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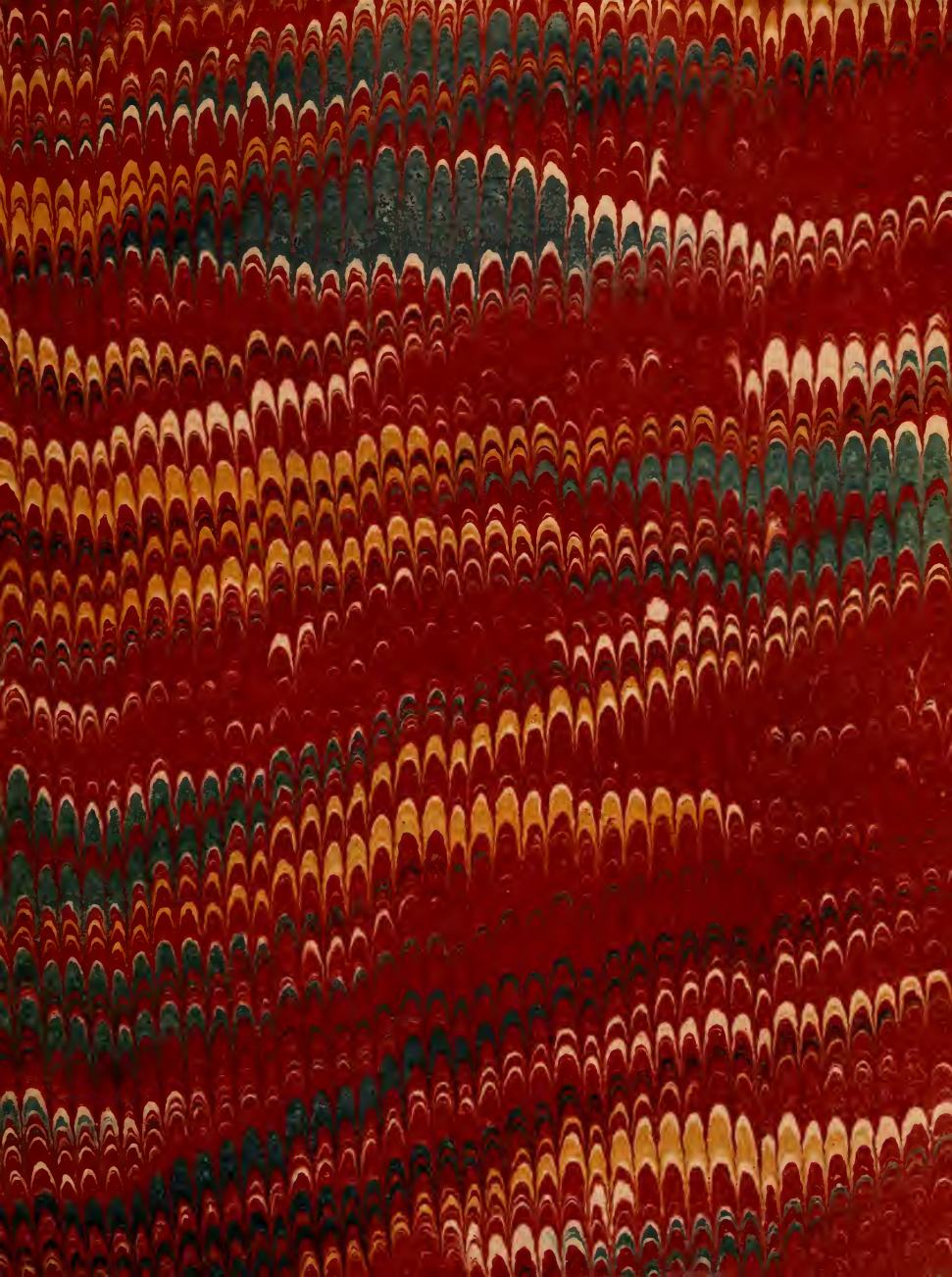
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Tulse Mayoz,

*Martis decimo sexto die Septemb. 1684.
Annoque Regni Regis Caroli Secundi
Angliæ, &c. trigesimo sexto.*

THIS Court doth desire Dr. *Calamy* to Print his Sermon Preached at Bow-Church on the Second of *September* Instant, (being the Day of Humiliation for the Great Fire in the Year 1666.) before the Lord Mayor, and Aldermen, and Citizens of this City.

WAGSTAFFE.



A
S E R M O N

Preached before the Right Honourable

The Lord Mayor,

A L D E R M E N,

A N D

C I T I Z E N S of L O N D O N,

At the Church of *St. Mary le Bow,*

September the Second, 1684.

B E I N G T H E

Anniversary Fast

F O R T H E

D R E A D F U L F I R E

In the Year 1666.

By *BENJAMIN CALAMY* D. D.

Vicar of *St. Laurence Jewry*, and one of His MAJESTY's
Chaplains in Ordinary.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby* at the *Bishops Head* in
St. Paul's Church-yard. 1685.

N^o. 11

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
Sir Henry Tulse
LORD MAYOR
OF THE
City of London,

And to the Honourable
COURT of ALDERMEN.

Right Honourable,

IN Obedience to Your Lordships Commands
I have published this following Sermon, and
now humbly present it to Your favourable
Acceptance. The Discourse was suited to the Day,
plain and serious; the Subject Matter of it or-
dinary and common, but highly useful and seasonable.
And

The Dedication.

And if any of the Inhabitants of this great City are by the reading of it persuaded to, or better established in the strict Practise of their Religion in all its several Duties, which respect either God or Man, I have obtained my whole Design both in the Preaching and Printing of it.

I beg Your Lordships Pardon, if I take this Opportunity to renew my most thankful Acknowledgments of those many particular Favours I have received from Your Lordship, by which I am bound ever to remain

Your most Obedient

and Humble Servant,

Benjamin Calamy.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before

The Lord Mayor,

On *September* the Second, 1684.

I S A I A H LVII. 21.

There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

IT is not to be imagined, that the Design of this Anniversary Fast is barely to call to mind those dismal Days wherein this Famous City was laid in Ashes, and to hear the doleful Relation of that amazing Providence; but it was intended as an Opportunity for the Exercise of serious Repentance: and to that purpose we are now met, to lament our Sins, and humble our Souls in God's presence, and to renew our

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Resolutions

Resolutions against all those Courses which once plucked down such remarkable Judgments upon this Place, and will, unless we reform them, at last prove our utter Ruine: And to improve the Consideration of that dreadful Calamity to the same pious purposes, is my present Design, from the Words now read unto you.

In the Verses immediately foregoing my Text the Prophet endeavours to revive the drooping Spirits of those amongst the *Jews*, now in *Babylonish* Captivity, who were truly penitent for their past Sins, and therefore called, *v. 15. the humble and contrite ones*, with the Promise of God's Mercy to them, in bringing them back at last to their Native Country; assuring those *who put their trust in God*, that, tho' now far banished from it, yet they should again *possess their land, and inherit the holy Mountain. For God will not contend for ever, v. 16. neither will he be always wroth.* He knoweth our weakness, and how unable we are to stand before him, when he is angry. He observed therefore their Repentance, *v. 18.* and how they amended their *ways*, and would *heal them*, and conduct them safely to their own Land, with abundance of Joy and Peace.

But if, after so signal deliverance, they should again fall back to their old Courses; if, forgetful both of those sore Evils God had inflicted on them for their Disobedience, and of his wonderful Mercy shewn in redeeming them from their Captivity, they should wantonly return, when restored, to their former Provocations, he tells

tells them, that they should by sad Experience find, that the same Effects would still follow the same Causes, that Sin and Irreligion would again destroy their Peace, and bring down God's severer Vengeance against them: so that they should be *like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, v. 20.* always unquiet and unsettled, in continual distraction and confusion. And now, that they might not in the least doubt of the truth of all this, he confirms it by the Authority of God himself, *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* They must never look to be an happy, flourishing People, as long as their Lives and Manners were so corrupt and degenerate. This some Learned Men take to be the strict meaning of the Words, and thus I shall now understand them.

Under this Word *Peace* in *Scripture* is often comprehended all manner of outward Happiness and Prosperity; and taking it in this large sense, the Words do not then respect wicked men considered singly by themselves, but as they are joyned together in Society and Community; to whom the Prophet declares, from the Mouth of God, That there is nothing so destructive of the Political Happiness or Welfare of any People, as prevailing Vice and Wickedness. Religion doth not only secure the inward Peace and Tranquillity of our Minds, and provide for our future Felicity in the other World, but doth mightily promote the temporal Prosperity of any Kingdom or City in this: And, on the contrary, Vice and Wickedness, especially where it

abounds, and is become fashionable and creditable, and hath infected all Sorts and Ranks of Men, doth certainly undermine, and will by degrees overthrow the Peace and Happiness of any Society or Community. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

Many and weighty are the Arguments by which men may be moved to Repentance and Amendment of Life. There is no Capacity we can be consider'd in, no Relation we can stand in, but Religion is of mighty use and advantage to us in it; and, on the contrary, Sin and Wickedness infinitely prejudicial and mischievous. But I cannot think any Consideration more proper to this Assembly, or to the Occasion of this Solemnity, than what my Text suggests to us, *viz.* the serviceableness of True Religion to the Publick Good and Interest, and the malign Influence that Vice and Impiety hath upon any Kingdom, City, or Body Politick; whence we may learn, to what Causes ought to be imputed that dreadful Judgment of Fire, which once laid this City waste; as also, what is the most successful Expedient to preserve this City, and the whole Kingdom, from any such Publick Calamity for the time to come.

In the prosecution of this Subject, I shall first demonstrate the Truth of what is here affirmed, and then make such particular Application to our selves, as may be most suitable to the Occasion of our meeting at this day.

In order to the proving of this, That Wickedness
doth.

doth obstruct the Peace and Happiness of any People or Society, I shall insist on these three Arguments.

1. The natural tendency of Vice and Wickedness.
2. The Consideration of God's Providence, and his righteous Government of the World.
3. The Experience of all Ages.

1. How contrary Vice and Wickedness is to the Temporal Peace and Prosperity of any Kingdom or City, will appear from the natural tendency of Sin and Irreligion, which necessarily produceth many Publick Mischiefs, which we can no ways avoid, but by leaving those Sins which are the natural Causes of them: and, on the other side, the true Fear of God, and hearty Obedience to his Laws, do in their own nature, and direct consequence, conduce to the Publick Interest.

Most of the Duties of Religion are so absolutely necessary to the good Order, Quiet, and Peace of Societies, that Men have found it highly expedient to oblige one another to the observance of them by Civil Sanctions and Humane Laws: and should the wisest Men, the greatest Politicians on Earth, set themselves to find out the best and most useful Rules of Living, for the securing the Publick Peace and Happiness of Kingdoms or Cities, they could pitch on no other but those very same Precepts which God hath given us, of doing to all as we would be done unto, of mutual Love and Charity, of strict Justice and Temperance, of Faithfulness, and Meekness, and Patience. And lest Men should not be sufficiently

sufficiently moved by the Divine Threatnings, the wisest Governments have always added Temporal Punishments, to restrain Men within those Bounds which Religion hath prescribed to us, without which all Humane Societies would presently fly in pieces, and the World be over-run with Disorder and Confusion.

It is a common Observation, That even Societies of wicked, lawless Men, who combine together to do mischief and injury to others, yet are forced to bind themselves to the practise of some Vertues, without which they cannot hold together. Thieves and Robbers promise to be just and faithful to each other; and the very Powers of Darkness take care to preserve Order and Unity amongst their miserable Subjects, without which, our Saviour tells us, the Devil's Kingdom cannot stand.

But what Effect Religion hath upon Societies, will better be understood, if we consider distinctly, first, the Principles of Religion, and then the Duties and Offices of it, and shew what Influence they both have upon the Publick Peace and Safety.

I. As for the Principles of Religion, the Belief of a God, and a Future Life, these are the very Basis and Foundation of all Society, without which it can never subsist. This is sufficiently acknowledged even by *Atheists* themselves, whilst they affirm, as *Tully* expresses it, *the whole Opinion of the Gods to have been feigned by wise Men, for the sake of the Commonwealth, that so Religion might engage those to their Duty, whom Reason could not.* They would

would suspect all Religion to have been a Politick Con-
 trivance of Civil Sovereigns and crafty Law-makers, by
 the Fears of an Invisible Power to keep Men in awe and
 order. *There was a time at first, as they tell us, when
 Mens Lives were disorderly and brutish, and the Will of the
 stronger was the onely Law: After which they consented and
 agreed together to make Civil Laws, that so the Disorderly
 might be punished. But Temporal Penalties not being suf-
 ficient to deter Men from secret Injuries, at last when Man-
 kind hapned to be under one Universal Monarch, there arose
 a mighty sagacious and prudent Prince or Minister of State,
 the Author of a further Invention, to scare Men from pri-
 vate as well as from open Injuries; and that was, by feign-
 ing a God, Immortal and Omnipotent, who hears, and sees,
 and takes notice of all things: and from hence the noise of
 a God came to ring over the whole World, and to fill all
 Places with Temples and Altars.* Thus they would re-
 present Religion as a meer Engine of State, and Myste-
 ry of Government, to possess the Minds of the Vulgar
 with the Belief of a God, and a Life to come, thereby
 to render them more tame and gentle, submissive and
 obedient: And this alone hath continued the Cheat in
 the World to this day, because this Device hath pro-
 ved so strangely successful for the Ends of Govern-
 ment, to serve which it was first invented; and hence
 it became the Interest of States and Kingdoms to main-
 tain and cherish such Apprehensions in those subject to
 them.

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I have not time now to confute or expose this wild Supposition, for which there is not the least Ground or Evidence; but I think I may draw these three Conclusions from this Atheistical Suggestion, which will be not a little to my present purpose. As,

1. That by the Confession of the greatest Enemies and Haters of Religion, the Principles of it are very useful and beneficial to Mankind. Admitting all they say for true, yet it is great pity that Religion hath not its Foundation in Nature and Reason, it being so advantageous to Government, and it laying such strong Obligations upon People to quiet and orderly living, that without it the Earth would be but one vast howling Wilderness, and Men so many Beasts of Prey, continually worrying and devouring one another.

2. If the Principles of Religion were all false, if they be all Imposture and Cheat, yet it is best for Men to be kept ignorant of this Secret, the Belief of them being of so great consequence to the Welfare of all Kingdoms and Societies. If we are imposed upon in the Matters of Religion, yet it is against our Interest to be undeceived.

3. It follows further, That they are the greatest Enemies of Mankind, and of the Nation or City they live in, and ought to be looked upon, and avoided as the most dangerous Disturbers of the Publick Peace, and the very Pests of Humane Society, who go about to root this Belief out of the Minds of Men, and to set them free from those Fears which Religion propounds

to them ; this being the readiest and shortest way to dissolve all Government, and disband all Societies.

Take away the sense of Religion, and the Consideration of a Superiour Invisible Power, who takes notice of all we do, and will one day call us to a strict account, and Men have no other Rule left to guide themselves by, but their own Will and particular Interest. All Fences are then broken down : Every Man may do any thing he can safely, and nothing is unlawful to be done by him who hath but Power enough to justifie it, and can defend himself when he hath done it : There can be no Security to Governours, no Confidence one in another ; there is nothing we can call our own, no Obligation to stand to our Promises and Covenants, or to obey the Laws of the Society we are Members of, any further than we see it is for our own private Benefit; and of this then every Man is Judge for himself. So true is that excellent Saying of *Plutarch*, That a City might be as well built in the Air, without any Earth to stand upon, as a Commonwealth can be either constituted or preserved without the support of Religion.

2. If we consider the Offices and Duties of Religion, we shall find most of them plainly subservient to the Publick Peace and Happiness ; and, on the contrary, Irreligious Practises do naturally lead to Disorder and Confusion, so that there is hardly any Vice, but what bringeth some notable Damage to the Publick. So saith *St. James*, c. 4. 1. *Whence come wars and fightings amongst*

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you ?

you? are they not hence, even from your lusts, which war in your members?

Unbounded Avarice and Ambition, implacable desire of Revenge, unmeasurable coveting of what is other Mens, unjust Oppression of those whom we have at any advantage, these are the fruitful Parents of Publick Disturbances and Confusions. Luxury, and Sensuality, and Prodigality consume the Wealth and Treasure of a Nation. Idleness, Intemperance, and untamed Lust, effeminate and enfeeble the Minds of Men, destroys their Courage and Spirit, and so lays them open to the Assaults of their Enemies.

Irreligion and Prophaneness break in pieces the Bands of Community; and they, who make nothing of those Obligations which God's Laws have laid upon them, will not be held by any that Men can make; and their Allegiance to their Earthly Sovereign is always to be suspected, who have cast off all Subjection to the Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Lying, Falshood, Injustice, Uncharitableness, and contempt of an Oath, (which is the certain Effect of vain Swearing in common Discourse) these destroy all mutual Good-will, and Faith, and Trust amongst Men, which are the great Joynts and Ligaments by which the Members of any Body Politick are knit and fastned together.

Unreasonable Appetites and Passions make Men uneasy and troublesome one to another, and are the necessary

lary Causes of Enmity, Division, Strife, and every Evil work ; and by disuniting of Men one from another, they apparently make way for the dissolution of any Society.

Pride and Discontent naturally make Men Factious and Unpeaceable, dispose Men to endeavour Changes and Alterations, in hopes of bettering themselves ; and the Sin of Schism, and unnecessary breach of Christian Communion, even as a Physical Cause, doth usher in the Ruine of the State, as well as of the Church.

Thus I might run over all manner of Sins, and shew how they all, more or less, weaken the Sinews and Strength of the best-constituted Government, where they are commonly practised. So that should God Almighty stand Neuter, and not concern himself in the Affairs of this lower World ; had he left Mankind, as the *Epicureans* thought, wholly to their own Counsel and Conduct, and should never trouble himself to inflict any Evils upon us for our Disobedience to him ; yet the natural Consequences of our own Sins, the ill Effects they have upon the Kingdom or City we live in, would be no little Punishment for them. And this we learn from the Mouth of God himself, *Deut. 5. 29. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever !* Where God is pleased to represent it, as a Learned Man observes on that Place, as *a thing e'en quite out of his own power, to make it well with an impious people : O that they would*

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fear

fear me, that so it might be well with them ! as if it were impossible, from the very Nature of the thing, for God to make a People happy, whilst they continued vicious and unreformed : So necessary, so indispensable are Piety and Vertue to the Establishment of a Nation.

Religion inspires Men with all those good Qualities and Dispositions that tend to Peace and Unity, which is the Life and Soul of all Society : It extirpates all those Vices and Passions which are the Causes of Enmity and Division ; teacheth every Man to keep his own Rank and Place, to mind his proper Duty, to give to every one his Due, and to prefer the Publick Good before his own Private Advantage. It inclineth and obligeth Men to all mutual Offices of Love and Kindness. It maketh Magistrates just and merciful, Subjects faithful and obedient, out of Conscience, for God's sake. It secureth every Mans Interest, and Fortune, and Reputation, every Man in his particular Station contributing his best to the Common Welfare.

We cannot possibly frame in our Minds the Idea of a more happy State of things, than would presently be, if the Fear of God, and Love of Righteousness, and general Practice of Religion, did every where prevail amongst us. There would be then no Discontents, nor Complaints heard in our Streets, no Jealousies or frightful Suspicions, no Sidings, or Parties, or divided Interests, no Separations and opprobrious Nick-names of Distinction, which are the mortal Diseases of the Body Politick,

Politick, and the never-failing Symptoms of a decaying State. How safely and pleasantly should we all live! A Kingdom or City bless'd with such Inhabitants, what would it be but an Heaven upon Earth? And tho it is hardly to be hoped that ever such a happy Change should be found amongst us, that Religion should gain such an universal Conquest over the Minds of all Men, yet let me say, That to those small Reliques of Vertue and Piety which are yet to be found amongst us, it is chiefly owing that Mankind live together in any tolerable Peace and Security.

Thus Sin hath a natural tendency to make not onely the Sinner himself miserable, but the Society also of which he is a Member; whilst, as *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 14. 34. Righteousness exalteth a nation*, raiseth it to the highest degree of Prosperity and Glory. To which I shall onely add the Observation of that great *Roman General Scipio*, That *it was impossible for any State or City to be happy, stantibus mœnibus, ruentibus moribus, tho' their Walls were never so firm and good, if their Manners were decayed and corrupted.* But this is not all.

2. We must consider, that God Almighty is no idle and indifferent Spectator of the Actions of Men. He is no such soft and delicate Being, (as some have imagined him) taking his own Ease and Repose within the spacious Circuits of Heaven, whilst, unconcerned at the Affairs of Mortals, he lets this lower World go as it will. No, his careful Providence is extended even to the meanest.

meanest thing which his Power created ; much more it is conversant about whole Kingdoms, Cities, and great Societies of Men : And this is the setled Course and Method of his Government.

Tho' he often suffers some particular Men to thrive and flourish in their Sin and Impiety, and doth not always call single Persons to an Account in this Life, but reserves them for the future Vengeance ; yet he dealeth otherwise with Bodies Politick : He will not permit them ordinarily to pass unpunished in this State, this Life being the onely time wherein he can reckon with Men as joyn'd together in Civil Societies ; and therefore, besides all the Evils Men bring upon themselves by their Wickedness, the Great Sovereign of the World doth by way of Exemplary Justice inflict sore and desolating Calamities, such as Plague, Fire, Sword, Famine, and the like, as the due Reward of their incurable Obstinacy in Sin and Disobedience. Prevailing and crying Sins of a Nation or City, without timely Repentance, never scape Publick Judgments.

And indeed, it is in a manner necessary for the Government of the World, and preserving some good Order in it, and keeping up in Men the awe of an Invisible Power, upon high and publick Provocations, when Men insolently bid open Defiance to the Laws of God ; I say, it is necessary that God should manifest his Power and Displeasure, by some remarkable Punishments, inflicted on Places generally infamous for their foul Ingratitude

gratitude towards, and horrid Contempt of his Divine Majesty.

When Sin and Irreligion mightily abounds, and hath gained reputation amongst foolish people, and, like a great Flood, carries all before it; when it hath once got an Head, and formed a strong Party, and Men of all Conditions and Qualities are engaged on the side of Vice and Profaneness, all Reason and Argument shall at such a time be easily run down, and the *soft voice* cannot then be heard: God must appear in a *great Storm, with Thunder and Lightning*, as he did of old to the *Israelites*, if he would have the Inhabitants of the Earth look up to him, or would convince them of their Folly and Danger.

Such publick Judgments are rightly compared to publick Executions, which are sometimes necessary for the Support of the Government, and making People to stand in dread of the Laws. They serve especially to excite in the generality of Mankind a more quick and lively sense of God's Power over, and Presence with them, to rouse Men out of that Stupidity and dull Lethargy, which long and prosperous continuance in Sin betrays them into. *I will cause you to pass under the rod*, saith God by the Prophet, *and then shall you, and all that hear and see it, know, that I am the Lord.*

Thus, did not that miserable Fate, which befel *Sodom and Gomorra*, serve to awaken the neighbouring Cities & Countries, when they beheld the bright Flames to ascend towards

towards Heaven, to inquire into the Causes of such Severity, and to examine themselves, whether they were guilty of the same Sins, which had so highly incensed God? And would not they have been glad to have been at good terms and at peace with that Almighty Being, who hath such dreadful Punishments in store for the Refractory and Impenitent?

And was it not thus with us, at the the time of the late terrible Conflagration, which we are this day more particularly to call to our minds? I appeal to all amongst you, that were then present at it: Did you not then humbly acknowledge the Hand of God in it? Did you not then accuse your selves, and did not your Consciences loudly charge you with those Sins, that you could not but think did fully deserve so severe Vengeance? Did not some of you blame your Covetousness, and niggardly hoarding up those many Goods, which now suddenly perished in the merciless Flames? Did not others of you curse your Injustice, and Falseness in your Trades? others, your Intemperance and Riot? and many in this City, their odious Hypocrisie, and base prostituting Religion to unworthy Ends, which, with other Sins, provoked God to so great Anger? Did you not then make many serious Promises of better living, should you any ways escape, or ever recover so great a Calamity? What would you not then have undertook, nay, performed, onely to have been assured, that in so short a time you should be again restored to your Dwellings,
Trades,

Trades, and Possessions; that this City should so soon rise out of its Rubbish and Ashes, and all of us return to live in greater splendour and ease than we did before? And O had we lived answerably to those Vows and Promises which this surprizing Providence did then extort from us in the day of our Fears, what an holy, what an happy City had this been!

But, alas! do not the same Vices, to say no worse, reign amongst us, which did before Sixty six? So that we have great cause to fear, tho' I am loth to speak it, that it is e'en now time for God to think of some more smarting Punishment, more grievous than any we have yet felt, which may give some check to the overflowing Atheism and Wickedness of this Age. And doubt not, but he will do it in his due time, unless we stop his Hand by a general Reformation.

God doth not take any delight in such Severities. It is no pleasure to him to make such havock in the World. This is his *strange work*: He is very loth to be brought to it. He doth not *willingly grieve* any particular Man; much less doth he love to exercise his Power in laying whole Cities and Kingdoms waste: But onely, when he is concerned in Honour to vindicate his Authority, his Laws, his Name, from bold Profanations, and open barefac'd Affronts, then neither our Wealth, nor Power, nor Policy, can secure us from the Omnipotent Arm of Divine Justice. And indeed, it is very great Impudence for us to expect or hope, that God should bless or protect

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that People who live in open Rebellion against him.

By all this it appears, that Vice and Wickedness is not onely by its own Malignity apt to destroy us; but also, where it prevails and abounds, doth, as it were, necessitate God Almighty to visit such a People, especially when they are irreclaimable by any gentler Methods, with such signal and remarkable Judgments, as may keep the World in some awe of him, and make them confess, That *there is a God who judgeth the earth.*

Whereas the general Practice of Religion recommends and intitles us to the Almighty's Protection, engages him on our side, secures to us the constant Succours and Aids of Divine Providence. God will watch over our Cities and Houses, will bless our Land with Increase, will deliver us from all our Enemies, and think nothing too much, or too good for us. *Seek ye the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, in the first place, and all these things shall be added to you.*

3. In the last place, I appeal to the Experience of all Ages,; and we shall certainly find the State and Condition of any Kingdom or Society to have been more or less prosperous, according to the Manners that have prevailed amongst them: Which was of old acknowledged by the *Orator*, in that known Saying, *Omnia prospera eveniunt colentibus Deos, adversa spernentibus*; *The People that have a care of Religion, are always successful; but unhappy, when they are Irreligious.*

God indeed may defer pouring forth his Wrath for
a while,

a while, to give Men time and space of Repentance ; but at last, when *their iniquities are full*, (as the Scripture expresseth it) Divine Vengeance hath overtaken them, which hath commonly been so much the sorer, the longer it hath been delaied. If we look therefore upon any one whole Kingdom, or great City, as joynd together in one Society, we shall generally find, that according as Vertue, Justice, Temperance, Sincerity, and Fidelity hath flourished amongst them, so long have they thrived, grown Great, Powerful, and Wealthy, and abounded with all Good things ; and never hardly were there any Times or Places famous for Publick Prophaneness, Debaucheries, and Contempt of Things Sacred, but they also remarkably bore the sad Tokens of the Divine Displeasure.

There is nothing more evident than this in the whole Story of the *Jews*, that as long as they continued constant to the Worship of the True God, in that manner he had prescrib'd to them, they either lived in Peace, or their Arms were always successful, and their Land flowed with Milk and Honey : But when at any time they fell into Idolatry, it was always attended with some mortal Disease, or the devouring Sword, or a long Captivity. Their Sins would poyson their Air, blast their Corn, weaken their Hands in the Day of Battel, till at length, after many various Dispensations of Mercy and Judgment, when they refused to be amended by the Preaching of the Son of God himself, their City was

sick'd and burnt by the *Roman* Legions, their glorious Temple demolished, their Polity dissolved, and their whole Nation involved in one common Ruine.

But because it is usually objected in this Case, That God hath not dealt so with other People and Nations, as he did with the *Jews*, whose Political Sovereign and Governour he was after a more peculiar manner; and that we are not to argue from Gods special Providences towards them, nor draw his Proceedings with *Jerusalem* into a Preident to other Kingdoms and Cities; we may therefore search into Profane Histories, and every Age will give in some Testimony to this Truth.

If we inquire into the Causes of the Dissolution of those Potent Empires and States which once were so famous in the World, or of the Destruction of those great and populous Cities, of which the bare Names onely now remain, and we can hardly find out the Places where they once stood, we shall see abundant reason to impute their Ruine to their own Follies and Wickedness. Either they fell into Parties and Divisions, and so crumbled into Pieces, or their Strength and Wealth being wasted by Ease and Luxury, they were exposed to the Fury of a Foreign Enemy; or else by the Cry of their enormous Sins provoked God to overthrow them by Inundations, Earthquakes, Fire, or some such depopulating Judgments. This is particularly observed by almost all that treat of this Argument, concerning those mighty Revolutions which hapned in
the

the Four first *Monarchies*, as they are commonly called

That which gave occasion to the enlarging the *Babylonian* Monarchy, and made it spread so fast and wide, was neither their own Courage nor Counsel, but the Transgressions & Provocations of the Eastern Nations, which moved God to give them over as a Prey to the King of *Affyria*, whom he calls by the Prophet *the rod of his anger*, and made use of *to destroy and cut off nations not a few*. And when the Lord by him had performed his whole Work, and the Sins of *Babylon* were ripe for Vengeance, then did God raise up *Cyrus*. who at a time of a great Feast, in the midst of their Jollity and Security, entred into that City, and fulfilled all those Threatnings which God's Prophets had often denounced against that People.

When, in process of time, the *Persians* had sunk into the same Vices for which God had destroyed the *Babylonians*, how easily and suddenly were they conquered and over-run by *Alexander* and his *Grecians*, to whom God gave Success vastly beyond their own Hopes, greater than they themselves could expect, either from the Number or Strength of their Armies?

After which, the *Grecians* themselves, being softened by *Persian* Luxury, and infected with the Vices of *Asia*, soon submitted to the *Romans*; of whom the fore-named *Cicero* affirms, *Non calliditate ac robore, sed Pietate & Religione omnes gentes nationesque superavisse*; That they overcame all the Nations, not by Force or Craft, but by piety and Religion.

And

And of them it is commonly taken notice of in the *Roman* History, That whilst their Senators and People inviolably maintained that strict Justice, Faithfulness, and Sobriety, that was so remarkable in the first Founders of that great Empire, so long they flourished, and enlarged their Dominions, till at last they were themselves enslaved to the Vices of all the Nations they had subdued; and then how miserably were they harass'd with Civil Wars? and in the issue became a Prey to Barbarous People, God giving them up to be over-run by the *Goths*, and *Vandals*, and *Hunns*, a cowardly and contemptible People, if compared with the *Romans*, whose Success yet was so strange and unaccountable, that it could not be attributed to any Second Causes, but only to the Hand of God, by them punishing the *Christians* of the West, then grown luxurious, and almost incorrigible by too much Felicity; as one of their Generals, *Attila*, stiled himself *Flagellum Dei*, God's Scourge to chastise the Wickedness of that People.

Should we go no further than our own Country, our own Historians do all along observe, That those great Desolations which have been made in this Island, either by Foreign Invasions, or Intestine Divisions, or Infectious Diseases, were always preceded by a notorious degeneracy and corruption of Manners. And against this, I believe, there are but few Exceptions; and where there are any, such single Instances are not according to God's ordinary establish'd Rule and Method,

thod, according to which we ought to expect he will always deal with us.

By this time, I hope, you are all convinced of the evil nature of Vice and Wickedness, where it prevails and abounds; how contrary it is to, and destructive of the Publick Peace and Prosperity of any Kingdom or City. What remains, is to make some particular Application to our selves; which I shall do, by drawing these four Inferences.

1. Hence we may learn, what great disservice they do unto, and what great dishonour they bring upon Religion, who make pretence of it to the embroiling and disturbance of Societies, and the breach of the Publick Peace. Government and Society was settled in the World from the very beginning of it, by the general Providence of God, as being absolutely necessary for our common Peace and Safety; and therefore nothing ought to be admitted, as any part of Revealed Religion, which is plainly inconsistent with this Prime and Original Institution of God.

I should call that any thing rather than Religion, which makes Men Factious and Seditious, that prompts them to publick Outrages and Mischiefs, that teaches them to burn Cities, and to make *Stirs* in a Kingdom, that inspirits Men with a fierce Zeal which transgresses all Bounds, keeps no Place or Rank, observes no Mean or Decorum, that is promoted by secret Plots, and open Rebellion. If such a Religion could be supposed to come
from

from Heaven, we might change the Words of *St. Paul*, and more truly say, That *God was the Author not of Peace, but of Confusion*. But in this last Age the false Visard and Mask of Religion hath been so often pulled off, and such deformed Visages have appeared to have been disguised under it, that it is to be hoped, that the People of this Kingdom or City will not be easily cheated again into a Belief of the Honesty or Good-meaning of any Persons who joyn in a Party against the Lawful Government they live under, let their Pretences be what they will.

It is otherwise with True Religion: It is quite of another Genius: It begets other Tempers and Spirits in Men. *The wisdom that comes from above, is first pure, then peaceable*. Especially our *Christianity* is so admirably fitted for the benefit and advantage of Societies, that were there no Obligation to the Practice of it from the Considerations of another Life, yet all wise Men would think themselves bound to the observance of the Chief Laws of our Saviour, were it onely out of respect to our Peace and Security in this present World.

2. Since the Publick Welfare depends upon the Manners of Men, we may thence conclude, how much it is the Interest, as well as Duty, of all Governours and Magistrates, in their severall Places, to discourage and punish all Vice and Wickedness, and to countenance and promote True Religion, which is the great Instrument of Political Happiness. The more the fear of God, and the Practice of Righteousness, prevails amongst the People,

ple, the more easie and safe will the Government be; and therefore Religion doth fully reward the Civil Powers for all the Protection they can give it. True Religion tends so much to the Establishment and Prosperity of any Nation, that they whose Office it is to look after the Publick Good, cannot do any thing better for themselves, or for the People committed to their Charge; for the securing their own just Authority, or maintaining the People in Peace and good Order, than by all means to preserve and increase amongst them a Reverence and Obedience to Almighty God and his Laws.

This will keep them in firm subjection to their Superiours; this will unite them one to another in Love and Charity; and, which is never to be forgotten, this will procure Gods Blessing both upon Governours and People.

And since Christians are unhappily divided into several Denominations and Communions, take *that Church*, I beseech you, into your especial Care and Patronage, whose Principles do most effectually contribute towards Mens orderly and quiet living together in Societies. If you can find any Church or Body of Christians in the World, whose Doctrines are more Loyal, whose Government is better consistent with Monarchy, whose Practices have been more peaceable at all times, than the Reformed Church of *England*, I would e'en exhort you then to forsake and renounce ours, and not onely tolerate, but establish and set up that Church amongst us. But in this certainly our Church hath no Competitor. Peaceable and quiet living under the Civil Government, always was, and

is still the Glory of the Church of *England*: This Praise she stands upon, and challengeth as due to her; and on this account doth she with confidence recommend her self, and all her true Members, to the Care and Protection of those who are in Power and Authority, that they would be so just as to defend that Religion, that Church, which doth best defend and support the Publick State.

3. Hence we may learn the true Cause of all those Publick Evils and Calamities that have befallen this Kingdom or City of late Years. Our Sins have been the Natural Causes of some of them, the Meritorious Causes of others. Some we have brought upon our selves, as the necessary Effects of our own wicked Courses; others God in Justice hath inflicted upon us, as the Punishment of our Disobedience.

I shall not now undertake to give in a Catalogue of those many Sins that we in this City have been notoriously guilty of. I had much rather leave that Work to your selves, for every Man to smite upon his own Breast, in which he will find a faithful Monitor, I mean his Conscience, which will impartially tell him wherein he hath provoked God, and contributed to those Judgments and Distractions we have laboured under, if so be he will but patiently attend to its Suggestions, and give it leave and opportunity freely to speak unto him. I am sure it much more becomes us all this Day to give Glory to God, and to take Shame to our selves, and to charge and accuse our selves, than wholly to shift off all the Guilt & Blame upon others.

We are very apt indeed to impute these Publick Evils to
other

other Causes; we are very curious in guessing at the immediate Instruments of them; and, which is worst of all, too many amongst us have been on all occasions ready to lay all Publick Miscarriages and Misfortunes at the Door of their Governours and Superiours: whereas the true Cause hath been from our selves; wherein no one can acquit himself, tho' some far more innocent than others. But I shall rather chuse to spend that little time your Patience can yet allow me, in persuading you all to amend, than in ripping up the Vices of this Age, or City, or several Parties of Men amongst us, for which we may justly suppose God hath visited us with the Plague, this dreadful Fire, and (which was no less punishment) those unnatural Divisions and Heats which of late so violently broke out amongst us, and threatned sudden Ruine both to Church and State.

4. And lastly This Doctrine, which I have now proved to you, teacheth us the best Expedient to prevent such Judgments for the future, and to settle us in firm Peace; which is, a general Reformation of our Lives and Manners.

Blessed be God, the Case is much mended with us since the dreadful Burning of *London*. Our City hath been many Years re-built, and that more splendid and glorious than before. We miss not that number of Inhabitants who were swept away by the devouring Plague; nor hardly now do we feel any of the dismal Effects of that terrible Fire. We seem to have weather'd out those sore Calamities. And tho' of late our intestine Animosities arose to such an height, as that we all feared, a woful Interruption of our Peace, yet God hath not as hitherto delivered us in-

to our own Hands, nor suffered us to destroy our selves. Nay, things tend at present towards an happy Settlement and Composure, and we begin to entertain hopes of living in quiet and safety, *every man sitting under his own vine and figtree*. The Face of our Heavens is more clear and serene, and the black Clouds that presag'd so dreadful a Storm, seem in some measure to be dispersed. Yet let us not deceive our selves, and rashly conclude, that *the bitterness of death is now past*: For, as I said at first, the same Causes will always produce the same Effects; and if the same Sins still continue amongst us, they will soon be attended with the same, or worse Desolations and Confusions.

If this be the natural Effect of prevailing Atheism, Prophaneness, and Contempt of Religion, of Hatred and Division, to weaken a Nation or People, to unsettle a Kingdom, to unhinge the Government, and dissolve all Societies, let us not fondly think, that God Almighty will always miraculously interpose, and hinder these natural Consequences of Things. I say, God will not by extraordinary ways preserve those who obstinately persist in such Courses which naturally lead to their own Destruction.

What Peace then can we expect amongst us, if, after all these Vicissitudes of Divine Providence towards us, we still continue unreclaimed? When so many not only neglect Religion, as a thing full of trouble, but scorn it, as unworthy of, and below them; when they are ashamed to own their Belief or Fear of God, as if it were a sign of a vulgar Spirit and mean Parts; when Men exercise their little Wits in abusing and deriding the most serious and sacred things;

things; What Villanies or Treasons are not such Men ripe for? What can oblige them, or tie their Hands?

What Peace can there be in a Land or City where such prodigious Debauchery reigns? where such horrid Oaths and Perjuries abound? where Men sin without shame, nay, glory in it as an Accomplishment? *Shall not God visit for these things?*

In short, What Peace can there be, as long as there remain amongst us such bitter Envyings and Heart-burnings, such unchristian Separations and Contentions, such Complaints and Discontents under such happy Circumstances of Affairs, as that no Nation under Heaven is in the like? These Vices and bad Dispositions do naturally tend to our Ruine, besides that they highly provoke God Almighty against us.

I come not hither at this time to prophecy evil things against this City or Kingdom, nor would I amuse you with needless Fears. I know well this hath been the great Art used by the Enemies of our Peace to raise Disturbances amongst us, by possessing the Peoples Minds with strange Jealousies and Suspicions, as if all things were running to ruine, and our Laws, Liberties, and Religion were all now at stake, and in extreme hazard. The onely thing I would earnestly desire you to consider, is, That the greatest Danger we are in is from our selves, and consequently, the way to preserve our Peace is to reform our selves.

And now at this time, when our most Gracious Sovereign, whom God long preserve, hath taken particular care of us in this City, and hath done what in Him lieth to prevent

vent our undoing our selves, by putting the Government of it into safe Hands, and making several Publick Reformati-
 ons amongst us, let us all in our several Stations be prevailed upon to do our part, every Man to turn from the evil of his ways, to fear God, to honour the King, to love his Neighbour, and mind his own private Duty, and to carry himself as becomes a Christian, in all his several Relations he stands in to other Men, whereby we shall make God our Friend, and become hearty Friends one to another.

Wise Men, by subtle Policies and Contrivances, may divert our Trouble and Danger for a while; but it will never be well long with us, till the true Christian Spirit of Love, and Charity, and Meekness, and Submission, and Obedience, generally prevail amongst us. Then indeed we should soon see happy Days, and be freed from those Fears and Disturbances that have so long troubled our *Israel*. This is the best Project for Insuring our new Houses, and continuing those great and manifold Mercies, both Spiritual and Temporal, which we in this City yet enjoy above any other People, to us, and to our Posterity after us. How quiet, how settled a People should we be, if we would but give credit to the Word of God, and follow our Blessed Saviour's Directions!

And let not any one now think this a mean and pitiful Contrivance, and that himself hath far better Models and Projects for our Settlement, with which his politic Head labours and is in pain, till he be delivezed of them in all Companies; since the State and Condition of Humane
 Affairs

Affairs is so disposed by God's wise Providence, that there can be no lasting Peace without the practise of Vertue and Religion.

Nor let any one think, that by thus reforming himself, he being but one, and perhaps but of small Interest or Influence in the City or Kingdom, it will be of very little concernment or advantage to the whole; for it is plain, that our Reformation must begin from single Persons, and so proceed by degrees. It hath sometimes indeed hapned, that there hath been a sudden general Reformation of the Manners of Men throughout an whole City or Nation, as at *Niniveh* upon the Preaching of *Jonah*, upon some great Fright or extraordinary Judgment, when all the People, as one Man, have turned from the evil of their ways. But this is not our Case. Our Reformation must be accomplished (to borrow an Illustration) as this famous City of *London* was re-built; the Foundation of which was not all laid at the same time, nor *continued Streets raised at once, but at first here a House, and there a House, to which others by degrees were joyn'd*; and every private Man took care to build his own House, and Authority took care of Publick Buildings, *till at last single Houses were united into whole Streets, whole Streets into this beautiful and glorious City*. Thus our Reformation must take its beginning from some few, from whom others may take Pattern and Encouragement, till at length it generally prevails; and why should not good Examples be as effectual to reclaim this Age, as bad ones have been to debauch it?

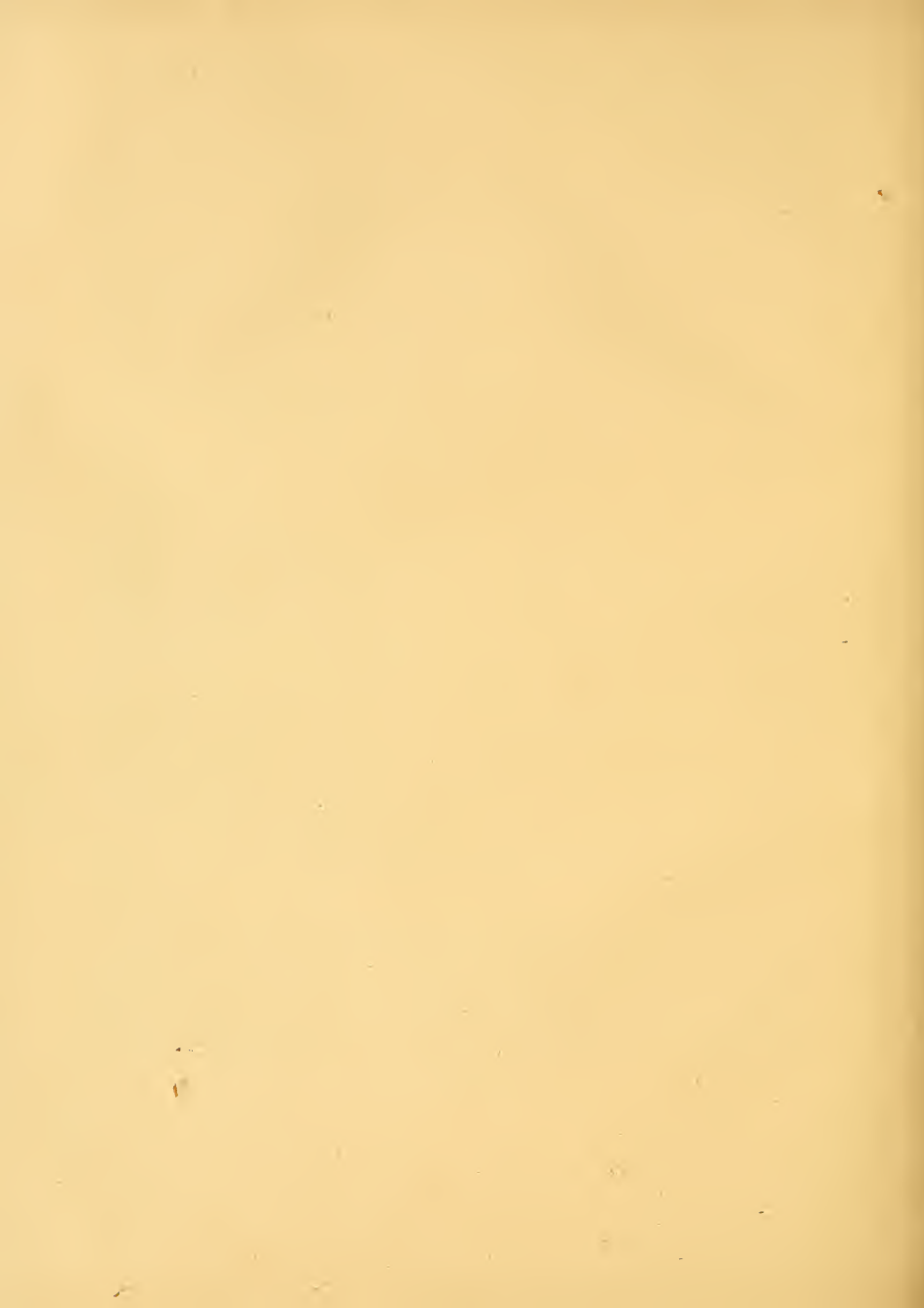
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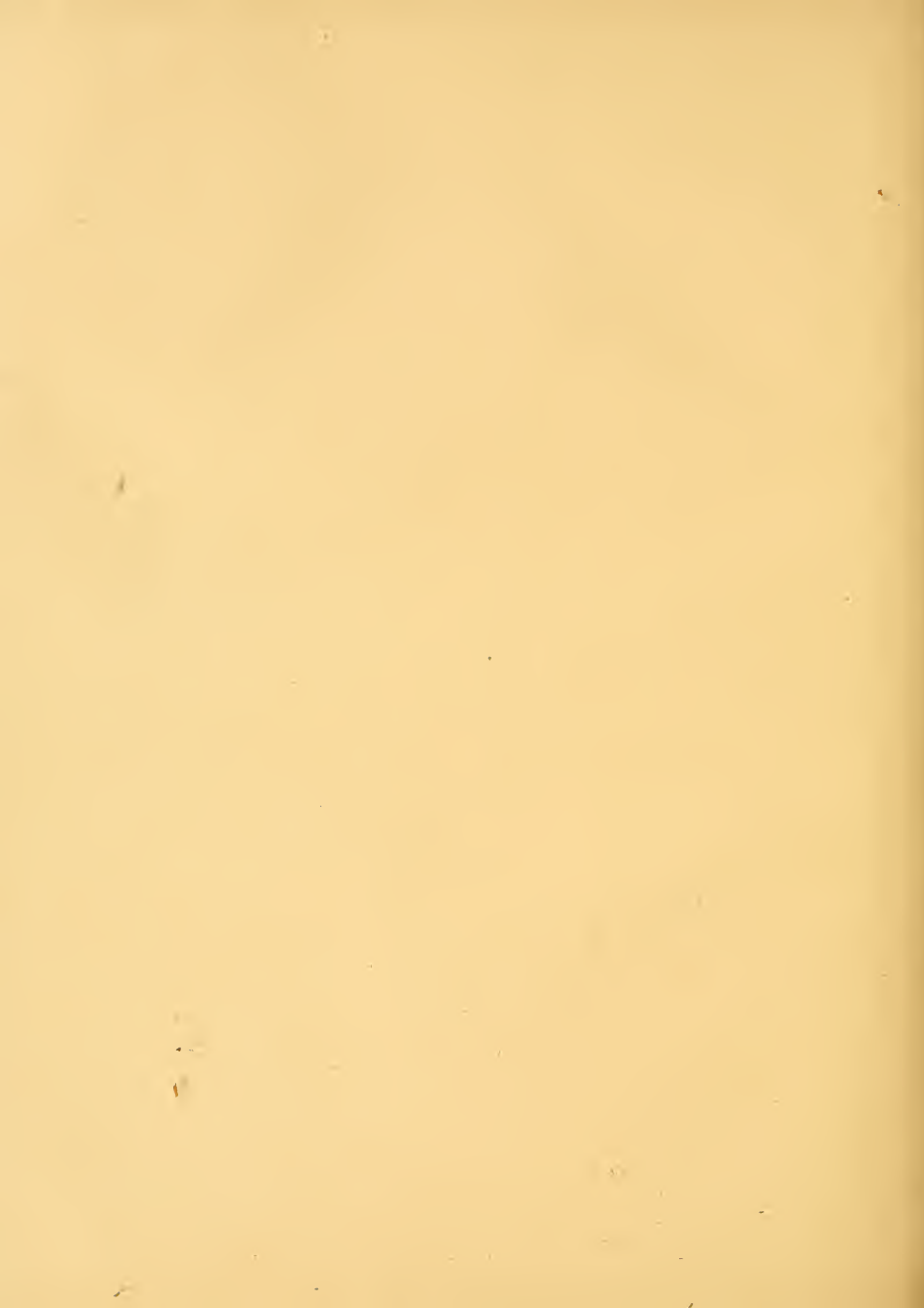
To conclude all ; Of all the great Arguments which our Religion affords us, to engage us to the leaving our Sins, and amending our Lives, I have this day insisted on this one, *viz. That it is the onely certain Way and Method of securing the Peace and Happiness of this City, and of our Native Country.* There may be many amongst us whose Minds are not considerably affected with the Apprehensions of future Rewards and Punishments; yet sense of present Good or Evil maketh deep and lasting Impressions upon them: Who, tho they seem to have no regard for their everlasting Happiness in the other World, yet are ready to hazard their Lives, to expose their Estates and Fortunes, to sacrifice all that Men usually count dear, to the Service and Preservation of their Country; and now one would think it should not be altogether impossible to persuade such Persons, for the same Reason, to live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present World. Shall a Man be ready at any time to venture and loose his Life, and be loth to leave his Sins for the Publick Good and Safety ?

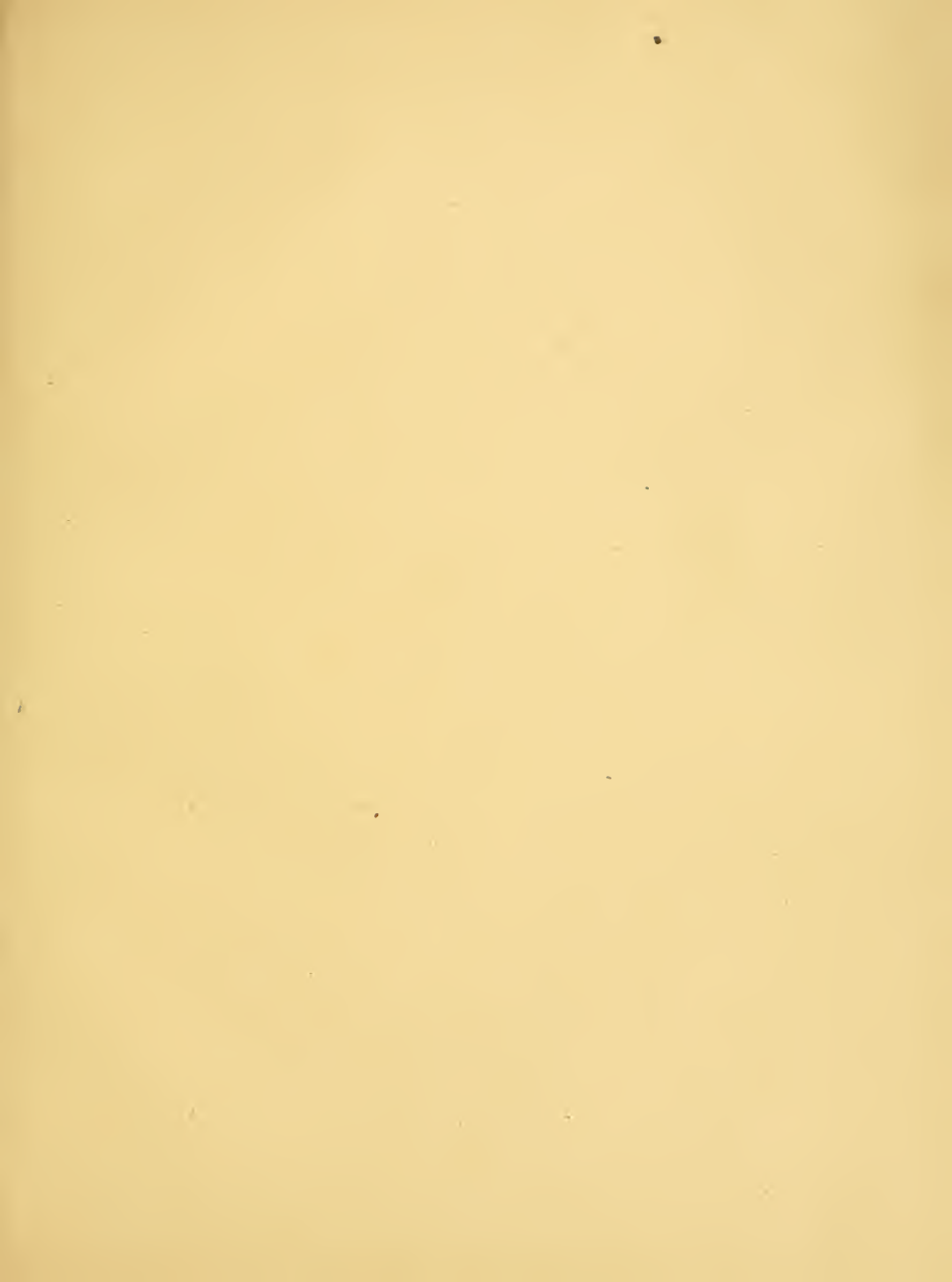
For your Countries sake therefore, as you value the Welfare and Prosperity of this Kingdom, and this great City; as you desire the continuance of those many singular Blessings which yet thro' God's Patience we are possessed of; as you would avoid the repetition of those Judgments you have already smarted under, or the inflicting of new and greater; in the Name of God, I exhort you all to repent and amend. Our Sins are many and great; they have (as I have shewn you) a natural tendency to Ruine and Confusion; their Cry is gone up to Heaven against us. Delay not therefore to seek the Lord whilst he is to be found, and to turn to him with your whole Hearts; and then shall God be reconciled to us, and turn away his Wrath from us, and prevent those Judgments we fear, and remove those we labour under, and bless us with Peace, and Plenty, and Prosperity. *Happy are the people that are in such a case, yea, happy are the people whose God is the Lord.*

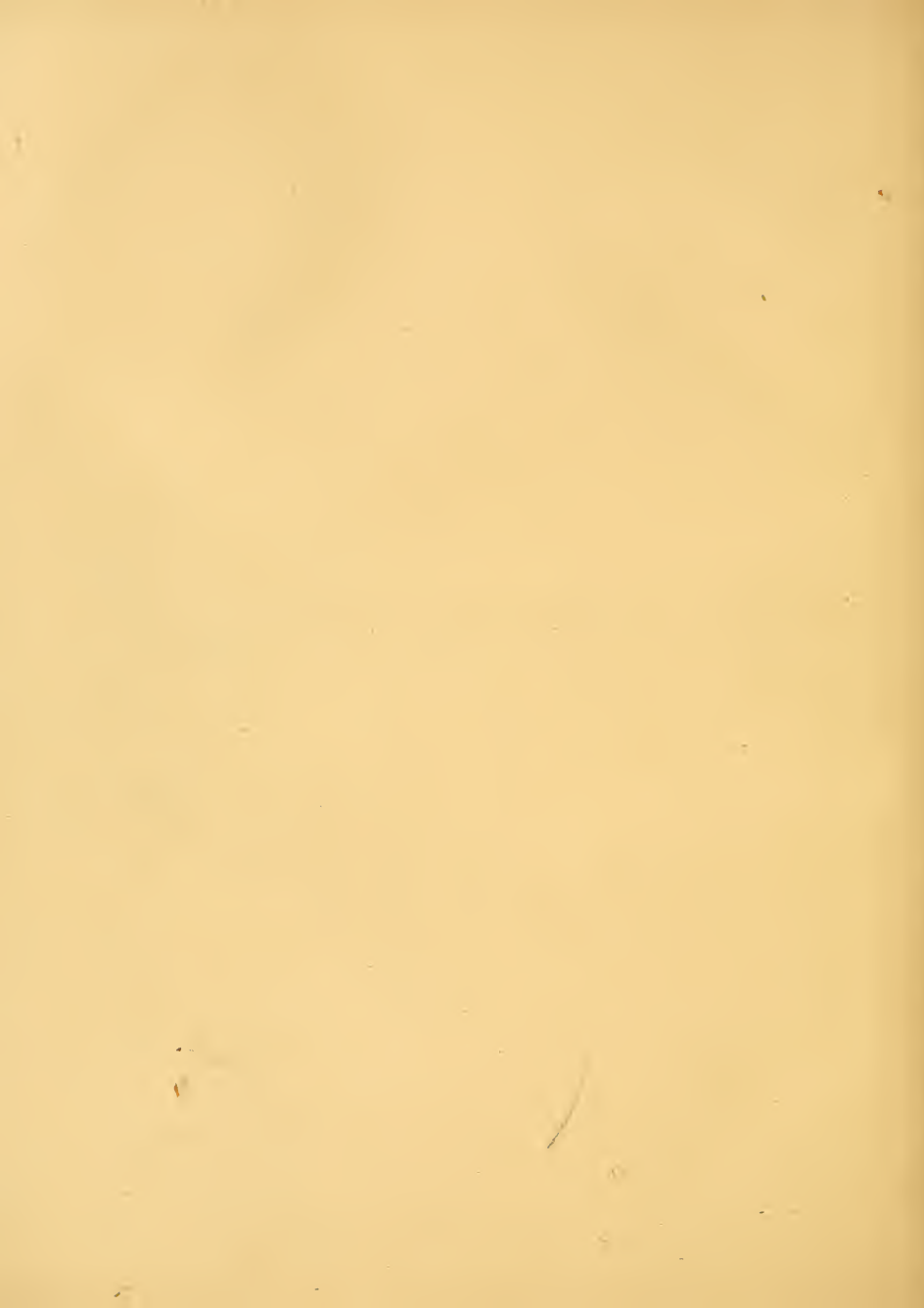
I onely add, That such a general Reformation of our own Tempers and Lives is vastly more our Duty, infinitely more for our private Advantage, and the Publick Good of the whole Kingdom, than all our Heat and Zeal for Reforming of Publick Grievances, or for amending the State, or other Men. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

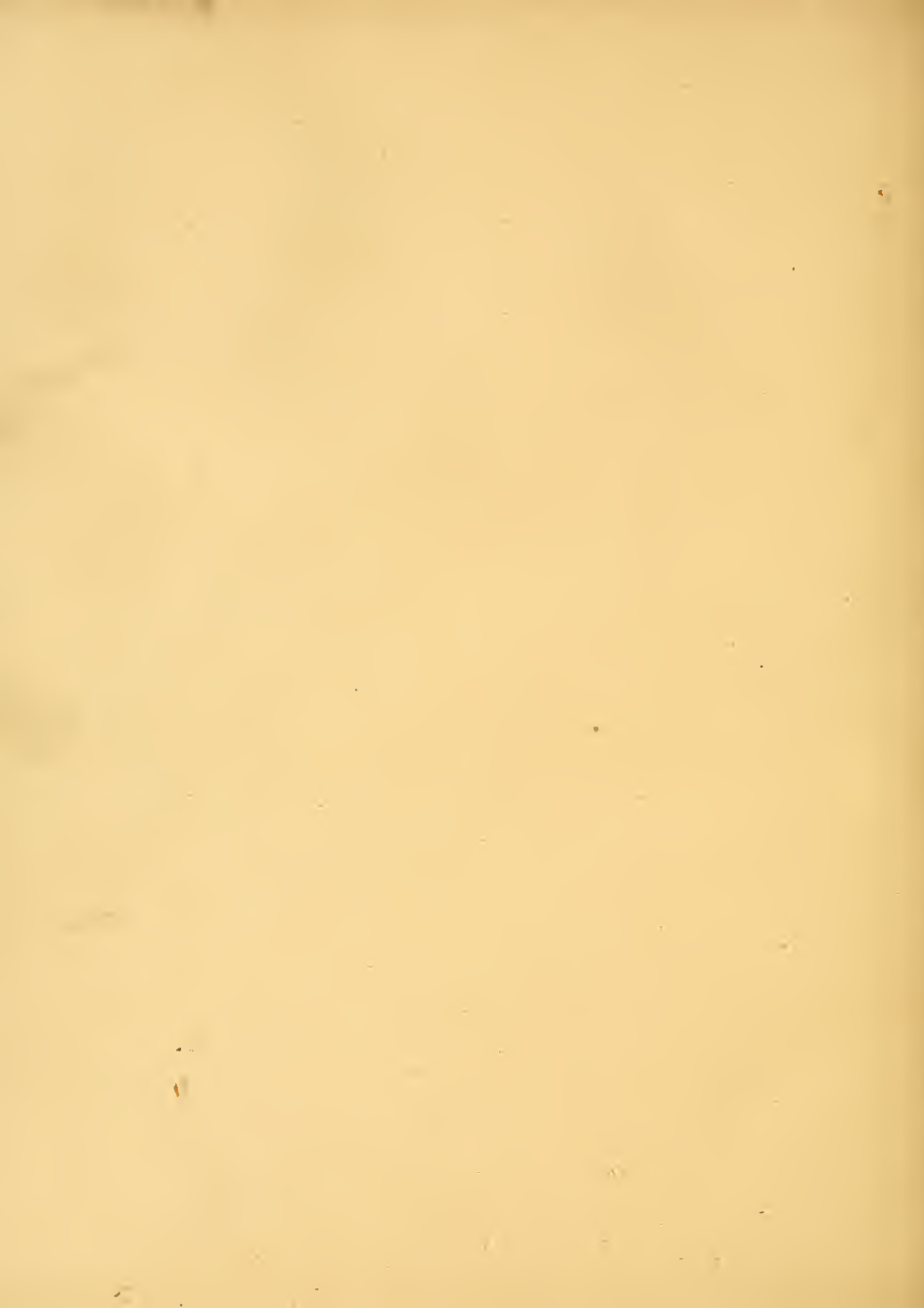
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