under *Francis* II: And under *Charles* IX, an Hundred thousand Protestants of all Ranks were massacre'd in a few Days Time, after they had been insnar'd by a deceitful Marriage. In *Germany*, no Method, that might tend to ruin them, was left unattempted by *Charles* V; who yet at last sensibly found there was no fighting against GOD. In the Netherlands, no Sort of Cruelty was lest unattempted by the Duke of *Alva*; and it would be endless to mention the Particulars of other Countries; and yet 'tis observable, that the Reformation gain'd Ground after all.

IN *England*, under Queen *Mary*, we had sorrowful Bonfires in *Smithfield*. Upon her Advancement to the Throne, this Kingdom was re-united to *Rome*; which so elevated Pope *Julius* III, That he coin'd Money with this Inscription, *The People and Kingdom which will not be Subject to thee shall perish*. But his blasphemous Inscription was, in a little Time the

confuted, by Divine Providence, in raising up the Glorious Queen *Elizabeth*, who was a firm Bulwark to the Protestant Interest for many Years; and no Designs could prevail against her. A Council was, in this Age, generally desir'd, by some to promote, and by others to hinder, a Reformation. After many Delays, there was a Body of Men, who call'd themselves a Council, that sate in the City of *Trent*; and it was commonly said, That the Holy Ghost came thither from *Rome*, Twice or Thrice a Week in a Cloke-Bagg; and Things were so manag'd by the Artifices of the several Popes who sate in the pretended Infallible Chair, (while the Affair of that Council was depending) and their respective Creatures, that the many Errors and Extravagancies of the Schools, and the very Corruptions that before were complain'd of among themselves, were confirm'd and settled to their Hearts Content: And so the general Hopes of *Europe* were deluded, and the Papists much the more harden'd in their Errors, and grew rather more cruel and severe than ever: Of which,

THE *Seventeenth* Century, has given but too abundant Evidence. In this Age, the Reformation lost Ground again, instead of gaining more. At the very Beginning of it, the *Vaudois* of the Marquisate of *Saluzzo* in *Italy*, were extirpated by *Charles Emanuel* Duke of *Savoy*: And the Reformed Churches of *Styria*, *Carinthia*, and *Carniola*, were ruin'd, by *Charles* and *Ferdinand* Arch-dukes of *Austria*, under the Conduct of the *Jesuits*, who have succeeded the *Dominicans* as the *Boutifeus* of *Europe*. The

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same Prince *Ferdinand*, afterwads miserably ruin'd the Churches of *Bohemia*, notwithstanding he had promis'd them Liberty and Safety. He did the same by the Churches of *Moravia* and *Silesia*, imitating *Julian* the Apostate in his Way of Management, in order to the more effectual reaching of his Ends. Upon the Success of these Attempts, nothing less was thought of, by the Jesuitical Faction, than a General Extirpation of the Protestant Interest in all Parts of *Germany*; and it would soon have follow'd in the rest of *Europe*. The unhappy Prince Palatine and his Country was ruin'd, and a bloody War began of 30 Years Continuance. And when things were at the utmost Extremity, GOD sent that Hero *Gustavus Adolphus* from the Northern Parts, who broke all their Measures.

At the very Beginning of this Century, was the *Powder Conspiracy* form'd here in *England*, with a Design to destroy the Flower of the Nation at once, and so to extirpate the Reformation, and bring us back again to Popery. Some Authors have endeavour'd to excule the Romanifis with respect to this Contrivance: But the Canonizing some in their Church for Saints, who were well known to have had a considerable Hand in it, is a plain Evidence, that Rome, as well as Hell, favour'd that Project. And whatever were the Way of Discovery; whether it was by Means of the Letter to the Lord Monteaule, or by a Letter from the King of France, or any other Foreign Prince, we are to take Notice of the Hand of GOD in defeating the Design, and have Reason to look upon it as a remarkable fulfilling the Prediction
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in the Text, as to the Security of the Church of Christ from the Gates of Hell.

But tho' the Supporters of the Papal Hierarchy herein fail'd, they have had no little Success in many other of their Undertakings. Particularly there has been a cruel Massacre of the Protestants in the *Valteline*, where many Thousands were butcher'd with the utmost Inhumanity. Not many Years after, there was another Massacre in *Ireland* in which above Two hundred thousand People, were in a little Time destroy'd most miserably. There was also yet another, in the Valleys of *Piedmont*, where, tho' they have been persecuted from Age to Age, they are not, even yet, fully extirpated, tho' they never could be perswaded to renounce the Purity of the Gospel, or subject themselves to *Rome*.

AND even in our own Time, we have known of a miserable Persecution in *Hungary*, where the Ministers had such Treatment, as was scarce ever heard of before; and where there is, comparatively, but a very small Handful of Protestants now left remaining. And we have seen another Persecution in our Neighbouring Kingdom of *France*, which, upon several Accounts, may be said to outvie all Antiquity. How few Protestants are now left in that noble Kingdom, where they, not long since, so abounded! And how intolerably do they handle the few that remain!

It must needs affect us, (if we have any Love for our Religion) to think how sensibly the Protestant Interest hath declin'd. *Alsace* is lost, where there once were so many flourishing Churches, In *Poland*, where the Protestant Religion

Religion once bid fair for getting the upper hand, there are scarce any Foot-steps of it to be trac'd. In the *Palatinate* of the *Rhine*, our Brethren have been under the greatest Hardships imaginable; and in *Saxony* they are full of Fears: And yet even in our Times, we have had very signal Appearances of Divine Providence, in favour of the Protestant Cause and Interest.

NEVER certainly were the *Romanists* more flush'd with Hopes of Carrying all before them in this our Land, than when we had a popish Prince at Helm, adding under Jesuitical Influence, and sway'd by *French* Councils, assuming a Dispensing-Power without Controul, back'd with a Standing-Army; and pretending for General Liberty, only in order to pave the Way for an Universal Slavery, not as to our Bodies only, but our Consciences: But even then did God raise up a Defender of our Religion and Liberty, who was the Instrument of bringing about a *Revolution*, which may perhaps in the Issue prove the Means of freeing all *Europe* from the sad Effects of Popery, and Slavery. Our Deliverer was indeed forc'd to contest with a great many Difficulties; and while some perhaps encourag'd themselves in greater Expectations from Him than we ought to have from an Instrument; others I doubt have much to answer for, on the Account of their laying continual Rubs in his Way while he liv'd, as well as for their Ingratitude to his Memory since his Death. But this we may very safely say. That under all his Difficulties, He was not only the Source of invaluable Blessings to this Kingdom, but a Bulwark of the Protestant Interest. 'Twas He

He that laid the Foundation of the Blessings of the next Reign, which was so remarkably signaliz'd with Successes against the great Supporter both of Tyrannical and Anti-christian Powers: 'Twas He that contriv'd for us the Protestant Succession in the Illustrious House of *Hanover*, which gives us such rais'd Hopes. And with great Thankfulness to Almighty GOD have we Reason to own, that hitherto the *Gates of Hell* have not prevail'd against the Church of Christ; and in all Probability those in the next Age, will have yet more Reason than we at present, to admire the Accomplishment of the same Promise.

UPON the Whole, Let us be admonish'd,

I. NOT to be disturb'd to find Christianity sorely assaulted by the Powers of Darkness. Let us remember. That it was before-hand intimat-ed it would be so, and that it has been always so; and that not in this or that Age only, but in a continu'd Succession: But all hath in the Event been over-rul'd for the Good of the Church; and therefore let us not be dismay'd. 'Tis hard, I confess, to be in a weak Vessel, upon a tempestuous Sea, and toss'd by Waves, and not be afraid. *Master, carest thou not that we perish*, which was the Cry of the Disciples, is very natural upon such an Occasion. But still it may, and should quiet us. That an Almighty JESUS has undertaken the Conduct of his own Church, and engag'd that it shall in the End be Victorious over all the Designs of its Enemies. The brief Account here given, has shewn what Care He has taken of his Church in Ages pass'd.

Behold

Mark iv.
38.

Behold, He's as able still as ever. Hitherto He has succour'd in Extremities; and He is ready to do so still. He has foretold, that his Church should be subject to a thousand Vexations, and a thousand Oppressions: But at the same time has given his Word, it never shall be destroy'd. We have seen the Prediction in a great measure fulfill'd. The Church has subsisted now for upwards of One thousand seven hundred Years together, maugre all the Heresies and Persecutions with which it has been assaulted. And therefore let not our Spirits sink. The Church of Christ will keep the Field at last, in spite of all its Enemies.

2. LET us be persuaded to turn our Thoughts from our Particular Interests, to the General Interest of the Church of Christ. Were we of a right Catholick Spirit, it would comparatively be a small Matter to us, whether we Sink or Swim, so the Church of Christ be but safe. Good old *Eli* appears to have been much more thoughtful about the *Ark of the Lord*, than his own Concerns, or how it far'd with himself, or his Family; and it should be the fame with us also. 'Twere well if Persons that are fwallow'd up in the Interest of a Party as such, would soberly think with themselves, how little it can avail a Man, to have his own particular Cabin well stor'd, or well barr'd or bolted, or well adorn'd, if the Ship he sails in should be cast away. The Church of Christ indeed in the General is Safe; it shall not, it cannot, be cast: away in any Storm: But it is not so, as to any Particular Part of the Church, let it seem ever so well secur'd. Let us therefore remember.

member. That as the Infernal Powers strike at the Vitals of Religion rather than at any particular Interest, so should our Concern also, be accordingly stirr'd and mov'd.

3. LET us be still preparing for fresh Affaults. 'Tis but natural to the Infernal Powers to rage the more, the more they are disappointed: And if they that should be employ'd in calling in Help from Heaven, are secure and asleep, the Danger is so much the greater. God has indeed Angularly favour'd us in this Island, and we have great Reason to be thankful: And yet our Sins and our Follies give us Cause enough for Fear. Could we indeed be generally persuaded to reform our Manners, and live according to the Rules of our Holy Religion; could we be prevail'd with to maintain the Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace and Love amongst ourselves, we should not need to fear the Gates of Hell, or any Designs of our Enemies against us: But if we'll go on to defy God, and rend and tear one another; we may be yet hard put to it, before our entire Deliverance comes.

4. SUCH Thoughts as these should quicken and encourage our Prayers. We should lift up a Cry, and a servant one too, for the Remnant that is left. The more the Devil rages, the more earnestly should we cry to GOD; and the Experience the Church has had in Ages pass'd, of the kind Regard its GOD and Saviour has had to it, under the greatest Difficulties, should herein much encourage us.

N

5. WE

5. WE should not doubt of a Good Issue of Trials and Exercises to the Church of GOD, We should rejoyce in this Hope, That the Interest of our GOD and Saviour will at last prevail. This Promise may support the most drooping Spirits, It should confirm us in adhering to the Truth, and openly professing it, whatever befalls us. The Hatred of the World, and repeated Efforts of the Enemies of Christ and his Interest, may according to Humane Appearance sorely threaten: But let us consider what is past, to encourage us as to what is to come. The Accomplishment of this Promise in all Ages hitherto, is an Earnest that it will be made good in all Future Times. 'Tis for Barbarians to fear least the Moon should be lost in an Eclipse: As for us, we know, that its Obscurity will soon be at an End, and the Sun will again in a little Time brighten it with his splendid Rays. Experience also may in this Case convince us. We have found that our Lord in all Ages pass'd, has caus'd the Light of his Presence and Protection, to succeed the Darkness of Adversity and Tribulation, with which He has suffer'd his Church to be cover'd for a short Season: And can we not trust Him for the Future?

AND *Lastly*. Let us endeavour to be true Members of thus Church of Christ, and then may this Promise afford us special Comfort. A bare outward Profession won't bear the Test in a Time or Trouble, nor secure us from the most fatal Dangers. But if we are rightly built upon the Rock of Ages, we may bear any Shocks we may meet withal; and may live in
Hope,

Hope, that our present Thanksgivings for Mercies, Deliverances and Preservations, will be follow'd with everlasting *Hallelujahs* Above, in Conjunction with the whole Church in Heaven, when it shall be compleatly deliver'd not only from all Danger, but also from any farther Attempts from Hellish Powers.

FINIS.