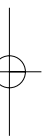


**The Spirit,  
Doctrines and  
Lives of Our  
Modern Clergy**

by

**George  
Whitefield**



*The Spirit, Doctrines, and Lives of our  
modern Clergy, not conformable to the  
Spirit of Christ.*

A

**SERMON**

PREACHED AT *ISLINGTON* AND *BEXLEY*.

BY

*GEORGE WHITEFIELD. A.B.*

OF *PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD.*

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Luke 4:29.

*And they thrust him out of the City.*

WHOEVER has read the sacred Writings, cannot be a Stranger to the Sufferings and Treatment of the Lord Jesus Christ, how he was despised, hated, rejected, and not permitted to Preach in any of their Synagogues, and that for no other Reason, but, because he offended the Rich and Wise of this World; his Doctrine displeas'd the Letter-learned *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, he preach'd against the Luxury of the great and mighty Ones of that Time, and against the bad Doctrines, and bad Examples which the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* shew'd to the People; and the poor People perceiving Christ to be a good Man, and that his Life and Conversation, tho' contrary to the polite Doctrine of the Age, was Good; and his Preaching, the plain Doctrine of the Scripture, they therefore attended upon his Ministry, and followed Christ for a considerable Time together; the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* perceiving that Christ daily gain'd the Love and Affections of the People, were very fearful, lest he should be a Means of

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their Dislike, and Disesteem of them and their Doctrines; they, therefore, envy'd the Lord Jesus, caution'd their People from following of him; and that they might the more easily persuade them, to agree with what they propos'd, they rais'd false Reports of the blessed Jesus, saying, that he was a Babler, that he was a Wine-Bibber, that he had a Devil, and went about, my Brethren, to deceive the People; but notwithstanding all their malicious Reports; and scandalous Aspersions, which they cast on the blessed Jesus, yet he regarded them not, he reviled them not, but bore all, my Brethren, with great Patience and Resignation; and all their

Reports did not make the Lord Jesus Christ forbear Preaching on their Accounts; no, it rather raised his Zeal the more, and made him the more earnest in declaring his Father's Will to the Multitude, which so frequently attended upon his Ministry.

He did not, tho' he received such Usage from these worldly-wise Men, he did not, I say, my Brethren, encourage his Disciples and Followers to return them the like Evil, to Revile, Curse, and despitefully use them; but on the contrary, to do Good, to Bless, Love, and Pray for those their Enemies, who had thus misused them.

This, my Brethren, was to teach you and I an Example, that from all the Persecution

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we may receive from a vain ill-natur'd World, we may suffer all for Christ's Sake patiently. My Brethren, if we will live godly we must suffer Persecution; we must no more expect to go to Heaven, without being persecuted, than to be Happy without being Holy: You may go thro' a great deal of Persecution, and not get to Heaven neither; but if you lead godly Lives, and have set your Faces Heaven-ward, you must then expect it from all Parts and Quarters of the World, all the Sons of *Belial*, all the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* will hate you, and have you in Reproach; they will point at ye, and cry, *See, yonder comes another Troop of his Followers; here's more of his Gang*. You may, my Brethren, as you indeed are, counted as a Parcel of ignorant People, poor Rabble, who are deceived by a vain young upstart Babler, by a Madman, one who is running into Enthusiastick Notions, and endeavours to lead all his Followers into his mad Way of Thinking; but, my Brethren, this, if we have an Interest in, and a Love for the Lord Jesus, we shall not regard, but count it an Honour to become a Fool for Christ's Sake, and shall praise God, my Brethren, that he has counted us worthy to suffer for his Name's Sake. The *Pharisees*, my Brethren, may wonder what I mean by talking of Persecution, in a Christian Country, but is it not very visible that they do not want a

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Will, but a Power to destroy us; why my Brethren, if those *Pharisees* had their Wills, they would as willingly put our Feet in the Stocks; shuts us up in a Prison, and take away our Lives, as they have thrust us out of their Synagogue.

But, my Brethren, don't let that discourage you from hearing the Word of God, for Jesus Christ can meet us as well in a Field, as between Churrh-Walls, and he not only can, but will meet us here; he has often met us; my Brethren, you know he has, and do not question but he will meet us again and again; all Places are alike unto Jesus Christ, and therefore, my Brethren, don't let a little Reproach, or Scorn and Contempt, make you forsake the Wages of Christ, but rather follow the Lord Jesus's Example, of being more zealous in his Ways, than if you had not been at all disliked or dispised, by these Letter-learned *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; for if you were of the World, if you would conform to the Ways, Manners, and Customs of the World, if you would go to a Play, or Ball, or Masquerade, it would then love you, because you would be its own; but because you despise their polite Entertainments, and go to hear a Sermon in the Field, and Will not run into the same Excess of Riot as theirs, they esteem you as methodically Mad, and in a short Time be fit only for *Bedlam*.

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If you would frequent Horse-Racing, Assemblies, Cock-fighting, or any of our polite fashionable Entertainments, then you would be caress'd and admir'd by our gay Gentlemen; but your despising, and not frequenting these innocent Diversions, as the World calls them, makes them esteem you as a Parcel of Rabble, of no Taste, and are going to destroy yourselves, by being Over-righteous, when they themselves are so far from being too good, that they are a great deal too bad; and instead of being too much Righteous, they will not be Righteous enough. If, my Brethren, you would join with them in singing the Song of the Drunkard, then they would think you a good Companion; but because you are for singing of Hymns, and praising the Lord Jesus Christ, and singing forth his Love, they think you Enthusiasts, and do it only out of Ostentation, and to be seen of Men, and that you are not fit for the Company of a polite Gentleman. Indeed our polite Gentry would like Religion very well, if it would make them pretty Gentlemen, or fine Ladies; if it did but countenance an Assembly, or allow them to read Novels, Plays, and Romances; if they might go a visiting on a Sunday, or to a Play or Ball whenever they pleas'd. In short, they should like to live a fashionable, polite Life, to take their full Swing of Pleasures, all their Lives, and go

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to Heaven when they die; but if they were to be admitted to Heaven without a Purification of Heart and Life, they would be as unhappy there, that Place would be a Hell to them; for the Songs of the Angels, and the Company of all good Men, would be esteem'd as Enthusiasts, and Madmen; indeed, Heaven might be agreeable, and they could pass even an Eternity away, if there were the same polite Entertainments there, as they seem so much pleas'd with here; it would be a pleasing Place then indeed, but there is never a Horse-course, or Cock-Pit all over Heaven; therefore, unless those Tempers were changed, and they were made Holy while here, they never will, nor never can be Happy hereafter.

Therefore, my Brethren, do not be any ways uneasy at the Treatment that the Letter-learned *Scribes* and *Pharisees* have, and still do treat us with, they only shew of what Spirit they are, by their late uncharitable and unfair Aspersions. O, my Brethren, the Clergy, envious of my Success, do their Utmost to suppress me in my preaching of the Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, but as I am engag'd in the Work of my Master, all their Endeavours to stop me, will be of no Signification, for as I am sent by the Lord Jesus, and his Work, I am now engag'd in, and it is not their persecuting of me, it is not their thrusting me out of their Churches, or depriving me of

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the Rights and Privileges which I ought to enjoy, but, my Brethren, the more they are endeavouring to destroy all my Happiness, the more Comfort I have in my own Soul; they may do or say what they please against me, blessed be God, I have a good Conscience, and a gracious Jesus Christ; and, therefore, my Brethren, let all their bitter Invectives be never so great, or ever so many, still I will pursue the Way of the Lord, and will endeavour to bring your Souls, my Brethren, from Satan, unto the Lord Jesus Christ, to make you see and feel your Iniquity, and come unto the Lord Jesus Christ; and if you are but thus brought to the Lord, and leave your Iniquities, and make you see the Value of the Lord Jesus Christ, then let *Pharisees*, and my Letter-learned Brethren, say what they will against me; and may they use all that the Devil and their own Evil Hearts stir them up to use against me, still, my Brethren, if I am but the Means of bringing your Souls to Jesus Christ, I will rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice.

The Evil of Mens Hearts are so great, and their Dispositions so wicked, that, alas, my Brethren, all that the Clergy are acting is against the Doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ; they do not agree with their Articles; they have subscrib'd to them, 'tis true, but it has been with no other View, but to gain Pre-

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ferment; and when they have once obtain'd their Desires, then, my Brethren, they, neglect all that they have subscribed to, and have their Eye and Regard only to greater and greater Preferment; and, if they do but preach Fifteen, Twenty, or it may be Thirty Minutes, and have Four or Five Hundred a Year for what they do, and when they are there, they only preach up the poor, dead, dry, moral Actions of Life, of leading civil, moral, honest, decent Lives, when they live contrary to the Doctrines of their Articles, their Articles are founded upon Scripture, but what they preach up is not agreeable either to the Doctrine of Scripture, or to the Necessity, the poor guilty Sinner stands in of a Saviour; and those that do preach up the Doctrines and Articles of the Church of *England*, are look'd upon only as Enthusiast Madmen, or as a Deceiver of the Common People; but if they were to examine themselves, or their own Hearts, they would plainly see that there was so much Pollution there, that all the Morality as they could perform, would not cleanse them of; they could see that all their good Works would be of no Signification without an Interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that all their own Actions were only Sin; and the best that they could perform is full of Iniquity; and that unless the Spirit of God is within you, to sanctify you, and to cleanse you of

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all your Iniquity, to take away that Filth and Pollution of your own Hearts, you must feel the Spirit of God; tho' this is deny'd by all our polite and fashionable Gentlemen of this Age, yet, my Brethren, it is the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, and their very Persons profess themselves Members of the Church of *England*, and yet live disagreeable and contrary to the Articles of their own Church, which they profess to be Members of, when they live quite contrary to, and believe contrary to their own Articles, and yet if they do but go to Church once a Week, and say the Prayers, they look on themselves as good Churchmen, and can thrust out of their Churches all who differ from them, tho' they

preach up the Articles of their Church, and the Doctrine of Scripture, and of the Lord Jesus Christ; but because they preach to the Poor and Unlearned, and are willing to instruct them, and bring them to Jesus, truly by his Merits, without any Regard to their own Works, either past, present, or to come, because, my Brethren, our Clergy fear that you will quite forsake them, and they loose their Benefits, they therefore make a great Noise against those who are willing Naked to follow a naked Jesus, and esteem them as Persons unworthy to preach in their Churches; but at the great Day of Accounts it will be known, who are the Schismatics, the En-

thusiasts,

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thusiasts, and Deceivers of the Common People, those who preach up Works, and that Man must do what he can, and Christ is to make up the Deficiency, that God seeing you dispos'd to be good, and therefore gives you his Grace; or those, my Brethren, who tell you that Salvation is the free Gift of God, and that Man has nothing to boast of by all his Works, but is unprofitable to God, that tells you that Jesus Christ justifies you while you are ungodly, that are willing to exalt God, and abase the Creature: But why do I say it shall be determined then? God forbid it should be left 'till that Time. Oh, that they may be, convinced of these their Errors, and brought to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity and Truth; before they go hence and be no more seen.

I do not speak there Things out of Malice; No, my dear Brethren, God is my Judge, I would willingly lay down my Life for the greatest of my Opposers, and if there was not a Necessity for my thus speaking, I would not open my Mouth against any of my Letter-learned Brethren; but, my Brethren, Love to your Souls constrain me to speak, to shew you what Danger you are in of the eternal Wrath of God falling on you, that you may, therefore, flee unto Jesus Christ as the City of Refuge, and that you might be made sensible, that you, my Brethren, must be more

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than moral, honest Persons, before you are Christians indeed.

I have frequently told you, my Brethren, that you are half a Beast, and half a Devil; and tho' this may offend the *Pharisee*, yet it may be prov'd even to a Demonstration, that Man is a motly Mixture, and that there is in your Hearts the Nature, the whole Nature of the Beast and Devil. Lust, my Brethren, Sensuality, Self-Love, Ease and Pleasure, are the

Nature of the Beast; and all this we find in our Hearts. Then, my Brethren, Pride, Vain-Glory, Malice, Revenge, and all Uncharitableness, is the Temper of the Devil, and these Tempers, my Brethren, we have in our Hearts by Nature. And you are like the Beasts, always looking downwards, but never upwards, never looking to God at all.

Indeed, my Brethren, our polite Gentlemen are for painting Man in lovely Colours, but if I was to draw a Picture of Man according to its Likeness, I must go to the Kingdom of Hell for a Copy. Could I tell you how dreadful, how deplorable, how miserable, apostate Spirits are since their fall from God; could I tell you how hateful the damned Spirits are to God; could I search and find out, how desperately wicked your own Hearts are; could I find out the Turnings and Windings, the Labyrinths and Mazes, which is in your accursed Hearts; in one Word, could, I tell

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you what an infinite Difference there is between God and our Hearts, then I might describe the true Picture of every Man since the Fall; for the Heart of Man is so black, that it is the Blackness of Darkness itself; therefore; if these polite Gentlemen, in never so pleasing and delightful Colours, yet if they will but examine their own Hearts, they will see all Manner of Evils harbour'd there; for we must, my Brethren, talk to these polite fashionable Gentlemen, not from the Bible, for they have got above that; but if you will talk to them from Reason, or from Novels, and Romances, they may regard you; but, my Brethren, if you talk to them from the Word of God, they will give no ear to, they will not mind it, because they think their own weak, narrow Conceptions of those Things, is for the best, and most agreeable to them; but, my Brethren, I hope better Things of you; than to think that you make so light of the Gospel of the blessed Jesus; but that you esteem it as the most valuable Book in the World.

The Deists despise all Revelation, and think their own Reason is sufficient to make, them as good Christians, as they can be by all the Revelation that can be given them. But if, my Brethren, these Persons did but consider their own Hearts, they would soon be convinced of their Corruption and Evil that they

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are guilty of, which all the Reason as can be given by the Light of Nature, will not purge away: No, my Brethren, nothing will purge away Sin, but the Blood of Jesus Christ.

And I hope that the Blood of Jesus Christ is more precious to your Souls than ten Thousand Worlds; what is a little flashy Mirth, my Brethren, signify? Will it comfort, you, when upon a sick and dying Bed, to hear that you have took a great deal of Pleasure in Life? that you saw and read Plays, convers'd with Books of Novels and Romances, was always esteem'd a pretty Gentleman, or a pretty Lady; that you had polite and fashionable Behaviour, what Comfort will this yield, when you are expecting every Moment your Soul to leave its Body, and to appear before the Judge of all the Earth, one who knows the Secrets of all Hearts, he knows with what Design you come to hear his Word, tho' preached in a Field, whither you come out of Curiosity, with itching Ears, whither you come to scoff, or to find Fault with the Preacher, or whither you come with sincere Desires of having the Word of Power of God grafted in your Souls? And if he knows, my Brethren, all Things that ever you do, how will you answer him when he calls you, O ye Scoffers, to an Account, for all your Jest and Jeers, you have cast upon the People of God? Will they stand you instead, then? Will they

support

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support you under the Wrath and Indignation of an angry God?

At that Day it will be known who are the true Ministers of Jesus; then, then, my Brethren, it will appear whether you are Enthusiasts, or Madmen, or no; then it will be determined, whether the Doctrine I preach to you, is not the Doctrine of Christ; but God forbid it should be left undetermin'd till then, for if it is, it will be determined to the Confusion of all Opposers of the Truth of Jesus Christ. And tho', my Brethren, they look on me as deceiving of you, and leading you into Errors, and base Notions, yet, God is my Judge, I would pawn my own Salvation, my Brethren, upon those Doctrines which I have preach'd up unto you; for they are the plain Doctrines of Scripture; and as for deceiving, good God, which is deceiving of you most, those who tell you, that you must be saved by your own good Works, when, perhaps, you never did one good Work in all your Life. This, this, my Brethren, would be driving you to Despair indeed; but I preach up no such Doctrine; no, my Brethren, I say, God justifies you while you are ungodly; it is not of Works, least anyone should boast:

No, Salvation is the free Grace of God, it is his free Grace that I preach up unto you; I do tell you, as to too many of our polite Clergy, (God is my Witness) I speak with Grief,

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when I am speaking against any of our present Clergy, but) indeed, my Brethren, they have deviated from their own Articles, and have got a new Sort of Divinity among us, of making Jesus Christ half a Saviour, and Man the other. But, my Brethren, Jesus Christ will be all in all, or, Jesus Christ will be nothing at all; Jesus will be your whole Wisdom; Jesus Christ will be your whole Righteousness; Jesus Christ will be your whole Sanctification, or, Jesus Christ will never be your eternal Redemption.

And if Jesus Christ will be thus good to your Souls, sure, my Brethren, you can bear a little Reproach: What is the Loss of Fame, Honour, Wealth, Reputation, or Life itself, or compared to the Loss of Christ? For if, my Brethren, you lose him, you will lose your only Happiness to all Eternity; then, then, my Brethren, you will find the Folly of despising Christ, of forsaking him, of counting his People Madmen, Enthusiasts, and as a Parcel of Rabble: Then they who have thus despised Christ and his Members, who have thrust his People out of their Churches, will see how their Lives were Madness and therefore their End is Folly and Destruction; then they shall see the poor People of God, these Fools in the World's Account, taken to Heaven, into the Company of God, Christ, Angels, and of all good Men, and to live with

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them without Interruption, either from Men or Devils; for no Scoffer shall be admitted there: And this, my Brethren, will be a full Recompence for all that you have met with, from the Slanders and malicious Aspersions of a prophane and wicked World.

And tho' you may have all Manner of Evil, or may be spitefully used by the ill Treatment of the Men of this World, why should it discourage you, when, my Brethren, the Lord Jesus Christ himself pronounces a Blessing upon all who are thus treated while below? Then never, never, my Brethren, revile them again, but suffer all Things, endure all Things, and be willing to suffer all for the Sake of the Lord Jesus Christ; consider how great a Love the Lord has had for you, in being crucified, and in dying for all you who believe in him; then come to Christ, and you shall have Life, Life Eternal: It requires no more than your asking for it in

Faith, and then you shall receive; knock, it shall be opened unto you, if you do but come to Christ in Faith; and you shall have no Reason to complain, that he thrust you out of his Presence.

Let nothing occasion your making Excuses for a Delay in your putting far from you the Day of the Lord, for it may come before you are aware; then, my dear Brethren, let me beseech of you, in Bowels of Mercy, to have

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Compassion on your Souls. Pray, and strive mightily with Christ, that he would put his Spirit within you, that he would give you Grace to love him, fear him, and serve him, that you may be born again; for unless you are born again, however, my Brethren, you may please yourselves of being saved, and of being happy to all Eternity, your Hopes are in vain, my Brethren, while you expect it in any of your Performances; nothing less than being born from above. You were, my Brethren, baptised in your Infancy in the Name of the Father, in the Name of the Son, and in the Name of the Holy Ghost; but when you are regenerated, when you are changed from the Spirit of the Devil, into that of Christ, then you will be baptised into the Nature of the Father, into the Nature of the Son, and, into the Nature of the Holy Ghost; and this is the Baptism which is for your Salvation.

For Salvation is only of the free Grace of God, it is not of yourselves, it is his free Gift. *By Grace ye are saved, through Faith, and it is not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God.* You are saved *by* your Faith, my Brethren, not *for* your Faith, for that would be to make Faith a Creature, and then you would have something wherewith you might boast, and then Christ would be but Part of a Saviour; but; my Brethren, Jesus Christ is the Way,

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Jesus Christ is the Truth, and Jesus Christ is the Life, and he will be your whole Saviour, or he will not be anyone; and if you will but come unto Christ full of your own Nothingness, sensible of your Unworthiness, and that you are Nothing, have Nothing, and can plead Nothing before him, and that you deserve nothing from him but eternal Damnation. Come, my Brethren, thus sensible of your Wants, and Jesus Christ will, Jesus Christ shall receive, he shall take away your filthy Rags, and give you the white Robe of his Righteousness; he shall cloath you with his

own Fulness, give you himself, and then you will be one with Christ, even as he, and his Father are one.

The World has made a great Noise about the Word *Enthusiast*; but, my Brethren, it means no more than; *One in God*; And what Christian is there that is not thus an Enthusiast? And if this is to be an Enthusiast, would to God you were all thus Enthusiasts; would to God ye were more and more so. They say it is Madness to preach, you in Christ, and Christ in you, the Hope of Glory: But if this is to be Mad, I will be more and more Mad; if this is Enthusiasm, I will be more and more an Enthusiast; and if their persecute me, and shoot their Arrows, even bitter Words, if they thrust me out of their Churches, nevertheless, as it is for preach-

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ing Jesus Christ, and his Gospel, to you, the Poor of this World, I'll rejoice. Yea, and let the Devil and his Agents, do what they are permitted to do against me, I will, by the Strength of my Master, rejoice; ay, and exceedingly too.

It is not a little Pleasure, or Enjoyment of Abundance of this World's Goods, that I am seeking, or want. No, my Brethren, I want you; I want your Souls to present to my Master; I want not any Thing of yours; I only want you; I do not value a little Contempt, or a little Reproach here, I can bear it all for your Sakes, I could indeed, my dear Brethren, I could go to Prison, I could go to Death without you, but I cannot bear to go to Christ, to go to Heaven without you; I cannot bear to see so many in the Hands of the Devil, and none to snatch them away; I could not bear to see you more willing to learn, than your Teachers were to instruct you: It is, my Brethren, an awful Sight to see so many of you now met together, and to consider that in a short Time, in a few Years, you'll be consuming by Worms: It is awful, I say, my Brethren, to reflect in what a Condition your Bodies will be; but it is a thousand Times more so, to consider where your Souls will be, either in Heaven or Hell; they must be in one of those Places, for there is no Medium; and therefore I beseech you to

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consider, whether, my Brethren, you am prepared for your last and great Change; if you have experienc'd inward Holiness, are regenerated, and born again, if you have Oyl in your Lamps, Grace in your Hearts, then, my Brethren, you are ready to meet the Bridegroom, whensoever

he cometh; but if you are taken up, and rest contented with the Lamps of an outward Profession, they will leave you, the Lamps will go out; your moral, honest, civil, decent Lives, will not protect you then, then you will find there was one Thing wanting yet, and that is, the Blood of Jesus Christ; and if that cleansing Blood be apply'd to your Souls, you are happy for Time and for Eternity; then, O Soul, you will find a Glimpse of the Light of God's Favour shining upon your Souls; will be a Salve of that sovereign Virtue, as to heal all your Disquietments, to satisfy all your Doubts, and overcome all the Difficulties with which we are surrounded

And tho', my Brethren, God may, at Times, shine upon your Souls, yet you must not expect to be always upon the Mountain, you must, at Times, be in the Valley, Darkness and Doubts will be upon you; but then, my Brethren, it makes the Favour and Presence of God the more sweet, the more delightful, and the more precious to you; if you were to be on the Mount always, if we were to meet

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with nothing but Favours and Kindness from God, we should be proud, and exalt ourselves, and quite forget the Lord that bought us; but, my Brethren, you who are Partakers of this heavenly Gift, you know, that when Darkness and Gloominess is on your Souls, it keeps you humble; then you can bewail your Condition before the Lord, and can't refrain from your Knees or Prayer, tho' there is such a Deadness and Numbness on your Souls, that you can scarce utter a Word: To talk of Deadness and Dryness in Prayer, is Enthusiasm to the *Pharisees*, but to those who believe, it is plain to their own frequent Experience; and God grant everyone may experience this Power of Believing, may know and feel this Power on their Hearts.

Indeed, my Brethren, all inward Feelings are deny'd, and Persons, yea Ministers of our own Church can tell, there is no such Thing as feeling the Spirit of God, that all inward Feelings is Enthusiasm; but, my Brethren, is it not amazing that all inward Feelings are deny'd, when it is express'd in our Collects and Homilies so very frequently, it is the Doctrine of our Church, and because I preach it up in its primitive Purity, and the Doctrine I preach is conformable to her Articles, to her Collects, and to her Homilies, they despised me, and thrust me out of their Churches; and when they won't permit me, my Bre-

thren,

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then, to preach in their Churches, at the same Time they blame me for preaching in the Fields and Highways, say I am a Dissenter, and an Underminer of the established Church; when I am a Friend to her Liturgy, I am a Friend to her Collects, I am a Friend to her Homilies, and if they would give me Leave, I would read her Prayers every Day; I am a Friend to all there, I am for establishing the Church of *England*, and wish she was the Joy of the whole Earth; but *that* she never will be, while the Clergy, the Generality of the Clergy, shew so bad Examples, by their scandalous Lives.

Is it becoming a Minister of the Church of *England*, my Brethren, to frequent those Places of polite Entertainment, which is condemn'd by all serious and good Men? Are the Church and Play-house, my Brethren, fit for the same Persons? Is it not inconsistent with all Goodness for Ministers to frequent Playhouses, Balls, Masquerades? Is this becoming the Ministers of Jesus Christ? Would it not better become them to visit the Poor of their Flock at Home, to pray with them, to converse, and examine how it stands with God and their Souls? Would it not be more agreeable to the Temper of the blessed Jesus, to be going about doing Good, than to be going about setting of evil Examples? when they ought to be instructing the Ignorant, convincing the

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Sinner, confirming and edifying the Good; and endeavouring to be singularly Good, both in their Lives and Conversations.

This is laying a stumbling Block, my Brethren, before their weak Brethren, which they will not remove, tho' it is a stumbling Block of Offence; for, how frequent is it for the poor and illiterate People to be drawn a way more by Example than by Precept? and say, sure there is no Evil in doing such or such a Thing; sure there can be no Crime in going to a Play, or an Alehouse, in Gaming and Drinking, when such a Clergyman, and such a Minister of our own Church, does them? If there was Evil in them, they would not do them, for they are Men of Learning; this is the common Talk of poor ignorant People, who are too willing to follow the Examples of their Teachers. Is Billiards, Bowls, and Horse-racing, becoming Ministers of the blessed Jesus? But now, some *Pharisees* will cry, Do but hear this Babler, he is against all innocent Diversions. I confess, for my Part, I know of no Diversion but that of doing Good; but let me ask thee, Oh ye *Pharisee*, should you be willing to have your Soul demanded

of you, while you were at your innocent Diversions, as you call them? No, I dare say, you would not; but, as I said, my Brethren, it is the Examples of the generality of the Clergy, that occasions many Persons, commit-

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ted to their Charge, to run into the Devil's Entertainments, Good God! Are these the Men who are charging others with making too great a Noise about Religion, of being Righteous over-much, when they are over-remiss in theirs, when their Practice runs diametrically opposite to their Profession? And that it does so, is proved even to a Demonstration: Let them preach up the Articles of their own Church, let them preach up the good old Way, and not give their Hearers a little dead dry Morality, but bring the fatted Calf, the Operations of God's blessed Spirit; and when once our Clergy will do this, then the Church of *England* will flourish and increase, and the Numbers of Dissenters will lessen daily; then, and not till then, the Church of *England* will be the Joy of the whole Earth.

But now, while our Clergy is preaching up dead Morality, they are starving People out of their Communion, and they are forced to seek about to find Food for their Souls, and when they have found it, they know the Worth of it too well, than to exchange it for the Husks of dead dry Morality; and therefore, if the Clergy would see the Church of *England* prosper, they must preach up those pure Doctrines which she contains, and which was preach'd up in her Primitive State; but our Clergy have fell from the Doctrine of the Reformation, and have, I know not what

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Kind of Doctrine we have now among us, that we must do what we can ourselves, and then Jesus Christ will make up the rest, that there is a Fitness and Unfitness of Things; this, this, my Brethren, is the Jargon of the Schools; but it is not the Doctrine of Christ, it is not the Doctrine of the Bible, it is not the Doctrine of the Church of *England*; No, it is the Doctrine of the Devil; blessed be God I preach up no such Doctrine; No, I say that it is all of the free Grace of God, if ever you are saved, it must be by his free Grace, there is no free Will in Man, but a free Will to commit Sin, for he cannot think a good Thought, much less do good Actions, without the Spirit of God; and yet our polite Clergy tell us, that God, seeing you disposed to be Good, gives you Grace; Good God! Is

this our modern Doctrine? Are these our modern Teachers who condemn others for being too hot in Religion, when they themselves are a great deal too Cold? And till there is more Warmth, more Zeal, more Love, more Charity, among our Clergy, there will not be that flourishing of Christianity, that Love, Joy, Peace, and the Fruits of the Spirit, which should be found amongst all them who profess to be of the Temper of the blessed Jesus.

But to leave this unpleasant Work, and turn to you, my Brethren, to exhort you to forsake your evil Ways, and to turn to the Lord

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Jesus Christ; and if I was able to tell you of the Thousandth Part of his Love, what I have had Experience of, tho' it is but little, yet I would not be without it, not for Ten Thousand Worlds; and if there was Mercy for such a Wretch as I, why need you fear; God saw me when I was in my Blood, when I was polluted in Filth, when I was running a full Career to Hell, then Jesus Christ passed by me, and saw me thus polluted, he saw me sunk in Filth, and then Jesus Christ took me, by his Spirit, and set my Feet upon a Rock, even upon that Rock of Ages the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, do not, my Brethren, despair, for Christ will save all that come unto him; come unto him by Faith, and he will not cast you out. I do not preach Despair to you now; no, if I was to tell you, you must be saved by your good Works, this would be preaching Despair to you indeed; for perhaps you have never done a good Work in all your Life, and then this would be Despair to you indeed; no, I say, come unto Christ with all your Rags, with all your Filth, with all your Pollution, do not stay till you are drest, till you have done some good Works to recommend you to the Favour of God; no, come to him as you are, without delaying, come to him in your Sins, Jesus Christ loves you as well in your Rags as if you were drest never so rich; he loves you not as the World does, because

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you wear fine Cloaths; no, Christ is well pleased in all your Filth; bring to him a broken Heart, and a contrite Spirit, and he will accept ye, he will receive you readily, he will receive you joyfully, Angels and Men, all good Men, will rejoice to see a Sinner, a *Pharisee*, brought to be a *Publican*, to see Jesus Christ formed in your Souls, to see you are become new Creatures, and willing to embrace Jesus Christ.

The Service of this Day obliges me, my Brethren, to leave you, tho' I know not how to do it; for I could speak till I could speak no more, if I could but bring you to Christ. Oh, my Brethren, I love, indeed I love you, and it is with Concern that I think of ever parting from you; but, if the Providence of God, if my gracious Master commands me to do or suffer any Thing for his Sake, I must, I will obey, for he has been a gracious Master unto me, and therefore, my Brethren, that little Love I have, I will give unto him; and do you give him your Love too, let me persuade you to come unto him, do but try him, and if you do not find him as I have told you he is, then leave: You have served the Devil a great While, you have try'd the Pleasures of Life, now do but taste of a religious Life, and you will never forsake it more, you will then say, We love our Master, and we will not go from him.

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Oh,

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Oh, my dear Brethren, you will find more real Satisfaction in one Hour's Conversation with Jesus Christ, than ever you have from all the Pleasures of Sin, which you have enjoy'd all your Lives, you will find new Comforts, new Joys, new Delights, because you will have new Spirits, new Hearts, new Natures, all Things will be new, the old Man is done away with his Deeds, and the new Man, even the Lord Jesus Christ, and his Righteousness, you have taken up in his Room, and then you will desire daily to depart, to be with Christ, which is best to all who have his Spirit, because then they will live with Christ, enjoy Christ, converse with Jesus Christ, and that forever, without any Interruption, without any Allay of Joy, but there will be a Continuation which will endure as long as Christ himself will, which will be forever and ever; for when you have been with Jesus Thousands of Millions of Millions of Years, you'll be as far from the End of your living with Christ, as you were at the Beginning thereof; and does not the Thoughts hereof make your Hearts burn within you, to think of thus feeling that Jesus, who, when he was on Earth, was despised, scorned, contemned, scoffed, scourged, buffeted, crucified, dead, and buried, now honour'd; feared, bowed to, worshipped, risen, exalted, glorified, to see him coming with Tens of Thou-

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sands of Angels to take his People to himself, to live and reign, and reign and live with this their Jesus to all Eternity. Oh, think of this, and let this calm your Mind against the Taunts, Jeers, and Reproaches of the

Men of this World, let them point at and sneer you, with *here comes another Troop of his Followers*, the Time will be soon over, when you shall, if you believe in this Jesus, if you have accepted of him for your King, then you shall find him a loving one, and then hold on, and hold out to the End, and shall have a Crown, a Crown of Life and Immortality, which fadeth not away; this is the only desirable, this is the only lasting Blessing; Earthly Blessings, even while we are enjoying of them, they may be taken from us, or we from them; they are not worth our taking the Pains after them as we do; but this Crown, these Advantages, are great, are glorious, and will not fade, but will last to an endless Eternity.

I have been going, my Brethren, to conclude, but yet, I know not how to leave you; I cannot forbear speaking a few Words more, to use a few Intreaties and Persuasions more, to accept of this Jesus.

O ye *Pharisees*, ye Harlots, ye Whore-mongers, ye Covetous, ye Drunkards) ye Murderers, ye Thieves, do but come unto Christ,

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and he will joyfully forgive you all your Iniquities, he will take you to himself, and you shall be comforted with his Presence, and if you will not come, your Blood will be required at your own Heads; I have acquainted you where Mercy is to be found, and that if you seek, you shall find; and if you do not seek, indeed, my Brethren, you are lost, and will perish in your Blood.

But, I hope, my Brethren, you will seek unto Christ, and take him on his own Terms, and upon his own Conditions, and that you and I, that every one of us shall meet at the Right Hand of Christ, never to be parted from each other more, then we shall sing forth the Wonders of redeeming Love, and tell what great Things God has done for our Souls; there we shall see Christ as he is, and not converse with him thro' a Glass darkly, but talk to him Face to Face, and never be separated from him again; and Oh, does not this make you wish for the appointed Time, for that happy Season when this shall be accomplished, and we be brought to Jesus Christ, and never parted from him more? This is the Happiness, this the End of every Believer, of every real Christian; and that you and I may thus meet at the Right Hand of Christ, and hear his voice) *Come ye Blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared from before the Foun-*

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*dation of the World; that this, I say, may be the happy End of you and I, shall be my earnest Prayer; and may God, of his infinite Mercy, say Amen to it.*

*Now, to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be Glory and Honour,&c!*

