

The Duty of a Gospel Minister

by
**George
Whitefield**

The Duty of a Gospel Minister

A

SERMON

Preached on SATURDAY Forenoon,
SEPTEMBER 12th 1741.

IN THE

High-Church-Yard

OF

GLASGOW,

LUKE 4:18,19.

By the REVEREND

MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

Taken from his own Mouth, and published at the earnest Desire of many of the Hearers.

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THERE is lately published, and sold by Robert Smith, at the Gilt-Bible, Salt-mercat, and by the other Booksellers in Town and Country (Price 2d). The Believers Golden-Chain. A SERMON preached on Tuesday Afternoon, September 15th, in the High-Church-Yard of Glasgow. By the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield. There are some few thrown off on fine Paper, and sold at 3 d.

The Rest of Mr. Whitefield's Sermons preached in the High-Church-Yard will be published with the utmost Expedition.

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The Duty of a Gospel Minister.

A

SERMON

Luke 4:18, 19.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach Deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of Sight to the Blind, to set at Liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable Year of the Lord.

THOUGH ye are all here, I hope, sitting seriously in the Presence of God, with Desire to hear his Word to your Profit; yet I cannot but think it will engage your Attention still the more, if I inform you the Words now read seem to be one of the first Texts on which our *Lord Jesus Christ* himself preached, when he came to publish the glad Tidings of Salvation to a benighted World. The Occasion of our LORD's preaching upon these Words

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we find at the 16th Verse of this Chapter, *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his Custom was, he went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the Book of the Prophet Esaias, and when he had opened the Book, he found the Place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor, he hath sent me to heal the Broken-hearted, to preach Deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of Sight to the Blind, to set at Liberty them that are bruised, &c.*

The Words then, plainly contain a Prophecy of the *Lord Jesus Christ*. He it is that was here spoken of by the Prophet *Isaiah*: He it is that was anointed and qualified by the Holy Ghost, having received the Spirit of God without Measure, in order to enable him to perform the mediatorial Office betwixt God and Man. But the words may he plainly referred to Gospel Ministers as well as to

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Jesus Christ; and the very Words of the Text plainly give Ministers, a Direction how they are to preach the Gospel. And, therefore, from the Words,

I shall *First* endeavour to prove, That every Minister, before he pretends to have Orders to preach the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, from a full Evidence of a Work

of

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of Conversion passing upon his Soul, ought to be enabled, in some Degree, to say, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel.*

Secondly, I shall shew you what that Gospel is, which Ministers thus qualified are to preach.

Thirdly, I shall shew you the Persons to whom this gospel is to be preached unto, namely, *The Poor, the Broken-hearted, the Captives, the Blind, the bruised.*

Lastly, I shall make Application of the whole; hoping, that while I am preaching, the People of GOD will lift up their Hearts to *Jesus Christ*: And who knows but we may have an acceptable Morning of the LORD.

First, I would endeavour to shew you, That every Minister, before he undertakes to preach the Gospel of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, from a full Evidence of a Work of Conversion, ought to be enabled to say, *The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel.* It is certain there is now a great Degeneracy thro' all the Christian World; and tho' there may be many Reasons assigned for that Deadness, that

Lukewarmness, both in their Principle, Discipline and Practice; yet I am verily persuaded one great Reason is this, That many pretend to preach the *Lord Jesus*

Christ,

Christ that are Strangers to the Power of *Jesus Christ* upon their own Hearts; There are many who do run before they are called of GOD, and therefore it is no Wonder they do not profit the People at all. A dead Clergy will make a dead People: For I cannot see but it is as possible for a dead Man to beget a living Child, as for an unconverted Minister to beget a living Church. It is absolutely necessary, before a Minister undertakes to preach the Gospel, that he should have an experimental Acquaintance with the *Lord Jesus Christ*. A Man when he comes out to preach, should preach so feelingly, that all that did hear him might take Notice of him, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, that he has been with *Jesus*. It is a shocking Question *Jesus Christ* put to *Nicodemus*; says he, *Art thou a master of Israel? Dost thou pretend to be a Teacher of others; a Guide to those that are blind; to instruct others in the Nature of true Religion, and knowest not these Things, art not acquainted with the new Birth thyself?* If *Christ* were to come to preach the Gospel, how many Ministers must he be obliged to put this Question to. When there were only Deacons to be chosen, the Apostles said, *Look ye out among you Men of Faith, and full of the Holy Ghost.* And if it was necessary for the Office of a Deacon, that he was to be thus qualified,

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who was only to take Care of the Poor's Box; how much more necessary is it, that these should be full of Faith, and of the Holy Ghost, who were to deal out Bread to the spiritually hungry, starving Soul. When there was only a material Tabernacle to be built, the Spirit of God came upon two special Men to qualify them for that; and if the Spirit of God was necessary to qualify them, how much more is the Spirit of God absolutely necessary to enable men to build up the living temple of the Holy Ghost!

Besides, My dear Friends, it is not the Business of the Ministers of the Gospel merely to entertain People with Harangues of dry Morality, and leave out Jesus Christ. It is not our Business to entertain our People, as *Cicero*, *Seneca* and other Heathen Moralists did; but we are to preach Christ, not ourselves. We are to preach the hidden Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Now if a Man is a natural Man, he can have no Notion of the hidden Things of Christ's Kingdom. *The natural Man discerneth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned:* And how can a Man that does not know them, preach them? It is true a Man may study a Scheme of Divinity; and in order to

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get into a Place, to please a Patron, or some great Man, he may get *Calvin's*

Scheme, or any other Scheme of Religion: What is all this? if it doth not come from the Heart, the poor People cannot expect to be profited at all. It is poor Preaching to preach an unknown Christ: For my own Part, I would not preach an unknown Christ for ten thousand Worlds. Such offer God strange Fire, and their Sermons will but increase their own Damnation. It is absolutely necessary therefore, for all Ministers before they undertake to preach the Gospel to others, that they are taught of God.

Human Learning is an admirable Thing, when made use of to Divinity. The Apostle *Paul* was a learned Man: Every Man that reads his Writings, must own he was accurate in his Style, and a great Orator; yet what was all this without the Spirit of God was in his Heart? Great Accomplishments in an unsanctified Heart, only make a Man a more accomplished Devil; and the more a Clergy-man knows, if he is not sanctified, he will only be the more fit for propagating the Devil's Kingdom. It is indeed impossible in the very Nature of Things, that a Man should preach Christ, that doth not know him. I have

often

often thought the Minister that does not know Christ, and preaches him for a Maintenance, has the greatest Drudgery in the World. He is always preaching the Thing he doth not love in his Heart, and what a Drudgery must it be for a Man to do so. It is therefore necessa-

ry for all Ministers before they undertake to preach the Gospel, to examine themselves, and see whether they have got the Spirit of the Lord in their Hearts. It is not the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, and having a Call of a particular People that makes a Man a Minister; these outward Calls are certainly good, and I would have every Man called as was *Aaron*: but if ye are not called of God as well as of the People, ye are no Minister in the Eye of Jesus Christ, you are carrying your own Damnation with you in every Sermon ye preach; ye will never preach with Power feelingly, while ye deal in a false Commerce with Truths unfelt. Every Word a Minister should preach should be engraven on his Heart. It is therefore, remarkable, (tho' indeed our Clergy as well as the Clergy of other Kingdoms have sadly fallen from their Constitution), that in the Church of *England*, the first Question the Bishop puts to him is, *Are you inwardly moved by the holy Ghost?*

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By which they own, that an inward Call of the Holy Ghost is absolutely necessary for a Gospel-Minister. Many ordained do not mind that Question; or rather they lie not unto Men, but unto God. But it is the Opinion of the reformed Churches, that the holy Ghost is absolutely necessary before a Man can take on him the Office of a Minister.

And tho' I would, with all humility, own myself the chief of Sinners, yet if there are any Persons here in

the Ministry, I would exhort you in the Name, and by the Mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, to examine your Hearts, and see whether ye are in Jesus Christ or not, and see whether ye feel these Truths ye are preaching to your Congregations or not. It will be but poor, dry, sapless Stuff, your People will go away out of the Church as cold as they came in, except your Ministry be attended with the Power of God. I would likewise exhort all People that make up Presbyteries, and are entrusted with the laying on of Hands on these that are sent out to preach, to examine into their Experience, before they examine into their Learning. Learning is a good Thing: I am not for crying down Learning; but then for Christ's Sake when Persons come to offer themselves for holy Orders, examine into their

Hearts,

Hearts, see whether they are Saints more than Scholars, and if they are not renewed and converted, and give a satisfactory Account of the Work of God on their Hearts, let their Qualifications be what they will, they ought to be dismissed. There is a great deal of Guilt lies on these who lay Hands on Men suddenly, and I would not for ten thousand Worlds lay Hands on any without examining into their Experiences; ye are partakers of other Men's Sin, and whole Parishes together may rise up against you at the Great Day.

I would likewise as I am near the University, and perhaps as some young Gen-

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tlemen are come out this Morning to hear me; I would exhort you with all Humility in the Name of Christ, to consider the Importance of that Office ye are breeding up for, ye are to be Ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me therefore exhort you to get Acquaintance with Christ in the entry of your Studies; study not so much to be great Scholars as great Saints. Know yourselves and God, and a good Experience of Christ in the Heart with a moderate share of Learning, will make you noble Instruments of doing good to Mankind. It is true, God may convert People by the Devil if he please; but I believe, God

neither

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neither works by him, neither does he convert others by unconverted Men. I would therefore exhort all young Men that are now employing their Time in Studies, to take Care, *First*, that their Hearts be renewed; not so much to study the Stars as themselves: Study the precious Bible, the Book of God. My Heart is much drawn out for the Sons of the Prophets; for it is in vain to hope for a Reformation in this Kingdom, until it begin in the Clergy, and these who are entrusted with the Care of Youth. O that it might be done here in *Scotland* as in *New England* Universities. I have at present Letters from *Boston* giving an Account of the glorious Progress of the Kingdom of Christ there. Not above seven in *Cambridge College* are left without a Witness for their Soul. When shall we hear or see such a Day

of Power in *Scotland*, until we find a Work of God stirring among Ministers we cannot find it among the People; pour out your Prayers for your Ministers: Many perhaps deserve bad Ministers, because perhaps you do not pray for them; pray, says Christ, pray to the Lord of the Harvest, that he may send Labourers into his Harvest. Pray for Students, pray for these who are Tutors to Students, that they may be taught of God,

that

that when they come out, they may say, *The Spirit of the LORD is upon me*: When it is upon them, the whole World will be set on Fire of Love. I would not speak it out of Pertness: I speak as I think, as I hope the Spirit of GOD gives me Freedom, and I wish well to this poor Kingdom; but this will never be, until the Spirit of GOD is poured out on the Sons of the Prophets.

I think it is plain, from what has been said, that every one, before he undertakes to preach the Gospel of *Christ*, ought to be able to say, *The Spirit of the LORD is upon me*.

Before I dismiss this, it may not be improper to relate a Story a good Man gives an Account of. There was a Presbytery of Ministers met together; and one of their Number preached. In his Sermon he made a Supposition, that the last Judgment was come, and that *Jesus Christ* was now upon the Throne of his Judgment, and calling his Ministers to an Account. He asked one of them, What did you preach for?

Says he, LORD there was a Patronage in the Family of an Hundred and fifty Pounds a Year; I therefore took Orders to get the Presentation. Stand thou by (says he) verily thou has thy Reward. He asks another, What did you
preach

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preach for? And he said, I preached that I might be reckoned a fine Orator, and to have Applause of Men. Says he, Stand thou by, verily thou has thy Reward. A Third comes, and he said unto him, And what did you preach for? Says he, LORD thou knowest my Heart, I did not seek to please Men; and tho' many Infirmities have passed in my Ministry, I did it with an upright Design to promote thy Glory. *Jesus Christ* immediately cries out, Make Room, Angels, for this my dear Servant: Thou hast honoured me on Earth; sit here by me on my Throne. O! that this Story may have the same Effect on Ministers now, as it had when preached; for we hear they went away affected, and said, They would preach *Jesus Christ* more than ever.

But we shall go to the *Second* Thing, and point out that Ministers are to preach the Gospel. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath appointed me to preach the Gospel.* Observe, we are to preach the Gospel, not to preach up moral Harangues. Morality is a good Thing, but we must preach the Gospel of *Christ*. The Gospel we are to preach is, *That Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners.* GOD the Father entered into an eternal Cove-

nant with GOD the Son; he made *Christ* the Head, the Representative of the Elect,

as *Adam* was the Head, the Representative of all his Seed. For these the *Lord Jesus Christ* undertook to fulfil the Covenant of Works. For these *Jesus Christ* died a painful, cursed, ignominious Death, and by his Obedience, and by his Death, wrought out an everlasting Righteousness for them. So that now, whosoever believeth on the *Lord Jesus Christ*, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, he shall be saved; let him be what he will, be who he will, if he believe on *Christ*, there is no Condemnation for him. This is in a few Words the Gospel. It is Glad-tidings of great Joy to all who feel their Want of *Christ*. And this Gospel is to be preached to all. We are to make an Offer of *Jesus Christ* to you all. *Whosoever thirsteth, let him come to the Water of Life, and drink freely.*

I take the Gospel here more particularly, as signifying the Comforts of the Gospel; and therefore, tho' we are to preach *Christ Jesus* to all freely, to all indefinitely; yet People will never accept of him, and we can give them no Comfort, until that we find they are made sick of Sin, and made willing to embrace an offered *Jesus*.

The Persons therefore we are to preach this Gospel to, are described in the latter Part of the Text, *He hath appointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor.*

Who

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Who are we to understand by the *Poor*? We are not merely to understand these that are poor as to outward Circumstances, tho' indeed the Poor that generally receive the Gospel. There are a great many of you perhaps wish to be great, whereas ye should rather be thankful to GOD that ye are poor. *Christ* hath pronounced a Woe against the Rich, and hath told us, *Not many mighty are called, but it is the Poor that receive the Gospel gladly.* The Poor *Christ* hath chosen, to make them rich in Faith. There are many poor People clothed in Rags that are as proud as the Devil himself. But, by the *Poor* ye are to understand the Poor in Spirit; these that feel their Poverty, that bewail their Misery; these that feel they are lost and undone on Account of their original and actual Sin, and on the Account of the Deficiency of their own Righteousness; they find they must accept of Salvation, or be damned of GOD for evermore; they find they have nothing to buy Salvation with; they must be entirely beholden to GOD for it. Are there any such here? And perhaps we have all more Knowledge than Practice. Are ye poor, now? Do ye feel Conversions fastening on you? And are ye really poor Sinners? Can ye say from your Heart, GOD be merciful to me a
 poor

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poor Sinner? Many of you may say you are Sinners; but if another say so, you will not believe him. But do ye feel

yourselves lost, undone, poor, miserable, blind and naked without *Jesus Christ*? Do ye say so? Then I hope the Spirit of the LORD will enable me this Morning to preach the Comforts of the Gospel to your Souls. Ye poor Souls, GOD hath chosen you to make you rich in Faith: To you I bring the Gospel, the glad Tidings of great Joy: For you *Christ* was born, for you the Son of GOD was given; for you the *Lord Jesus Christ* became poor, that he might make you rich, to purchase a Crown of Glory for you; the *Lord Jesus* having shed his own precious Heart's Blood, hath said, *Blessed are ye, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Ye may be as poor as *Lazarus*, and not have a Bit to put into your Mouth; ye may be glad to be fed with the Crumbs that fall from the rich Man's Table: But fear not, ye are rich; *ye shall be Heirs with GOD, and joint Heirs with Jesus Christ.* If ye are willing to accept of him, behold, the *Lord Jesus Christ* is willing to accept of you; tho' ye are poor, the *Lord Jesus Christ* will not disdain you; the *Lord Jesus Christ* will take Care of you; the *Lord Jesus Christ* will make you Heirs of GOD; *ye shall be joint Heirs*

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with Jesus Christ; ye shall have Crowns on your Heads, and sit on GOD's right Hand in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the Gospel: This is glad Tidings to you who are poor.

The next Persons are the Broken-hearted, *He hath sent me to heal the Broken-hearted.* By Nature we are whole-

hearted; and while we are whole, while we are righteous, we need not the Physician; while we do not feel the Want of *Christ, Jesus Christ* and his Gospel is not precious to us. Our Hearts, by Nature, are harder than the nether Millstone; they are so hard, that none but GOD can break them. We reckon it a great Misfortune, if we say that such a Person has broke his Heart; for that Sorrow of the World which worketh Death, is a pitiful Case indeed; but do not be angry at me, when I pray God to break every one of your Hearts: But what shall it be broke with? With the Sight of a wounded Saviour? Of a bleeding, panting, dying **God**? The Heart broken is the Result of looking to him, of the Soul's looking to him whom it has pierced, and mourning as a Woman mourneth for her first born. Are there any poor broken hearted Creatures in this Congregation? And indeed, how can ye look up to Christ hanging on an ac-

cursed

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cursed Tree, and yet not have your Hearts broken? *The Rocks rent, the Graves opened, when Jesus Christ was giving up the Ghost: Nay, the Sun itself withdrew its Light as ashamed, and blushing as it were to see the God of Nature suffer.* And shall we see Christ crucified before us, and yet our Hearts remain hard and unbroken still; for such as are unbroken, and not changed, I cannot give them Comfort: But if there are any broken-hearted Creatures here, there is healing in Christ for them; he

hath sent me to heal broken-hearted Sinners; first to break them, to wound them, and then to heal them. I know very well, when your Hearts are broken with a Sense of Sin, the Devil will strike in with Terror, and tell you, ye are past Recovery; the Devil will bid you despair of Mercy, and not trust in Jesus Christ: But what says the Text? *He hath sent me to heal the Broken-hearted.* Though this is impossible with Men, yet it is possible with God.

Jesus Christ feels every Sigh, every Pang, every Throw of your poor Soul: Jesus feels the Load with you, and he will take the Load off from you: Jesus Christ has got a sovereign Remedy to heal you. What is that? It is his precious Blood: It is a Soul-saving Re-

medy.

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medy. Here is a healing Remedy; and therefore, if your Hearts are broken with a Sense of Sin, come away to the Blood of Christ. There is the Remedy the poor Creature shall have for the accepting of. No one came to Jesus Christ, and went away uncured. And when the Lord undertakes to cure you, he will do it to Purpose. Come to Jesus Christ, look at him; do not look to yourselves too much; look out of yourselves, and look up to Christ. The more ye look to yourselves, the more ye will fall into Unbelief; but look out of yourselves to Christ, by a direct Act of Faith; and one Look of Faith will heal your Hearts: Ye will feel the Power of Christ's Blood; it is omni-

potent! It is Almighty! It can cure all broken Hearts! Come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will heal you. He can but speak the Word, and it is done; and the more ye come, the more welcome ye are to Jesus Christ.

Well, the next is the Captive, *He hath sent me to preach Deliverance to the Captives.* By *Captives* we may here first understand all Mankind; we are all Captives by Nature, led captive by the Devil, by the World, by our own corrupt Hearts; we are led captive by the Devil at his Will; by Nature we tempt the Devil

to

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to tempt us; we love the broad Way; we hate God and his Laws, and bid God depart from us; we are willing Drudges to the Devil. We are Captives in general; but more particularly these, tho' they are in Captivity, yet feel the Misery of Captivity; these that are desirous to get rid of Captivity, these we are in a special Manner to preach Deliverance unto. It is just like a Proclamation from the King to the Captives in *Babylon*; they that were fond of their Captivity, stayed in *Babylon*; but they who were weary of it, they had Leave given them to go back to *Jerusalem*. We issue out a Proclamation from the King of Kings to all poor captive Souls, now taken captive by the Devil. Is there any of you weary of your Burden? Or do you hug your Chains, and look on Ministers as Troublers of *Israel*? Or do you say, O! that my Heart were set at Liberty? O! that I were delivered

from the Guilt and Power of Sin! O!
 that my Heart's Lusts were morti-
 fied! O! that old Things were passed a-
 way, and all Things were become new
 in my Soul! Is this the Language of
 your Heart? Then, behold I preach to
 you Deliverance by the Blood, by the
 Power and Spirit of Jesus Christ. Jesus
 Christ has led Captivity captive: Jesus

Christ

Christ has the Keys of Death and Hell
 in his Hand. Jesus Christ can open the
 Prison Doors; and tho' ye are Prison-
 ers, yet ye are Prisoners of Hope. But
 yet ye may say, I have been such a
 Sinner against God, that there is no
 Ransom can be paid for my Sin, I de-
 serve to be kept captive, and damned for
 ever; and I despair of having a sufficient
 Ransom paid for me. But (I say) the
 Blood of Christ is the Ransom; Christ
 has bought thy Deliverance with a great
 Price, the inestimable Price of his
 Blood: Jesus Christ hath purchased it
 by his precious Blood, and God the Fa-
 ther is as willing to release you, as God
 the Son is to have you released. The
 great Question is, Whether ye are wil-
 ling to come out of your *Sodom*, to the
 new *Jerusalem*? Are ye so? Behold
 then, your Jesus, the Finisher of your
 Salvation, that triumphed over his Ene-
 mies on the Cross, is willing to deliver
 you: Fear not Deliverance! When Je-
 sus is your Deliverer, he will deliver
 you from the Guilt and from the Power
 of Sin; he will make you new Creatures;
 you shall have Love, and Peace, and Joy,

and Sweetness and Meekness in your
Hearts; and being delivered from
Death and Hell, ye shall be invested
with eternal Glory. This is the Deli-
verance

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verance we preach to all who are led
captive, that are weary of their Capti-
vity. Behold, we preach Deliverance
to you from Captivity, this Morning;
may the Lord give you a Heart to ac-
cept of it.

Again, we are to preach *Recovering of
Sight to the Blind*. We are all by Nature
blind, and this is our great Misfor-
tune we do not know it, we think
we see; there are some Men think they
are mighty seeing Men, but they do not
see; they say they see, and yet they do
not see original Sin; they do not see the
Corruption of their Hearts. These poor
Creatures are blind; we are blind by
Nature; we know not the Way, by Na-
ture, of being reconciled to God, more
than a Man born blind knows how to
describe the Sun. But the *Blind* here
mentioned are these, that like *Bartimeus*,
are sensible of their Blindness, and de-
sire to see the Lord Jesus Christ. There
are a great many of you here, but who
of you is a blind Beggar, and cries out,
*Jesus, thou Son of David, have Mercy on
me*. If God was to ask you, What ye
want? Can any of you say, with blind
*Bartimeus, Lord, I want to receive my
Sight?* Do ye want to receive Christ?
If ye know him, ye will long to see
him again; he is the fairest among ten

Thousands,

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Thousands, and altogether lovely. Are any of you really willing to see Christ? Are ye like the *Greeks* that came up to worship at *Jerusalem*, that came to *Andrew*, saying, *Sir, We would see Jesus?* Then *Jesus* ye shall see: But ye say, I am blind. I know ye are: There are Scales on the Eyes of your Mind, and a Veil on your Heart, which intercepts your Sight of Christ. But what says Christ to the Church of *Laodicea*? *I counsel thee to come to me and buy Eye-Salve, to anoint thine Eyes, that thou mayest see.* We are blind; tho' we did see when we came first out of the Hand of our Maker, yet now we are blind: But yet blessed be God, there is recovering of Sight to such blind Souls as we are: How are we to recover our Sight? It is by the Lord *Jesus Christ*: It is *Jesus* that opened the Eyes of the Man that was born blind; the same *Jesus* who touched this Man's Eyes, must touch your Eyes, and must cause the Scales to fall from your Eyes, as they fell from *Paul's*, otherwise ye shall be damned for ever: Ye shall see Christ indeed, whether ye be born again of God or not; but if ye are not born again of Christ, ye shall see him only to damn you; ye shall see him once, that it may be your judgment, to see what ye have lost: But never, ne-

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ver shall ye see him any more. Blind Soul, look up to *Jesus Christ*. Now some of you may be drooping, and think

ye shall never see Christ, because ye have been in the Dark for some Time; but do not despair, Jesus Christ has recovered the Sight of Thousands of Millions; why may not each of you say, Lord, why wilt thou not give Sight to me also? Can ye not put in a Word? If ye can mix Faith with the Promise, and look up to Jesus Christ ye shall see: What shall ye see? Ye shall see Wonders, ye shall see Christ, and ye shall be so ravished with his Beauty, that ye shall be scarce able to contain yourself; ye shall see Fulness and Righteousness in the Son of God, something in Christ that will satisfy all your Wants, ye shall see your Interest in him, ye shall see that ye shall be with him for evermore, ye shall see him here by Faith, and see him as he is in Heaven, ye shall see wondrous Things. May God recover the Sight of all you poor blind Sinners.

Once more, Christ says, *The Lord hath sent me to set at Liberty them that are bruised.* We are described as poor, broken, blind, bruised Creatures; what a poor helpless Creature is Man in his natural state? We are all bruised even unto Death, and if ye want to know how we come to be

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thus

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thus bruised; by falling out with God, the Devil bruised our Heel most wretchedly. But, blessed be God, we shall yet bruise his cursed Head. Our whole Head is sick, our whole Heart is faint, from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot, we are full of Wounds, Bruises, and putrefying Sores. In our Flesh there

dwelleth no good Thing. We are like the poor Creature that fell among the Thieves, quite destitute and forlorn, and there shall for ever lie, unless Jesus Christ come to set us at Liberty. Are any here feeling their Bruises? What signifies your Hearing without Feeling? Are any here made sensible of your dreadful Fall from God? then do not despair, your Case is not desperate, the Lord Jesus Christ will set your Hearts at Liberty. *He hath sent me to set at Liberty, them that are bruised.* Christ will open the Prison-Door, and let your bruised Souls come forth; God the Father sent Christ, and Jesus Christ never came to do the Thing he will not perform; therefore he will take Care of poor, bruised Souls. Christ shall pour in the Wine of his Consolation into your Souls, Christ will do more for you, than what the *Samaritan* did for the wounded Traveller. Ye are so bruised ye cannot walk and come to God: But take Comfort, Christ has

borne

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borne thy Sins in his own Body on the Tree. The *Samaritan* carried that Man on his own Beast. But Jesus Christ has carried thy Sins on his own Body. Ye want to be taken Care of, Jesus Christ will take Care of you, he will put you into the Inn of the visible Church, he will give his Ministers Charge to Nurse you up, until he come and call you to Judgment. Ye cannot tell how tenderly and lovingly he will deal with you, he has wounded you, but indeed he will heal you throughly, and present

you at last blameless and spotless before his Father, saying, *Behold me, O Father, and these Children thou has given me;* thus shall it be done to all you who are bruised, and are willing to be set at Liberty by Jesus Christ. Here then I preach the Gospel to all such poor Creatures that feel the want of a Redeemer, that are blind, poor, broken-hearted, bruised; this will be acceptable Doctrine to your Souls.

But what shall I say to you, and perhaps the greatest Part of this Congregation consists of such, who, instead of being poor are rich, ye do not want Jesus Christ, ye will be saved by your own Morality? What shall I say to you, who instead of being broken-hearted, your Hearts are hard as the Nether Mill-

stone?

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stone, they are so hard and impenetrable, that they cannot be moved at the Thoughts of a crucified Jesus; instead of being blind, ye think ye see, ye see no want of Christ, no want of the Divinity of Christ, no want of free Justification through the imputed Righteousness of Christ. What shall I say to you? Ye love the Ways of the Devil, hate God in your Hearts, and are every Day tempting the Devil to tempt you. What shall I say to you? Ye think ye are mighty fine Creatures, and hate these Ministers that describe Man in such a black Colour. Shall I preach the Gospel to you? Thus far I will preach it, Ye are welcome to Christ if ye will accept it: but if ye continue in this Condition, I will

preach Hell to you. Ye poor miserable Creatures, what a damnable Condition are your Souls in? Ye poor blind Souls, ye poor whole hearted Creatures, ye think ye lack nothing, but alas ye know not that ye are poor miserable, blind, and naked. What shall I say to you? For Jesus Christ's Sake, consider the Danger ye are in, the next Step ye may go to Hell, ye may go to the Devil directly, ye may scoff at Christ, and despise the Offer of a blessed Redeemer, the preaching of the Gospel may to your

hardened

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hardened Hearts be Foolishness, and ye may say to God, *Depart from you, as ye desire not the Knowledge of his Way;* and because all Things continue as they were, ye may mock and say, *Where is the Promise of his coming, for since the Fathers fell asleep, all Things continue as they were from the Beginning:* But remember, Jesus Christ will avenge himself of his Adversaries by and by; God may bear with you long, but God will not forbear with you always: Now the Time is coming, when God will vindicate his injured Honour, when God shall lay hold on his glittering Sword, when God shall sheathe his Sword in your Heart's Blood, and if ye will not come to Jesus Christ now, Christ shall say, *Depart from me, ye cursed,* when he comes to Judgment. Hear then, I preach the Law to you, to you that will not come to Christ, and O that God would give this Word a Commission as once *Moses's* Rod got: O I would strike the Rock of

your Hearts thro' and thro', but out of Love that your poor Souls should come to Christ to be saved in the Day of the Lord. Sinners, Sinners, how will you escape, if ye neglect the great Salvation, Salvation wrought out for poor Sinners by a bleeding God? Do ye think God will take it kind? He hath left

fallen

30

fallen Angels to perish in their Sin, he hath sent fallen Man the Offer of a Saviour; and if ye deny Christ, and will not come to him, ye commit a Crime the Devil never did commit, and justly, will ye be made to say, I am damned for evermore.

O Sinners I would fain turn to preach the Comforts of the Gospel, but I must speak a little more of the Law to you; ye are hanging over the fiery Furnace, over Hell-fire, by a single Thread of this Life; God Almighty knows but this may be the last Time ye shall hear this Word, and out of Christ ye will find God to be to you a consuming Fire. *Kiss the Son, then, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the right Way.* Indeed it is out of Love and sincere Affection to your Soul (I speak so.) Let me prevail upon some one of you, do not at all despise Jesus Christ, but accept of Salvation by Christ. There is no entering into the Gates of Heaven but by Christ, he is the Way, he is the Truth, he is the Life. Are there any of the Children of God here, I hope there are many. I have heard that this Place was famous for the Work of God.

Sure there are some few Names in *Sardis*, who have not defiled their Garments. Help me by your Christian Pray-

ers,

³¹
 ers, and wrestle with God, that the Spirit of the Lord may wound them that are Sinners, and convince them of their Danger, and make them willing to accept of Jesus Christ. O! what shall I say? How shall I prevail? I know I can do nothing without God; but I hope God will send his Spirit to bring some of you Home to himself.

It would be my Meat and Drink to hear of your coming to Christ, more than to hear that your Corn and Wine increaseth. Beg of God to wound you, that ye may see your Want of a Redeemer. As for you who do see him, I open all the Magazine of God's Storehouse to you; I proclaim Peace to you, be what ye will, come eat of Christ's Bread, and drink of Christ's Wine, ye are welcome. Come and feed on a crucified Lamb. Jesus Christ is become our Passover, he is the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World. Come and feast on fat Things full of Marrow, ye poor, broken hearted Souls, poor Sinners that feel your Poverty, ye are welcome to Jesus Christ. O! that God may make this an acceptable Morning of the Lord to some of your Souls. My dear Friends, I would have you feed on Christ by Faith with Thanksgiving; that is real feeding on Christ. Those who

know

³²
know what it is to be born again, can feed on Jesus Christ. I hope some of you are feeding on Christ, and I am sure you have precious Food. I have been but a little While in Christ's Service, but I hope I have fed on him, and O! he is mighty, mighty sweet. May God give you to feed on him, and as ye grow in Years, so ye may grow in Grace. Let Ministers preach Jesus, let them venture their Souls for preaching Christ, if *the Spirit of the Lord is upon them*, they will be able to do Wonders. May God do Wonders on Ministers and People: And may we meet together to feed on Christ in the beatific Vision hereafter. *Amen.*

FINIS.