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S E R M O N

AGAINST

False Prophets.

PREACHED

IN S. MARGES CHVRCH

in OXFORD, shortly after the
Surrender of that Garrison.

By JASPER MAINE, D. D. and one of
the Students of *Christ-Church*, OXON.

JER. 23. 16.

*Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Hearken not unto the
words of the Prophets that prophesie unto you; They
make you vaine; they speak a vision of their owne
heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.*



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A Sermon Against False Prophets

Jasper Mayne, 1646

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A SERMON AGAINST
FALSE PROPHETS.

EZEK. 22. 28.

Her Prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken.

THE PREFACE.

THat which the best *Orator* said of *Oratory* put to the worst use, *Nihil est tam horridum, tam incultum, quod non splendescat oratione*, That there is nothing so deformed, or rude, which may not be made amiable by *Speech*, hath always been verified of *Religion* too. No one thing hath, in all Ages, been more abused, to paint and disguise foule *Actions*. It hath been made the *Art* to cozen people with their owne *Devotions*, and to make them, in the meane time, think sacredly of their seducers. *Conspiracies*, and *Insurrections*, dressed in these colours, have been called *holy Associations and Leagues*: And the *Ambitious*, to work the more securely on the credulity of the *simple*, have not onely presented *evil* to them growing on the *Tree of Good*, but have proceeded thus much farther

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farther in the *fallacie*, that they have still made *forbidden fruits* seeme *pleasant to the eye*. And the *false colours* under which they have teemed *pleasant*, have always been taken from *Religion*. Thus, in their *Heathen States*, where they first made their *owne gods*, and then *worshipt* them; never plot was hatcht to disturb the *Common-wealth*; but the writings of some *Sybil*, or other, were entited to that *plot*; And never any *designe* was laid to destroy the *Romane Empire*, but some *Augur*, or *Priest* was taken in, whose part 't was, to make the *Entrails*, and *Liver* of it, whole part 't was, to make the *ambition* of the *designe*. And his *sacrifice*, give credit to the *ambitious men*, the better to gild over their proceedings, still entited *God* to them. Who, as if he had been one of those *Tutelar*, changeable *Deities*, which used to be enticed, and called over from one side to another, they still entertained the people, that they who most zealously pretended to him, had him most. And that however he be the *God of Order*, and him most. And that however he be the *God of Justice*, and *Agreement* among men, yet in favour of his *owne Cause*, he would for awhile be content to change his *nature*, and become the *God of Injustice*, *Disorder*, and *Confusion* too.

The better to work this persuasion into the mindes of the *Multitude*, their first piece of policy was to draw the *Prophets* into their *Faction*. This is exprest to us in the 25. verse of this Chapter. Where 'tis laid of *Jerusalem*, *There is a Conspiracy of her Prophets, in the midst thereof*. And truly, 'twas a Conspiracy so unfit for *Prophets*, that the resemblance of it was never yet found in any but those Men of a much unholy stile, of whom the *Historian* saies, *Est aliquand tian inter Latrones & Sicarios, sicut, that Theeves and Robbers hold League and friendship amongst themselves*. For 'tis said in the fol-

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lowing words of that verse, that 'twas a *Conspiracie like the roaring of a Lyon, ravening the prey*. A *Conspiracie*, by which they devoured *Soules*, and took to themselves the *Treasure*, and *precious things of the Land*. And because pillage of this publick Nature, could hardly be gained without the *Death*, and *Murder* of the *Owners*, 'tis laid in the close of that verse, *That they made her many Widowes in the midst thereof*. To which if the *Scripture* had added these two *Words* of pittie, the *Fatherlesse* and *Orphanes* too, nothing could have beene added to the *calamitie* of the *Description*.

Nor is there a much more favourable Character stuck by the *holy Ghost*, upon the *Priests* of those times. For by that which is laid at the 26. verse of this Chapter, (And 'tis well worth your marking) you may perceive that the *Disorder* to which things were brought in the *State*, sprung first from the *Disorder*, to which things were brought in the *Church*. For 'tis there said, *That The Priests had violated the Law, and prophaned the holy Things; That they did put no difference between the Holy, and prophane, nor made any Distinction between the uncleane, and the cleane*. In briefe, the *Legall*, well establishd *Service*, and *Worship* of *God* was at a kind of losse, and *Indifference*. 'Twas referred to every mans *Fancy*, to make to himselfe his own *Religion*. *Blemishd*, and *unblemishd* *Sacrifices* began to be sacred alike. And the *Scripture* of another *Prophet*, became quite altered; He that offered a *Swine*, was thought as religious, as he that *slew an Oxe*; And he that *cut off a Dogs neck*, was thought as liberal as a *Sacrificer*, as he that brought a *Lambe* to the *Altar*.

Next, having taken the *Prophets*, and *Priests*, so far in to their *plot*, as to mingle & confound the *Services* of the

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Church,

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red for men to prove them false; And to perceive, that, contrary to all true *predictions*, they would never come to passe. Lastly, (which was the *third*, and great abuse of their office and *function*) they were not afraid to entitle God to their *vanities* and *lies*. As often as they were pleased to deceive the people, he was cited, and quoted, as the *inspurer* of the *deceit*. And this bold, insolent sinne was committed against the *holy Ghost*, that the vaine, foolish, groundlesse *conjectures* of the Prophets, were called his *Inspirations*: who to make their falsehoods take the stronglyer, still uttered them in the holy, Prophetical style of *Truths*, saying, *Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord had not spoken*. All which contracted into a narrower roome, the *Irreligious Compliance* of *Spiritual* men with *Lay*, the *weaknesse* of their *pretences*, the *abuse* of their *Calling*, by uttering their owne *vanities* for *inspirations*, and their owne *Fictions* for *Truths*, together with the *injury* offered to God, by entitling Him to all this, shall be the *parts* on which I will build my future Discourse. In the ordering of which, I will begin with the *Compliance* or *Combination*. Some there were among the *Jewes* (as you have them decyphered in the former verse) who did *shed blood*, that they might get to themselves *dishonest gains*; and some false Prophets there were, who, to goe *sharers* in that *gain*, by the *Helmesse* of their *Function*, did disguise and *dawbe* them.

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The comply-
ance.

It was well said of a virtuous man in the praise of *Virtue*, *Si oculis cernatur*, If it could be seene, or could be put into *Limbes* or *Colours*, nothing would more *insame*, or ravish the *Beholders*. And he had spoken as well in the dispraise of *Vice*, had he said, *Si oculis cernatur*, If it could be made visible, or put into *Colours*, nothing would appear more deformed, or lothsome.

To

To speak of it, as it deserves, there is so little *Beauty* or *Amiability* in *Dishonest actions*, that to be disliked, and abhorred, it hath alwayes been sufficient for them to be understood. None but the *Father* of *mischiefes*, ever loved *mischiefes* for it selfe: And none but the *Children* of such a *parent*, have found out a comynesse in *Evill*, merily as 'tis *Evill*. Of all other men, who have not quite lost their *Reason* with their *Innocence*, and over whose understandings darknesse and *Errour* have not so prevailed, as to prevent *wise* and *virtue* to them, as one and the same thing, the saying of the *Poet* hath alwayes held true, *Exemplo quodcumq; malo committitur ipsi displicet Auctori*; Bad actions are so farre from pleasing others, that they never yet pleased themselves. Nor can I persuade my selfe, that ever any may could so stifle his *Conscience*, or force it, (like some compelled to enter into unwilling contracts, to embrace a *Bad Design*, but he for that time divided himselfe between his *Design*, and his *Hatred*. And the advantages which have accompanied the *lowllesse* of the *Emprize*, have never been so great, but that the *poore* colensed *offendor*, at the same time sinned, and lothed himselfe. But then, as some either borne, or growne deformed, have found out certain arts to hide their deformities; As some I say, of a withered, ill shaped complexion, have by the help of their pencil, turned *yellow* into *red*, and *pale* into *white*, and by the same help, have placed a *Rose* there, where there was before a *decay*; And so have bestowed, not only an *Artificial* beauty, but an *Artificial* youth upon themselves, and in this borrowed shape have flattered themselves, and deceived others: So few bad men have been so *unpolitick*, not to hide their *Deformities* by *painting* too. And this cunning use hath beene made of *ver-*

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one, that it hath always been made the colour to adorn, and cover vice. A thing the more easie to be effected, because that saying of the Philosopher hath always bene true, *Difficile est Nonnulla vicia à virtutibus scelerere, bene prudentes nonnunquam fallunt*, some vices are so neede-
ad prudentes nonnunquam fallunt, some vices are frequently aliied to some virtues, that wile men have frequently mistaken them for *Trinnes*. Thus Rashnesse with success hath past for *Counsel*, and covard ce with discretion hath past for *Counsel*. Covetousnesse well ordered hath worn the shape of *Thrift*, and *Ryot* hath put on the name of *Magnificence*, and a large mind. But where this *Neighbourhood* between good and evil is not, other helps have been taken in; And a *verus* of one shape hath been made to disguise the fowlenesse of a vice of another. Thus among the *Jewes* in our *Saviour Christ's* time, there were some who tithed *Mint*, that they might withhold *Justice*, and some payd *Cummins*, that they might keepe backe the weightier matters of the Law. Some made long prayers, that they might devour *Widows Houses*, and some were *broad Phylacteries*, that they might swallow *Orphan goods*. And thus in this *Prophet Ezechiel's* time, some disguised their rapine by a *Prophet*, and their slaughters by a *Priest*; their Covetousnesse by a *Seer*, and their Oppressions by a *Man of God*. Betweene whom the parts were so speciously carried, that, as if there had been no such things in Nature, as *Right or Wrong, Justice or Injustice*, but only as *Holy men* would please to call them, the one devoured the prey, the other gave a *Blessing* to it; The one destroyed *Soules*, the other excused the *Murder*; The one committed *Sacrilege*, the other made it *plausible*. Or if you will have me expresse my self to the true *Historicall* Importance of this Text, the one grinded the faces of the *poore*, and polluted themselves both with private, and

and publique *Oppressions*; the other gilded, and palliated, and veiled, and dawbed them. *Complazabant*, sayes one, *Gypsians*, layes another *Translation*. The *Prophet* did *smooth*, and *steeke*, and put a *sayecruft* upon them. The words are diverse, but have all one denie.

For first, whether we expresse their palliation of *Sins* by *dawbing*, (which is the word here used by our *English Translatours*, and answers to *Saint Jeromes Oblinibans* in the *Latins*, and the *Septuagint* *ὀσινω* in the *Greece*) 'tis a *Word* it a learned *Interpreter*, well skilled in the *Originall*, have not deceived me) taken from those who deal in *Oynments*. And the meaning of the place is, That as some, skilled in such *Confections*, have at times bene hired to disguise *deadly receipts* in *fragrant Smells*, and so have conveyed *poison* in a *perfume*, and clothed *Death* in the *Breath* and *Ayre* of an *odoriferous Sent*; so these *Prophets*, here in the Text, among the other *Abuses* of their *Calling*, changed one of *Salmans* best *proverbs* into one of the worst *Compliances*: Which was, that by the *Opinion* of their *Holynesse* among the *people*, they made some mens *ill names* passe, as 'tis there said of *Good*, like a *precious Oynment* *some* *ill* *forth*, *perfumes* and *Odours* were put upon *Ambition* and *Avarice*. And *Gods Lawes* were too a while taught to forget their *style*; And those *Commandmentes* were made molt to defend the men, who did most violate, transgress, and breake them. Or next, whether we use the word *steeke*, or *smooth*, 'tis a word taken from those who use the polishing *toole*, or *file*. And the meaning of the place will be, That, as such *Artificers* doe ordinarily *file* rude, rough, mishapen matters, into decent *figures* and *formes*, and by the *Repectin* of their instrument, and application of it artificially to the same place, doe raise a *Glasse*, and

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Lustre there, where there was before only a deformity, and shade; so these Prophets dealt with the publique Sinnes of their times. Rapines, and Oppressions were fled, and polished into the softer names of Just Levies and Supplies. Murders also and Bloodsheds, together with the Cryes of Widlowes, and Teares of Orphans were smoothed and glazed into the milder appearances, perhaps, of publique utility and necessity of State. In brieft, these Prophets here in the Text, dealt with some mens vices, as the Phylosopher would haveus deale with our Affections, transformed, and wrought them into ornaments, and virtues. Or lastly, whether we use the word *Gypfabant*, 'tis a word taken from those who deale in playiter. And the meaning of the place will be, That as such Artificers, by laying a new Crust upon old Decays, doe many times make a falling building seeme stroog, and to the certaine danger of the dweller, doe to veyle, and cover aged Walls, as to disguise Rascallness, and make a raine seeme habitable; So these Prophets dealt with the sinnes of their times. They whited Sepulchres, and adorned Rottenesse, and putrefaction. Wicked *designes* had a fayre crust put upon them; And ruinous *projects* were supported with splendid, holy Colours. If you will have me speake more home to the mind of the Text, some Ambitious men built Houses on the Land, and some flattering, servile Prophets dambd them with weak, untemperd mortar. Which discovers to us the frailty and unsoundnesse of all such proceedings, as are not built upon Justice, or Truth, those two immoveable Rocks of the Scripture; And leads us on to the next part of the Text.

For the clearer understanding and interpretation of which words, it will be necessary, that I once more briefly reconcile the severall Translations of them. That

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The frailty of
bad designs.

which

which we in English doe read *untemperd mortar*, a very Classicall Interpreter of the Bible reads thus: *Propheta ejus linebant eos insulso*, Her Prophets have dambd them with a thing which is insipide, or which hath no salt in it. From whence some have made this exposition of the place, That though the thing with which these Prophets disguised the foule actions of their times were *Holynesse*, and *Religion*; and though it be true, that we may say of *Religion*, as *Christ* laid of the Teachers of it, that it is the salt of the world, yet this salt sprinkled upon forbidden enterprizes, leaves off to be salt, and loseth its savour. To speak yet more plainly to you, *Holynesse* it selfe applied to wicked *designes*, leaves off to be *Holynesse*. And they who put sanctity to that vile use, to serve only as the pains to make the unlawfull *projects* of others seem faire, adde thus much guilt of their owne to the others, that they turne Religion it selfe into their crime. And I may confidently say, that they had beene much more innocent, if in such forbidden cases they had been lesse holy.

Saint *Ierome* translates the words thus: *Propheta obliniebant eos absq; temperamento*, The Prophets dambd them with a thing which would not piece, or unite, or make a mixture. From whence some have given this interpretation of the place, That however religious pretences may be found out to maske irreligious deeds, and however *Holynesse* may be made the *vermillon* to impiety, yet there can never such a mixture, or composition passe betweene them, that it shall cease to be *Impiety*, because it hath piety joynd to it. But rather as *guts* upon false coynne makes it so much the more counterfeite, or as *Timme* silver'd over is so much the more Treason, because 'tis silver'd over, & *Copper* so much the more deserves hanging, because it wears

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Here then, if any expect that I should apply what hath been said to our times, and that I should take the liberty of some of our *Modern Prophets*, who have by their rude *Inveitres* from the *Pulpit* made what ever *Names* are *High*, and *Great*, and *Sacred*, and *Venerable* among us, cheap, and vile, and odious in the ears of the people; if any, I say, expect that by way of parallel one people with another, I should here audaciously undertake to shew that what ever *Arts* were used to make bad projects seeme plausible, and holy in this Prophets time, have been practiced to make the like bad projects appear plausible, and holy now; Or that in our times the like *Irreligious Complaisance*, hath past between some *Spiritual men*, and *Lay*, to cast things into the present *Confusion*, I hope they will not take it ill, if I deceive their Expectation. For my own part, as long as there is such a piece of Scripture as this, * *Dixi non maledices, sicut non revilete deo*, (that is, thou shalt not only not defame them by lying, but shalt not speake all truthest of them which may turne to their Infamy, and reproach;) I shall always observe it as a piece of obligatory Religion, *no to speak evill*, no not of *offending dignities*. Much more to *frustrate*, and *Subversions*, for *Realities* owne ill-built *Jealousies*, and *Truthts*: Which if I should doe, 'twould certainly favour too much of his Spirit of *Detraction*, who having lost his *modesty*, as well as *Religion* and *Obedience*, to the *scandall* and *just offence* of all *loyall Eares* here present, was not afraid to forget the other part of that *Text*, which says, *Ne maledices principi in populo meo, Thou shalt not reproach the Ruler of my people.*

Yet because to many strange *Prophets*, of our wilde, licentious times, have preacht up almost five yeares
Commotion

* Exod. 23. 1.

commotion for a *Holy warre*; And because, in truth, no warre can be *Holy* whose cause is not justifiable; If I should grant them what they have proclaimed from so many *Pulpits*, that the Cause for which they have, all this while, some of them, so zealously taught, as well as preacht, hath bene *Liberty of Conscience*, or, in other termes, for the *Reformation* of a corrupted, degenerated *Church*; Or to speake yet more like themselves, for the *Reformation* of the *Protestant Religion* growne *Popish*; if I say, all this should be granted them, yet certainly, if *Scripture*, *Gospell*, *Fathers*, *Schoolemen*, *Protestant Divines* of the most reverend, and sober *marke*, and *Reason* it selfe, have not deceived me, all *Sermons* which make *Religion*, how pure soever, to be a just cause of a *Warre*, doe but *dawbe* the undertakers with *untemper'd Merit*.

For However it be an *Article* in the *Turkish Creed*, that they may propagate their *Law* by their *Speare*, yet for us who are *Christians*, to be of this *Mahometane* persuasion, were to transfere a piece of the *Alcoran* into a piece of the *Gospell*. And to make *Christ* not only the *Author* of all those *Masacres*, which from his time to ours, have borne that *Holy impression*, but 'twere to make him *over-literally* guilty of his owne saying, that he came not to *send peace*, but a *Sword* into the *World*. For though it be to be granted, that nothing can more conduce to the future happinesse of men, then to be of the true *Religion*; yet I doe not finde that *Christ* hath given power to any to compell men to be *happy*, or commanded, that *force* should be used for the collation of such a *Benefit*. All the wayes more proportioned for the achieving of such an end, he hath in his *Gospell* prescribed, namely, *preaching*, and *perswasion*, and *Holy example of life*. He bade his
Apofles

Apostles goe, and teach all Nations; Not stir up one Nation against another, or divide Kingdoms against themselves, if they would not receive the Gospel. This had been plainly to joyne the Sword of the flesh, to the Sword of the Spirit. Which to save their Lives, and Fortunes, might perhaps, have made some Hypocrites, and dissimblers without, who would nevertheless, have remained Pagans, and Infidels within. In short, some things in the Excellencies, and Height of the Doctrines of Christian Religion being no way demonstrable from Humane principles, but depending for the credit, and evidence of their truth upon the Authority of Christs miracles, conveyd along in Tradition, and Story, cannot in a naturall way of Argumentation force ascent. Since, as long as there is such a thing in men, as liberty of understanding all arguments, even in a Preaching, and persuasive way, which carry not necessity of demonstration in their Forehead, may reasonably be rejected. Much lesse have I met with it in all my progresse of Divinity, or Philosophy, convincingly maintained, that men upon every slight disagreement, or dissent in Religion, are to be whippe, or beaten into a Consent; or that the plunder of mens Estates is a fit medium to beget a Beliefe or persuasion in their minds.

Here then, should I once more grant the Charge of these Prophets to be true (a very heavy one, I confesse) that the Protestant Religion among us, had very farre taken wing, and had almost resign'd its place in this Island to the Romish Superstition. Nay, suppose (which is yet farre worse) that a great, and considerable part of this Kingdome, had through the Corruption of the times, not only relaps'd from the Protestant Religion in particular, but from the Christian Faith in generall; suppose, I say, (which is the worst that can be supposed) that they who have

have so frequently of late beene branded for Papists, had outright turn'd Infidels, however in such a case, that Warre which fights against the Errors of men thus lost, and propofeth to it selfe no other end but their Repentance, and Conversion, may to some perhaps, seeme to wear the Helmes of their Salvation, and the Army which thus strives to save men by the sword, may to some seeme an Army of Apostles, yet I doe not finde that to come into the field with an armed Gospel, is the way choien by Christ to make proleites. The Scripture indeed, tells us of some who tooke the Kingdome of Heaven by violence; But of any, who by violence may have it imposed upon them, tis no where recorded. But alas, my Brethren, (if I may speak freely to you in the defence of that defamed Religion, in which I was borne, and to which, I should account it one of the greatest blessings that God can bestow upon me, if I might, with the Holy Fathers of our Reformation, fall a Sacrifice) that which these men call Idolatry, and Superstition, and by names yet more odious, was so farre from having increased it selfe in our Church, So little of that drusse, and Ore, and sinne, which hath lately filled our best Assemblies with so much noise and Clamour, was to be found among us, that with the same unaidedness that I would confesse my finnes to God, and hope to o' taine pardon for them, I doe protest, that I cannot think the Swaine, in all his heavenly courle, tor so many many yeares, beheld a Church more blest with purity of Religion for the Doctrines of it, or better establish'd for the Government, and Discipline of it, then ours was. And therefore, if I were privily to enter into dispute with the greatest Patriarch among these Prophets, who, even against the Testimony of sense it selfe, will yet perversely strive to prove that our Church stood

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in such need of *Reformation*, that the *growing Superstition* of it could not possibly be *expressed*: but by so much *Civil Warre*, I should not doubt with modesty enough to prove backe againe to him, that all such weak, irrational *Arguments* as have only his *Zeale* for their *Logick*, are not only composed of *untemper'd Morer*; But that in *seeing* those *spots*, and *blemishes* in our *Church*, which no good *Protestant* els could ever see, 'twil be no unreasonable inference to conclude him in the number of those erroneous *Prophets* here in the Text. Who to the great *Scandall* and *abuse* of their *Office*, and *function*, did not only palliate, and gild over the publique *sinnes* of their *times*, but did it like *Prophets*, and *say Vanity* too. Which is the next part of the Text; And is next to succeed in your attentions.

3.
The first abuse
of their function.

If the *Philosophers rule* be true, that *things* admit of *definitions* according to their *essence*; & that the nearer they approach to *nothing*, the nearer they draw to no *Description*; to goe about to give you an exact *definition* of a *thing* impossible to be *defined*, or to endeavour to describe a *thing* to you, which hath been so much disputed whether it be a *thing*, were to be like those *Prophets* here in the Text; first to see *Vanity* my selfe, and then to perswade you that there is a *Reality*, and *Substance* in it. Yet to see you see by the best *lights* I can, what is here meant by *Vanity*, I will joyne an *inspired* to a *Heathen Philosopher*: *Solomon*, (whose whole booke of *Ecclesiastes* is but a *tract* of *Vanity*) as we may gather from the instances there set downe, places *vanity*, in *mutability*, and *change*. And because all things of this lower world consist in *vicissitude*, and *change*, (so farre, that as *Seneca* said of *Rivers*, *Bis in idem flumen non descendimus*, we cannot steppe twice into the same *streames*, so we may say of

most *Sublunary things*, whose very *beings* doe so resemble *fire*, as *ut vis idem his conficiamus*, that we can scarce behold some things twice) that wisest among the *sonnes of men*, whose *Philosophy* was as spacious as there were *things* in nature to be knowne, calls all things under the *Sunne*, *vanity*, because all *things* under the *Sunne* are so lyable to *inconstancy* and *change*, that they fleet away, and vanish, whilst they are considered; and hasten to their *decay* whilst we are in the *Contemplation* of them.

Aristotle defines *vanity* to be *deest ei finis ingenio ratione*. Every thing which hath not some *reasonable end* or *purpose* belonging to it. For this reason, he calls *emptiness*, and *vacuity*, *vanity*. Because there is so little use of it in nature, that to expell *things* have an inclination placed in them to performe actions against their *kind*. *Earth* to shut out a *vacuity*, is taught to fly up like *fire*, and *fire* to destroy *emptiness*, is taught to fall downe like *earth*. And for this reason, another *Philosopher* hath said, that *colours*, had there not beene made *eyes* to see them, an *sounds*, had there not beene *ears* made to hear them, had beene *vantities*, and to no purpose. And what they said of *sounds*, and *colours*, we may say of all things els, not only all things under the *Sunne*, but the *Sunne* it selfe, who is the great *Quasi vis* the eye of the world, without any eye to behold him, or to know him to be so, had beene one of *Aristotels vanities*.

As then in nature, those things have deserved the name of *vantities*, which either have no *reasonable end*, or *purpose* belonging to them, or els are altogether subject to *mutability*, and *change*, so tis in *policy*, and *religion* too. To doe things by weak, unreasonable, *inconstant principles*, *principles* altogether unable to support, and

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and uphold the *weights*, and *structure* of *publique* *business* built upon them; or to doe things, with no true substantiall, solid, useful, but a mere imaginary good and belonging to them. As for example, to alter the whole *frame* and *Government* of a *State*, not that things may be amended, but that they may run in another *course* then they did before; or to change the univerally received *Government* of a *Church* merely for *change* sake, and that things, may be *new*, not that they may be *better*, is a *vanity*, of which I know not whether these *Prophets*, here in the *Text*, were guilty; but when I consider the unreasonable *changes* already procured, and the yet farther, endless *changes* as unreasonably still pursued by the *Prophets* of our times, I finde so much *vanity*, and *emptinesse* in their *desires*, so much interested *Zeale*, and so little disinterested *reason* so much *novelty* mistaken for *reformation*, and withall so much *confusion* preferred before so much *decency*, and *order*, that I cannot but apply the *Wise mans* *Ingeniuation* to them, and call their proceedings *Famity* of *vanities*.

For it wee may call weake, groundlesse, improbable *surmises*, and *conjectures*, *vanities*, have not these *Prophets* dealt with the minds of vulgar people, as *Melancholy* men use to deal with the *clouds*, rayed monstrous forms and shapes to fright them, where no feare was? Have they not presented strange *visions* to them? *Idolatry* in a *Church window*, *superstition* in a white *Surplice*, *Mass* in our *Common prayer Booke*, and *Antichrist* in our *Bishops*? Have they not also to make things seeme hideous in the *State*, cast them into strange, fantastical, *Chymera figures*? And have they not, like the fabulous, walking *Spirits* we read of, created imaginary *Apparitions* to the people from such things, flight, unfolde, melting *Bodies* as

Ayre?

Ayre: And for all this if you enquire upon what true stable *principle* or *ground*, either taken from *reason* (which is now preached to be a *peculiar*, *prophane*, *heathen* thing) or from *Scripture*, (which is now made to submit to the more unerring rule of *fancie*) they have proceeded, or what hath been the true *cause*, of their so vain imaginations, you will find, that (contrary to all the *rules* of right judgement, either common to *men*, or *christians*) they have been guided merely by that *Causa per accidens*, that *fallible*, *erroneous*, *accidental* *cause*, which hath always been the mother of *mistakes*. *Socrate* *ambulante* *coruscavit*, because it lightened when *Socrate* rooke the *Ayre*, one in the company thought that his walking was the occasion of the *flash*: this certainly, was a very vain and foolish inference, yet not more vain and foolish then theirs, who have taught people to conclude, that all *pictures* in *Church windows* are *Idols*, because some out of a misguided devotion, have worshipt them; or that *Surplices*, and the like *Church Vestures* are *superstitious*, because some *superstitious men* wear them; or that our *Common-prayer booke* is *Papery*, because part of it is to be found in the *Rubricks* of that *Church*; or that the *government* of the *Church* by *Bishops* is *Antichristian*, because in their *beliefe*, *Antichrist* already is, or, when he comes into the *world* shall be a *Bishop*.

For here, if I should presse them in a *rational*, *logical* way, (unless they will call *Argument*, and *Logicke*, and *Syllogisme*, *Superstition* too, and banish *Reason* as well as *Liturgie* out of the *Church*) to thinke (as they do) that *Churches* are unhalloved by reason of their *ornaments*, or to perswade people to refrain them, because *some* out of a blind zeal have paid *worship* to the *Windows*, is to me a feare as unreasonable, as theirs was, who refused to go to *Sea*, because there was a *Painter* in the *City*, who limed

Shaparacks.

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shipwracks. For certainly, if that be all the reason they have to banish *Images* out of the Church, because *some* (if yet there have been any so stupid) have made them *Idols*, by the same reason, we should not now have a *Sunne*, or *Moon*, or *Stars* in the Firmament, but they should long since have dropt from Heaven, because some of the deluded *Heathens* worshipt them; and if that be all the reason they have to prove *Surplices*, or *white vestments* superstitious, because *Papists* wear them, (pardon the meannes of the *subjeſt*, I beseech you, which is scarce worthy of a contutation) why do not they also, conclude *Linnen* to be superstitious, because *Papists* shift, & lo have cleanliness to be as unlawfull as *Surplices* or *Copes*? Thirdly, to say our *Common-prayer-book* is *Papish*, because tis so good, that some in the Church of Rome have prayed it, is to me an accusation as senseless, as *theirs*, who accused their *Generall* of their *Army* of *treason* against the State, because his enemies out of the admiration of his virtues, erected a Statue to him. Lastly, to call the Government of our Church by *Bishops*, *Antichristian*, because that *Church* which they make to be the seat of *Antichrist* is so governed, is to me such a weak *Imputation*, as by the same reason makes all the *Christian Governments* of the world *pagan*. And therefore to be utterly extirpated, and banisht out of the world, because in some points of Government they resemble the *Common-wealths* of *infidels*. To all which *vaine*, *unlearned*, *impotent*, *shallow* objections, raised against the *Church*, when I have added against the *State* too; Where things *possible*, nay in a *civill*, *politick* way, almost *impossible*, have been urged, and cited as things *present*, and done. Where, because some *Princes* have been *Tyrants*, and grievous to their

their *Subjeſts*, people in serene, easie, halcyon times, have bene made believe that an *Ægyptian bondage*, and *Barbadoe* was ready to fall upon them. And where, because there was a time when a *branch* of *Grapes* or two extraordinary was gathered for the *publicke*, people, after so many *reparations*, so many acts of *repemence*, have bene entertained, that those few, irregular *Grapes* were but the *prologues*, & *fore-runners* to the intended *rape* w^{ch} should in time have bene committed upon the whole future, following *vine*. I cannot looke upon the prophets who have thus preach *vainity* to them, thus amuzed them with false, imaginary *dangers*, but under that description which the *Prophet* *Jeremy* hath made of them, in his 23. chapter, at the 26. verſe, where he calls them *Prophets of the deceit of their owne hearts*, *Seers* who *coyne* their owne *visions*. Men who relying wholly upon the uncertaine *illumination* of their owne *fancies*, which they call the *Spirit*, and having never acquainted themselves with the true *ways*, and *principles* either of *reason*, or *Religion*, which should clear their *minds*, and take off the *grasse* *filme* which beclouds their *understandings*, make it their *business* and profession to deceive *themſelves*, and *others*. Building false *conclusions* upon weak, irrational *premisses*; and supporting improbable *conjectures*, by *fictions*, and *untruths*, Which suggests to me the *second* *abuse* of the *Ministry*, and *function* of these *Prophets* here in the Text. Which was, that they not only *law vainly*, but *divined* *lies* too.

The things in nature which makes the expression hold true, that man is *indeed*, a *ſociable creature*, is that we are able to repay *conversation* with *conversation*; and have a privileged bestowd upon us, beyond that of *beasts*, that we can unite, and joyne our selves to one another by

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speech. Without which, we, who now make *rational assemblies*, and *Commonwealths*, had been only a *rude*, *discomposed multitude*, and *Herd* of men. Nay, without *Language* to expresse our selves, and to associate our selves to one another in *Discourse*, every man had bene thus like the *first*, that he had bene *alone*, and *solitary* in the world. For where *commerce*, and *intercourse*, and *exchange* of minds is denied, and where all that passeth between us of men is, that we are *Alter alteri spectaculum*, only a *dumb*, *speechless* *show*, and *spectacle* to one another's *meetings*, and numerous *Assemblies* are but so many unpeopled *Wildernesses*, and *deserts*. And where all that we enjoy of one anothers company is only the dull *sight*, and *presence*, every one of us may reckon himselfe single in a full *theatre*, and *crowd*.

As *speech*, then, was at first bestowed upon us that we might hold *conversation*, and *discourse* with one another, so there was a *Law* imposed upon us too, that we should not deceive one another by our *speech*. * *Veri ubi res is veritas* *et ubi res is veritas*. 'Tis *Aristotles* definition of *speech*, which hath a piece of *commutative Justice* in it. *Words*, says he, are the *images* of *thoughts*. That is, says the *Divine*, they always ought, or should be so. The *minde* is thereby enabled to walke forth of the *Body*, and to make *visits* to another separated, divided *minde*. Our *Soules*, also, assisted by *Speech*, are able to meet, and *converse*, and hold *intercourse* with other *Soules*. Nay, you must not wonder at the expression, if I say, that as *God* at first conveyed our *mindes*, and *Soules* into us by *breathing* into us the *breath* of *Life*, so by *Speech* he hath enabled us, as often as we *discourse*, to breathe them reciprocally backe againe into each other. For never man yet spoke *Truth* to another, and heard that other speake

Truth

Truth backe againe to him, but for that time the saying of *Aminius Felix* was fulfilled, *Crederes duas esse animas in eodem corpore*, there were interchangeably two *minds* in one *Body*.

But this (as I sayd before) is only when *Truth* is Spoken. Otherwise, as the Question was askt of *fire*, *igne quid utilis?* What more usefull gift did *God* ever bestow upon us then *Fire*? And yet the same *Poet* tells us, that *some* have employed it to burne *Houfes*. So we may say of *Words*, *Sermone quid utilis?* What more beneficiall gift of nature did *God* ever bestow upon us then *Speech*? 'Tis the thing which cloth outwardly distinguish us from *Beasts*, and which renders us, like the *Angels*, (who discourse by the mere *Acts* and *Revelation* of their wills) *transparent* and *Chrystall* to one another. But then *Speech* misemployed, and put to a deceitfull use, may turne *Chrystall* into *fat*. And put into a *Lye*, may raise a *shade*, and *cloud* of *Discourse*, and *obscurity* there, where there should be only a *Translucency* and *clearnesse*. In short, some men, like the *Fish* which blacks the *stream* in which it (swimmes, and casts an *Inke* from its bowels to hide it selfe from being seene, make *Words*, which were ordained to reveale their *Thoughts*, disguise them: And so like the *Father* of *lies*, deal with their hearers, as he dealt with our first *Parents*, appeare to them, not in their owne, but in a false, and borrowed *Shape*. And thereby make them embrace an *Imposture* and *Falshood*, in the *figure*, and *Appearance* of a *Reality* and *Truth*.

An offence so fit to be banish't out of the World, that after I have said, that *no* thus talking, and deceitfully mingling *Speech*, are some thing more then *Absent* to one another; After I have said, that the *lyar* is injurious to *things*, as well as *persons*; Which carry the same proportion

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tion to our *minds*, as *Colours* doe to our *eyes*; And have a *naturall aptnesse* in them to be understood as they are, but are for that time not understood, because not rightly represented: I must say too that there is *injustice* done to *humane society*. Since in every *untruth* that is *told*, and *believed*, one mans *Lye*, becomes another mans *Error*, whereby a piece of his *naturall Right* is taken from him; which *Right* is by the *Cassius* call'd *Judicandi libertas*. He is disabled to make a *Right judgement* of what he heares. His *beliefe* betrays him: And the *Speaker* thus fallaciouly converting with him, is not for that time, his *companion*, but his *deceiver*.

But when *Religion* shall be joyned to a *lye*, and when a *Falschood* shall be alter'd, and clothed with *Holyneesse*; When they, whose profession 'tis to convey *Embassies*, and *Messages*, and *voices* from Heaven, shall convey only *cheats*, and *delusions*, and *impasures* from thence, though I cannot much blame the credulity of the *Simple*, who suffer themselves to be thus religiously *abused*, and like men who see *Fluglers* think their money best spent, where they are best *ensord*; yet, certainly, the *deceivers* themselves doe adde this over and above to the *fine of Lying*, that whereas others hold only the *Truth of things*, these men hold the *Truth of God in unrighteousnesse*.

And such it seemes, were these *Prophets* here in the *Text*. Who the better to comply with the *Publique sins* of their times, did put *untruths*, and *falschoods* to the same holy use, that others did sacred *Inspirations*, and *Dreames*, *Fictions*, the bastard creatures of their owne corrupt *fancies*, were delivered as *Prophecies* intused into them from Heaven, and he who joined most, and could lye with the most religious *Art*, was thought to have the

greatest

greatest measure of the *Spirit*, prosperous successes were foretold to wicked undertakings, and the *Prophets* dealt with the people, as some bold *Almanack makers* deale with us; coyn'd fowle, of faire weather as they pleased to set the times, and then referred it to *casualty*, and *chance* to come to passe.

And can I passe over this part of the *Text*, and not say that there have beene such *Prophets* among us in our times? Unless things should come about againe, that the *devill* should the second time get a *Commission* to become a *lying Spirit* in the mouth of the *Prophets*, with a promise from the *Almightie*, that he should *prevayle* too, were it possible that so much *costenage* should so long passe, for so much *Truth*? Have we not seene the *Prophet Micah's* propheticall curse fulfilled upon this *Kingdome*? 'Tis in his 2. Chap. at the 11. ver. where he sayes that if a man walking in the *Spirit*, and *falschood*, do lye, he shall be the *Prophet of this people*. Certainly my Brethren, when I consider how much *Romance*, how much *Gazette*, how much *Legend* hath for some yeares past for *Sermon*; When I consider (even with teares in my eyes) the many false aspersions stuck upon our defamed, wronged *University*, by some, who (even against the light of their eyes as well as *Consciencers*) have charged the *Prests* that gave them suck with *incited*, *posion'd milke*; And have belyed their *spotlesse Mother*, as if she were turned *brummet*; Or, as if 'twere grownea place from whence *piety*, and *grace*, and true *Religion*, have long since taken flight; a place which needs *conversion*, and which affords nothing but *dangerous education*; of which crime, I confesse, I know not whether she be guilty, unless it be for bringing forth such *abortive lying Sonnes*, who thus make it part of their Religion to revile *Her*; when I farther consider

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sider, that they have not spared Majesty it selfe, though clothed, and armed by God with all the sacred *Guards*, which should protect it from the venom of such disloyall, slanderous *mouthes*; when I yet further consider the seeming *sanctity* of the persons that doe this, with what *Holy passions*, what *inspired Zeale*, what *composure of face*, what *contention of voyce*, what *earnest Rhetoricke of hand*, what *Language of Saints*, they doe this. Lastly, when I consider how many there are, who, driving a gainefull *Trade in fictions*, (*fictions* as strange as his, who wrote of *Virgins* transformed to *Bay-trees*) use to lye as devoutly from such holy ground as this, as others to pray; And when withall I doe observe that there is sprung up a certaine *Sett of Hearers* among us, who as *Zealously* lend attention to *lies*, as their *Preachers* utter them; I cannot but take the *Philosophers* liberty to my self, and pronounce of such *Congregations*, as he did of *Markets*; that they are places where people meet to *deceive*, and be *deceived*.

And as in *Shops*, and *Markets*, Religion is sometimes put to helpe our faulty Ware, and the name of God is cited to make up measure and weight; and part of the false light by which the *Buyer* is over-reach't, is the seeming sanctity of the *Seller*. So tis here. A certain religious, holy, *ceremoniall exegese* passeth between Preacher and People. And that they may the more solemnly be cozened, these *Prophets* deal with their *Fictions*, as the *Devil* deal with his temptations, when he would have perfwaded our *Saviour Christ* to cast himselfe down from a *Pinacle*, cloathe them with *Scripture*, saying, *Thou it is written*, and, *thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken*, which brings me to the third, and last abuse of their *Profession*, and *Ministeriall Function*. Which is to entitle God to their *omission*, and *lies*. To which I shall only adde
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some briefe Application of something in this Sermon to our selves, and so commend you to God.

Lucian, I remember in his *Indubium*, or *false Prophet*, tells us of a certain *Mountebanke Cheater*, who the more artificially to deceive the *People*, did set up an *Oracle* of his own Fancying, and contrivance; in which he was both the *God*, and *Priest* to the *People* who came to enquire. And, like the *Priests* of those other true *Oracles*, which wee read of, where the *Sybill* never gave anwers till she was first *entranced*, and felt a kind of sacred *fury*, and *possession* within her selfe, so he, (as often as he pleased to delude the *People*) had his sacred *ravings*, and *trances* too; and appeared to those who came to consult with him, filled with a kind of *holy fury*, and possess'd with the *God* that spoke through him.

Me thinks, these *Prophets* here in this text, were just such *Foglers*, who, in preaching their own *Fancies* for *Gods dictates*, did not only set up a false *Oracle*, in which they were to the *People*, both the *Deity*, and the *priest*; but they *divined* untruths to them, in the same *holy, solemn, propheticall* forme and way, as others did *truths*. *Lies* had a kind of holy *trance*, and *ecstasie*, and *rapture* put to them; and *Falshoods* came from them in a kind of sacred *madnes*, and *possession*. As often as they had a mind to *deceive* the *People*, they could presently raryse to themselves their own *inspirations*; and as often as a *Plot*, or *Project* was to be brought about, they could presently snatch themselves up into the *third Heavens*, and could return from thence as full of *holy fiction*, and *inspiration*, as *S. Paul* did of *astonishment*, and *wonder*. In the delivery of which *Fictions* to the *People*, there was thus much holy *exegese* more added, that the *Lippes* of the *Reporters* seem'd for that time to be touch'd with a *Coale from the*

Altar;

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Altar, and God by the secret influence and infinit of his holy Spirit, was thought to be the kindler of that Coale.

An injury of that (*hypocriticall*, shall I say? or rather) bold, presumptuous, impudent nature, that when I have spoken of it the most gently I can, I must say tis something more then the breach of the third Commandement. For there we are only bid not to take Gods name in vaine, that is, not to mingle him with our ordipaty, rash, light, unpremeditated discourses, or not to forswear our selves by him, or cite him to be a witness to our perjuries. But they who speake fallly in his name, and vent their own finifler Plots for his inspirations; they, who, when they should be the messengers of truth, and the reprovers of sinne, shall stand as the messengers of falshood, and encouragers of publike wrongs, between him, and the peoples do not only take his name in vaine, and (as much as in them lies) draw a cheapnes, and contempt upon it, but do commit a sinne worse then perjury, for that onely calls him to testify, and beare witness, but these men make him the Principall, and first Author of a Lye: And so stick the reproach of a weak, impotent vice upon him, common to none, but base, servile, perfidious natures, and slaves.

You may read in the old Testament, that the Priest of those times, among his other Ornaments, wore two precious Stones in his Breast plate, called the *Vrim*, and *Thummim*. Through which, according as they did at times cast a bright, or dimmer lustre, God revealed his pleasure, or displeasure to the People; and spoke to them by the sparkle of a Jewel, as he did at other times by the mouth of a Prophet. You may read too, that after the Tabernacle was set up, God had a Throne, or Mercy seat placed for him, between the Wings of two Cherubims, which veiled it; from whence at certaine times he sent forth

Oracles.

Oracles. Here then, let me put this case to you.

Suppose the Priest, who wore the Breast plate, should have belyed his Jewels, and when the People came to enquire of him, should have interpreted a pale, for a bright Ray to the People; or suppose, he should have taken out the true, and have placed two false, counterfeit Jewels in his Breastplate, and should have taught them, by a kind of secret conspiracy, not to sparkle by the certainty, and holines of their own impartiall Fires, but according to the desires, and Plot, and Stratagem of the Consulters; had not this been plainly to set up an illegitimate *Anti-urim*, and *Thummim*, which should have cast a false, as the other did a true lustre? Nay, had not this been to make God, who used to appeare, and reveale himselfe in these Jewels, as he did to Moses in the Bush, in a flame of Fire, to become like one of those erratical, uncertain, wandring night-fires, of which Aristotle speaks in his *Meteors*; Fires, which shine only to lead Travellers out of the way?

Once more put the case, that the Priest should have usurped the Throne, and Mercy seat of God, and when the People came to enquire, should have placed himselfe between the Cherubims, and should from thence have uttered such false, pleasing Oracles, as he knew would most suite, and comply with the humour, and interest of the Inquirers. Had not this been most insolently to thrust himselfe into the place of God, and for that time to depole him from his Sanctuary, or holy Place, and to assume his businesse, and peculiar Office to himselfe? Nay, had not this been the way in time, to draw the same bad report upon him, which once passed upon the Oracle at Delphos? *Agud Apollinem, ut mihi videretur, mendacia emunaret*, men payd for lyes at Delphos; and sacrificed to Apollo to be cenzured and deceived.

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That this was the *finne* of these *Prophets* here in the Text, is evident from the words of it, and from their coherence with the rest of the Chapter. Who, (as if they had entred into the same *secter compass* with God, as they had with their other *Completers* of those times) made no other use of their profession, but only to humour *great men*, and to make *Sale*, and *Gain* of their *Prophecies*. *Enthusiasmes*, and *Visions*, and *Dreams*, and *Revolutions*, were uttered, as some *Mechanick* men utter their *Commodities*, to him that would give most. The *Sanctuary*, in plaine termes, was made a place of *Mercandize*; only the *Ware* was *Spirituall*. And the difference between *Simon Magus* bargain with the *Apostles*, and the *Bargaine* here in the Text, was only this, that here both *partyes* consented. The one *sinisterly bought*, the other *sinisterly sold* the *holy Ghost*.

An offence, my Brethren, so directly against the *Truth*, and *gracety*, and *Majesty* of God, (so necesse, (if not outright) that never to be pardoned sinne against the *holy Ghost*, that I am sorry I must say, that all the *defence* that can be made for it, is, that our times have brought forth *prophets* who have taken the same course.

For now, as if the *Scripture* were in a perverse, preposterous sense the second time to be fulfilled, that the *Foolish things* of the world shall confound the wise, and that *yes*, and *fictions*, and *things that are not*, shall bring to nought *Realities*, and *Truths*, and *things that are*, he is not only thought to be the *holiest man*, who can lye most in a *holy Cause*, but he thrives best, and makes the best *spirituall markets*, who most belyes God to his *Glory*. To what unweighed, airy *Scraps*, and *tranires*, is he entitled: How is his *Scripture*, for want of learning to understand it aright, abused, and made the *bellows* to blow a

fire

fire, fit rather to be quencht by the repentance, and *teares* of the *Incredulities* and *seducers* of it? How many are there who daily urge Text for *Blood-shed*, and undertake to prove the *slaughter* of their Brethren, (I had almost said of their lawfull Prince, and Sovereign too) warrantable by the *Word* of God? What bold *Libell*, or *Pamphlets* hath not for some years *rayled* in a holy style? And what *Sermons* have not beene spiced with a holy *sedition*? Hath it not (even to the ruine of one of the most flourishing *Kingdoms* of the world) beene made a piece of Religion to *divide* it against it selfe, and to divorce a *King* from his *people*, and his *people* from their *peace*? Have not men beene taught, that they cannot give *God* his *due*, if they give *Cesar* his? And that the only way left to prelive in themselves, the *grace* and *favours* of the *one*, is quite to deface and blot out the *image* and *super-scription* of the other? And have not the *Teachers* of these strange, *unchristian* Doctrines, delivered them to the people in the holy *stile* of *Prophets*? Have they not called a most unnaturall, civil *Warre*, the *burden* of the *Lord*? Have they not quite inverted the *injunction* of the *Apostle*, and turning his *affirmative* into their *negative*, have they not (directly contrary to his word) said, *Thus saith the Lord, honour not the King*?

My Brethren, let me speak freely to you, as in the presence of God, who knows that I hate the sinne of these *Prophets* here in the Text, too much to flatter. Or if I would be so irreligiously *servile*, you your selves know that the present condition of things is at too low an *ebb*, for me or an man els to hope to thrive by such a *false engine*. If there be such a thing as *Making* providence cover the *actions* of men, (which, I confesse, an *unresolved* man in such irregular times as these might be tempted to question) or if there be such a thing in *nature* as *Truth*, with a promise annex to it

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by the *God of Truth*, that first or last it shall *prevail*, unless by a *timely*, and *seasonable* *repentance* of their *abuse* of the *Name of God*, and of their many bold *reproaches* throwne upon his *Anointed*, they divert their *punishment*: Something, methinks, whispers to me, (I dare not be so confident of my owne infallible fancy, as to call it the Spirit of God) but something whispers to me, and bids me in the *Prophet Ezechiel's* words in another place, *Prophecie* against these *Prophets*; and say, *Woe to the foolish prophets who have followed their owne spirit, and have seen nothing. Because with lies they have made the heart of the Righteous sad, whom the Lord hath not made sad; and have strengthened the Hands of the wicked, that he should not returne from his evil way.*

Or if this will not awake them, but that they will still be guilty of the *sinne* of these *Prophets* here in the *Text*, they must not take it ill, if not I, but the holy Ghost (which they so much boast of, and by whom they so confidently pretend to speak) passe this *lad sentence* on them and their *compliers*, by the mouth of two other *Prophets*. 1. As for their *compliers*, (if any such there have been) who have said to the *Seers*, See not, and to the *Prophets*, *Prophecie not unto us right things, but speak to us smooth things, Prophecie deceit*; let them heare, with trembling, what the *Prophet Esay* sayes in his 30. Chapter at the 12. and 13. verses. *Because* (sayes he) *ye despise my word, and trust in oppression, and pervernesse, and say thereon; Therefore, thus saith the holy one of Israel, This iniquity shall be to you as a branch ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking commeth suddenly, at an instant.* The meaning of which propheticall judgement will be easily understood of any, who shall consideringly marke the beginning and progresse of the chapter to the context where 'is uttered and denouced.

Next, as for the *Prophets* themselves, who for *poore, low, misled,*

Esay 13. 3.

Esay 30.

earthly interests, and *respects*, have suffered themselves to be *mis-led*, let them, with *confusion of face*, heare what the *Prophet Jeremy* sayes in his 23. Chapter, at the 32. verse. A place no lesse remarkable then the former. *As for those*, sayes he, *who doe prophesie false dreames, and doe tell them, and cause my people to erre by their lies, and by their lightnes, yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; behold, I am against them, saith the Lord, and they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord God.*

The conclusion then of this Sermon, shall be this. *Fathers*, and brethren of this *Universty*: I presume it could not but seem strange to you, to heare your *Manners*, and *Religion*, as well as *Studies*, and *Learnings*, not long since publicly reproved, and preacht against out of this *Pulpit*, by men, who profess themselves, indeed, to be *Prophets*, but discovering to you so little, as they did of the *abilities* of *Prophets* *Sonnes*, could not but seem to you very unfit *Reformers*, or *instructors* of this place. I presume also, that with a serious griefe of heart, you cannot but resent, that there should be thought to be such a *dearth*, and scarcity of *able, vertuous* men among us, that the *Great Council* of this *Kingdome*, in pity to our wants, should thinke it needfull to send us men *better gifted*, to teach us how to *preach*. What the *Negligence*, or *loth*, or want of *industry*, in this place hath been, which should deserve the great *exprobation* of our *Studies* from them; or how one of the most famous *Springs* of *Learning*, which of late *Europe* knew, should by the misrepresentation of any false reporting men among us, fall so low in the esteem of that *great Assembly*, as to be thought to need a *Tutor*, I know not: Nor will I here over-curiously enquire into the ungiftednes of the persons, who have drawn this *reprooffe* upon us, or say that some of us, perhaps might have made better use of our time, and of the bounty of our *Founders*, then by wrapping up our *Talenti* in a *Napkin*, to draw

The conclusion.

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the same reproach upon our *Colledges*, which once passed upō *Monasteries*, which grew at length to be a Proverb of *Idleness*. But that which I would say to you; is this: *Solomon*, in one of his Proverbs, sends the *sluggish man* to the *Spider*, to learne *diligence*. Take it not ill, I beteech you, if I send some of you (for this is a piece of exhortation which doth concern very few) who have been lesse industrious, to these *vaine*, but *active Prophets*, which I have all this while preacht against. Mistake me not, I do not send you to them, to learn knowledge of them. For you know tis a received *axiom* among most of them, that any *unlearned*, *unjudged* man, assisted with the *Spirit*, and his *English Bible*, is sufficiently gifted for a *Preacher*. Nor do I send you to them to be taught their *bad Arts*, or that you should learn of them to *dawbe* the public *Sinnes* of your times, or comply with the *insatiable*, *itching Eares* of those, whom *S. Paul* describes in the fourth Chapter of his second *Epistle* to *Timothy*, at the third verse, where he sayes, *that the time should come, when men should not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own lusts, should heape to themselves teachers*. A Prophesie, which I with were not too truly come to passe among us; where *Studies*, and *learning*, and all those other excellent *helpes*, which tend to the right understanding of the *Scriptures*, and thereby, to the preaching of *sound Doctrine*, are thought so unnecessary by some *Mechanick*, *vulgar men*, that no *Teachers* suite with their *sick*, *queasie Palats*, who preach not that stufte, for which all *good Schollers* deservedly count them mad: I do not, I say, send you to them for any of these reasons. But certainly, something there is which you may learn of them, which *S. Paul* himselfe commends to you, in the *second verse* of the fore-mentioned *Chapter*. If you desire to know what it is, tis an unwearied, frequent, sedulous diligence of *Preaching* the Word of God, if need be, as they do: *In season, out of season,*

son, with reproofe of sinne, where ever you find it, and with exhortation to goodnes where ever you find it too; and this to be done at all times, though not in all places. For certainly, as long as there are *Churches* to be hid, I cannot thinke the next heape of *Turfes*, or the next pile of *Stones*, to be a very decent *Pulpit*, nor the next *Rabble of People*, who will find *eares* to such a *Pulpit*, to be a very seemly *Congregation*. For let me tell you my brethren, that the power of these mens indulties, never fatigated, hath been so great, that I cannot thinke the mild *Conquerour* (whose *Captives* wee now are, and to whose praise, for his civill usage of this afflicted *University*, I, as the unworthiest member of it, cannot but apply that *Epithet*) owes more to the *Sword*, and *courage* of all his other *Souldiers*, for the obtaining of this, or any other *Garrison*, then to the *Sweats*, and active *Tongues* of these double armed *Prophets*, who have never failed to hold a *Sword* in one hand, and a *Bible* in the other. There remains then, but one way for us to take off the present *reproach*, and *imputation* thrown upon us. Which is to confute all *lie*, *similer*, *clancular reports*, and to out-doe these active men hereafter in their own indultious way. To preach *Truth & Peace*, and *sound Doctrine* to the People, with the same *sedulity*, and *care*, as they preach *Discord*, *Variance* and *S strife*. If this course be taken, and be with fidelity pursued, it will not only be in our power to *dis-inchant* the People, (who of late (by what *Spell*, or *Charme* I know not) have unawares begun to entertaine a piece of *Poperie* amongst them, and to thinke, *ignorance* the only *Mother of Devotion*) But it will be no hard matter for us, (towards the effecting of so charitable a worke, as the undeceiving of so many well-minded, but mis-guided Soules) to make our true *Arts* deal with their *false*, as the *Rod of Moses* dealt wth the *Magicians Serpents*; first, shew them to be only so much *fantallical Form*, and

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and *Aire*, then consume and eate them up, in the presence of their *Believers*. To which (for a conclusion of all) I shall only adde this, That if this course be taken, and be reduced to practise, assisted with those great advantages (which are to most of them unknowa) of *Studie, Learning, Tongues, the use of Libraries, and Bookes*, besides those other helps of *opportunity, time, and leisure*, to render our selves able, (which they too immaturely ingaged to a Family, or Fortune, cannot have) wee shall not only comply with the ends and intentions of those *Founders*, who built us *Colledges*: (which they, certainly, intended should be Schooles of *verue*, not Nurseries of *sloth*) but our despised *Mother, the Univer-*
sity, shall reape more honour by us, our *Country* more service, and *God* more glory. To *whom* with his *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit of truth*, be ascribed all honour and prayse. *Amen*.

FINIS.

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