

The Way of Trying Prophets :

O R,

Some Considerations and Reasons to Prove the Truth of the great Dispensation of Divine Providence ; already begun by Prophetick Inspiration: To wit, The sudden Appearance of the Kingdom of Christ upon Earth, by the wonderful Effusion of the Holy Ghost.

YOU are Warn'd, in Holy Scriptures, not to believe every Spirit ; but to examine and try the Spirits, whether they are of God. You are likewise therein Warn'd not to despise, but covet Prophefying, for the Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy : As also, not to quench the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Occasion and Purpose of such a Dispensation, as well as the Evidences and Testimonials of such Messengers, ought diligently to be regarded and examin'd, by every one, none excepted : and that, with Childlike Humility, by Prayer and serious Meditation.

First, Let the Unbeliever examine himself ; Whether he hath serv'd his Lord, his God, with all his Heart and Soul, in Spirit and in Truth ; and lov'd his Neighbour, as himself : and whether he, in earnest, desires God's saving Health unto all People and Nations. In which if he is not in his own Conscience justify'd, ought he not to bless and praise his gracious God, for extraordinary Warnings to him, to Repent and Amend, that thereby he may be prepared for this Kingdom State ; and to Pray, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly ?

Secondly, However Righteous the Peruser of these Lines may think himself, let him but look into the sinful, wretched, degenerate State of Mankind, at this day : and he will probably thereby apprehend the infinite Mercy and Goodness of God to the World, in such Revelations and Warnings preparatory, before the Execution of the severe Judgments, so suddenly threatned.

The more comprehensive Occasion and Use, of such a Dispensation, we may learn from holy Scripture : to wit ; The Calling in of the *Jews* : The Fulness of the *Gentiles* : The Preaching of the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth : The intire Sanctification of all : The Opening and fuller Revelation of several Texts Prophetical and Mysterious, which as yet are not generally asserted to be understood : The Restoring Christianity, now delug'd in Vice and Corruption, to its primitive Purity, and to the supernatural Gifts and Communications of the Holy Spirit. Nay farther, the Restoring of all Things lost, by *Adam's* Fall, from the Burden of the Curse (under which whole Nature groans to be deliver'd) to their original, pure and paradisaical State : All this is promis'd, and will be accomplish'd. But how ?

By the Seed of the Woman, which is to break the Serpent's Head : By our Lord Christ Jesus, our Saviour and our Redeemer, by whom the Heavens were created ; who is the *Alpha* and *Omega* ; who will reconcile all Things to himself ; who will make the Beginning and End one, in this joyful Sabbatical Rest, where, as promis'd to be reveal'd from Heaven, he will reign, by his Holy Spirit, in the Heart of every one.

We are likewise told, in Sacred Writ, That, before these Things come to pass, there shall be a *Midnight Cry*, to make way for that Bridegroom. And why should not this now be going forth ? May it not likewise consist with the infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Prerogative-Power of God, seeing that human and ordinary Means of Teaching and Preaching are ineffectual to these great Ends, to send forth or raise up extraordinary Messengers, endu'd with futable Powers and Graces of his Holy Spirit, for such Purposes ? according to that in the *Ephesians*, the 4th Chapter, 11th, 12th and 13th Verses, which seems a Promise of it ; as also in *1 Cor.* 13. 9, 10. Is it not said that, before the Fulness of all Things, the Holy Spirit shall be pour'd out upon all Flesh ; and that all, which pray for this Holy Spirit, shall have it ; and thereby be taught, immediately from the least to the greatest, to know the Lord their God, and serve him, in Spirit and in Truth ? And are not such extraordinary Things and Messengers to forerun, and prepare the Way, for the great and terrible Day of the Lord, against the Wicked ? God is true, and cannot lie. These Things are promis'd, and not yet fulfill'd : Therefore ; why not now at the Door ? which if so, as the Writer apprehends, and several learned Divines of all sorts, in this Age, have asserted ; no Teacher, or Minister of any Congregation or People, which hath carefully and conscientiously executed his Ministrations, need or ought to be offended at God's Revelation of these glorious Appearances of this Kingdom State of Christ's Church on Earth : as hath been acknowledg'd, to the Writer of these Lines, by some pious and good Ministers of the Church of *England*. But Wo ! Wo to all obstinate Opposers, and rebellious Wicked ! For Blood, and Fire, and Smoak is foretold in that notable Day, to be their Desolation, who are thus found fighting against God. And may not such Offences, persisted in, come within

the Definition of the Sin against the Holy Ghost; which is not to be forgiven, in this World, or that to come? The following Considerations are such, as seem to evidence these Messengers, and their Commissions, to be now beginning; taking it for granted from the Promises, that such Times and such Things not being fulfill'd, are yet to come to pass.

All which the Writer collects, from Sense, Reason, and Faith, grounded on H. Scriptures.

As First, The Appearances of a supernatural Power, involuntarily operating upon the Organs and Bodys of Men, Women and Children, agreeable with those mention'd in the 32d of *Job*, the 20th of *Jeremiah*, the 39th Psalm, and elsewhere, are to him an Evidence.

Secondly, Divine Instructions, Discourses, Exhortations, Consolations and Prayers, from Persons manifestly incapable to utter them, in their natural Capacities, may be some Evidence.

Thirdly, The stricter Behaviour and Reformation, in the Lives and Conversations of these Persons, may be urg'd for Evidence.

Fourthly, Their Prophecys, agreeing in all things with those in Holy Writ, explanatory and more exprest to the present Time, and not mixed with any Errors either of Doctrine, or tending to ill Life, or any Disturbance of secular Authority, or the Countenancing of any Sect or Party.

Fifthly, The Ministration of the Spirit to others, by the laying on of Hands, I think, must be an Evidence, as in the Apostles it was pleaded such.

Sixthly, The making Promises personal, and the ensuing performing of them, is some Evidence.

Seventhly, The discovering the Secrets of Hearts, as many can witness they have had Instances, as to what happen'd in themselves.

Eighthly, These Persons, doing Things above the Power of Nature, as the above-mention'd, and others, disinterestedly suffering extremely for them, as well as the Truth of their Doctrines, to which the Scriptures witness, is further Evidence. To the Proof of which Matters of Fact there are presum'd to be some hundreds of living Witnesses, in this City, if thereto call'd.

Farther, May not the Nature of this Voice remove all Suspicion of Imposture or Delusion; for that the Honour and Glory of God, who hath declar'd himself a jealous God, hath not been known to suffer his Name to be so presumptuously blasphem'd, by any created Spirit or Being, not sent by his Authority: as to say, *I am Jehovah; I am the Lord thy God, who made the Heavens and the Earth, and will create all Things new*; and many other such-like Expressions, in the Name and Person of God. No Instance from History Sacred, nor perhaps from profane History, can be given of such Things, especially by Numbers of reputed sober, conscientious, and good Men; Men of Learning, Fortune, and on whom no selfish or ill Design can be charg'd; and with them by others of weaker Capacities, and Women, and young Children, not capable of being taught such profound Sayings, or such Impiety.

Lastly, I shou'd hope their acting and reasoning, as others do, consistently, at all other times, according to their natural Capacities,

wou'd, with sober and good Men, testify against Imposture or Delusion. And therefore several of them seeing glorious and significant Visions (in which way God reveal'd a great part of his holy Will) this also deserves its Consideration.

I cou'd cite other Things, as the Earnests (or manifest Beginnings) of the Gifts of Healing; of Tongues; of discerning of Spirits; and other miraculous Powers. But there are publick Declarations and Appeals to God, for his Decision. And I have lately heard, from their Mouths under Extasy, That, if, within a few Months, a fuller Attestation of their Commissions and Message be not manifested and confirm'd, by miraculous Signs and Powers from Heaven, and by working of such Miracles, as were done by our Saviour and the Apostles, even to the raising the Dead; that then they will own themselves deluded.

Now I say, as the Writer hereof is no Prophet; but, by Grace and Faith, a Believer and Enquirer into these so great and tremendous Affairs; so he cou'd wish, That the World wou'd not only cease, for a little Time at least, to censure these high Gifts (or Pretensions) by uncharitable Distinctions; but farther, for their own and Neighbours good, endeavour to undeceive and discover the delusive Error, or worse Design, if any be therein.

But if these Reasonings and Positions cannot be obviated, by solid and proper Answers; which I must seriously recommend to the Thoughts and Examination of every candid and pious Reader: Wou'd it not be to the Glory of God, to the Comfort of their own Souls, and the Good of their Neighbour, to be the Messengers and Publishers of such good Tydings to others, rather than barely to lay them up in their Hearts, without any farther Improvement of their Talent? It being certain, that whosoever glorifies the Lord their God, by a lively and active Faith, serves a gracious and bountiful Master, who abundantly rewards, and hath promis'd that our Works shall follow us!

God Almighty grant, to the great Comfort and Consolation of the Soul of every Reader, such spiritual Favours, as he now freely bestows on his Children. And as the Contemplation of these transcendent Blessings hath afforded an Earnest of refin'd and ravishing Enjoyments to the Writer hereof; so he sincerely prays, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*; and is, in Christian Love and Charity,

Yours, tho unknown.

P. S. Let all be exhorted to examine, Whether, if these Inspirations be a Voice from God, the One, Holy and Eternal Spirit; it may not much rather concern them to hearken thereto, than to the Voice of Man. And for a fuller satisfaction, the Devout Christian is refer'd to the following Treatises, viz. *The Cry from the Desert*, with Mr. Lacy's Preface; and Mr. Marion's and Mr. Lacy's several Warnings, deliver'd under the Operation of the Holy Spirit, to be had at *Benj. Brag's in Paternoster-Row*.

London, Decemb. 1707.