

NATHANIEL WARD

THE SIMPLE COBLER OF
AGGAWAM IN AMERICA

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NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR

The Reverend Nathaniel Ward, the writer of the following work, was born at Haverhill, England, in 1570. Of this town his father was a clergyman. He was educated at Cambridge, studied and practised law, travelled on the Continent, afterwards commenced the study of divinity, became a preacher of the Gospel, and was settled at Standon, in Hertfordshire. He was a strong friend of the early settlers of New England before the elder Winthrop's coming over. At a General Court of the Massachusetts Company, held in London, on Wednesday the 25th of November, 1629, "Mr. Whyte did recomēd Mr. Nathaniel Ward of Standon" to be admitted to the freedom of the Company. He was ordered before the Bishop, Dec. 12, 1631, to answer for his non-conformity. Being forbidden to preach, he embarked in April, 1634, for this country. He arrived here in June, and was settled as Pastor of the church at Ipswich, or Aggawam, the same year. By reason of indisposition, he was, at his own request, in 1636, released from his engagement with the church there. However thus disengaged, he preached often during the time he remained in the colony. The necessities of the infant Commonwealth called for his time, talents, and acquirements. Nor did he refuse. Willing to do the good, which he might, he lent a ready and efficient hand to the formation of our Legal Code. He was appointed by the General Court, March 12, 1638, on a committee to draw up a system of laws, for the consideration of the freemen. The same legislative authority, May 13, 1640, granted him six hundred acres of land for his service, at Pentucket, afterwards called Haverhill. He preached the election sermon, 1641, in which he advanced several things that savored more of liberty, than some of the magistrates were prepared to approve. The same year, Oct. 7, "The Govern^r" and m^r Hawthorne were Desired to speake to m^r Ward, for a coppey of the liberties, and of the Capitall lawes to bee transcribed, and sent to the severall townes." He wrote the "Simple Cobler" in 1645. In this year, May 25, he was on a committee to draw up a Body of Liberties, which were published in 1648, being the first printed volume of the kind in this Colony. Though greatly assisted by Joseph Hills and others in the composition and arrangement of so important a work, yet he appears to have been a principal agent in its accomplishment. He sold his interest at Haverhill, Nov. 25, 1646, to John Eaton, for £12,00. Between this date and the 6th of January following, he returned to England. On June 30th, 1647, he preached before the House of Commons, and the same year published the "Simple Cobler." He was afterwards settled in the ministry at Shenfield, near Brentwood, where he died in 1653, in his eighty-third year.

Fuller, in his "Worthies of England," speaking of him, says, that he, "following the counsel of the poet,

Ridentem dicere verum,
Quis vetat?

What doth forbid but one may smile,
And also tell the truth the while?

hath in a jesting way, in some of his books, delivered much smart truth of the present times." Dr. Mather, in his "Magnalia," remarks of him, "he was the author of many composures full of wit and sense; among which, that entituled *The Simple Cobler* (*which demonstrated him to be a subtil statesman*) was most considered." The same author adds, that "some famous persons of old thought

it a greater *glory* to have it enquired; *why such a one had not a statue erected for him?* than to have it enquired *why he had?* If it be enquired, *why this our St. Hilary hath among our Lives no statue erected for him?* let that enquiry go for part of one." And in the "Remarkables" of Increase Mather, he observes, "An hundred witty Speeches of our Celebrated *Ward*, who called himself *The Simple Cobler* of Agawam, [and over whose Mantel-piece in his House, by the way, I have seen those three Words Engraved, SOBRIE, JUSTE, PIE, and a Fourth added, which was LÆTE:] have been reported; but he had one Godly Speech, that was worth 'em all; which was, *I have only Two Comforts to Live upon; The one is in the Perfections of CHRIST; The other is in The Imperfections of all CHRISTIANS.*"

Mr. Ward had several children. Among them, were John, settled in the ministry at Haverhill, Mass., where he died, 1693; James, who practised medicine; and a daughter, married to Gyles Fyrmin. These three last accompanied their father to England.

To illustrate how much Mr. Ward benevolently labored for the public good with but small recompense, we quote another remark of Cotton Mather, as to his son John. It follows: "He was a son most exemplarily *dutiful* unto his *parents*; and having paid some considerable *debts* for his *father*, he would afterwards humbly observe and confess, that God had abundantly *recompenced* this his *dutifulness*." Whether these debts were paid in Old or New England is uncertain.

Thus we have given a sketch of one, who deserves well of New England and of friends to freedom every where,—so that it might be more evident how he and the subsequent work were estimated by his contemporaries and successors.

D. P.

Boston, March 8, 1843.

NOTE

This work passed through several editions at London in 1647. It was reprinted in Boston in 1713. One of the earlier editions and that of 1713 have been used in preparing the present edition for the press. After his first impression, the author made several additions to succeeding ones, which will be found in this now issued.—The principal of these additions are as follow: "A Word of Love to the Common People of England," "A most humble Heel piece," &c., and "A respective word to the Ministers of England."

Ed.

THE SIMPLE COBLER OF Aggawam in America

Either I am in an Appoplexie, or that man is in a Lethargie, who doth not now sensibly feele God shaking the Heavens over his head, and the Earth under his feet: The Heavens so, as the Sun begins to turne into darknesse, the Moon into blood, the Starres to fall down to the ground; So that little Light of Comfort or Counsell is left to the sonnes of men: The Earth so, as the foundations are failing, the righteous scarce know where to finde rest, the Inhabitants stagger like drunken men; it is in a manner dissolved both in Religions and Relations: And no marvell; for, they have defiled it by transgressing the Laws, changing the Ordinances, and breaking the Everlasting Covenant. The Truths of God are the Pillars of the world, whereon States and Churches may stand quiet if they will; if they will not, He can easily shake them off into delusions, and distractions enough.

Sathan is now in his passions, hee feeles his passion approaching; hee loves to fish in royled waters. Though that Dragon cannot sting the vitals of the Elect mortally, yet that Beelzebub can fly-blow their Intellectuals miserably: The finer Religion grows, the finer hee spins his Cobwebs, hee will hold pace with Christ so long as his wits will serve him. Hee sees himselfe beaten out of grosse Idolatries, Heresies, Ceremonies, where the Light breakes forth with power; he will therefore bestirre him to prevaricate Evangelicall Truths, and Ordinances, that if they will needs be walking, yet they shall *laborare varicibus*, and not keep their path: he will put them out of time and place; Assascinating for his Engineers, men of Paracelsian parts; well complexioned for honesty; for, such are fittest to Mountebanke his Chimistry into sicke Churches and weake Judgements.

Nor shall hee neede to stretch his strength overmuch in this worke: Too many men having not laid their foundation sure, nor ballasted their Spirits deepe with humility and feare, are prest enough of themselves to evaporate their owne apprehensions. Those that are acquainted with Story know, it hath ever been so in new Editions of Churches: Such as are least able, are most busie to pudder in the rubbish, and to raise dust in the eyes of more steady Repayrers. Civill Commotions make roome for uncivill practises: Religious mutations, for irreligious opinions: Change of Aire, discovers corrupt bodies; Reformation of Religion, unsound mindes. He that hath any well-faced phancy in his Crowne, and doth not vent it now, fears the pride of his owne heart will dub him dunce for ever. Such a one will trouble the whole *Israel* of God with his most untimely births, though he makes the bones of his vanity sticke up, to the view and grieve of all that are godly wise. The devill desires no better sport then to see light heads handle their heels, and fetch their carreers in a time, when the Roofe of Liberty stands open.

The next perplexed Question, with pious and ponderous men, will be: What should bee done for the healing of these comfortlesse exulcerations. I am the unablest adviser of a thousand, the unworthiest of ten thousand; yet I hope I may presume to assert what follows without just offence.

First, such as have given or taken any unfriendly reports of us *New-English*, should do well to recollect themselves. We have beene reputed a Colluvies of wild Opinionists, swarmed into a remote wildernes to find elbow-roome for our phanatick Doctrines and practises: I trust our diligence past, and constant sedulity against such persons and courses, will plead better things for us. I dare take upon me, to bee the Herauld of *New-England* so farre, as to proclaime to the world, in the name of our Colony, that all Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and other Enthusiasts, shall have free Liberty to keep away from us, and such as will come to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better.

Secondly, I dare averre, that God doth no where in his word tolerate Christian States, to give Tolerations to such adversaries of his Truth, if they have power in their hands to suppress them.

Here is lately brought us an extract of a *Magna Charta*, so called, compiled between the Sub-planters of a *West-Indian* Island; whereof the first Article of constipulation, firmly provides free stable-room and litter for all kinde of consciences, be they never so dirty or jadish; making it actionable, yea, treasonable, to disturbe any man in his Religion, or to discommend it, whatever it be. Wee are very sorry to see such professed profanenesse in *English* Professors, as industriously to lay their Religious Foundations on the ruine of true Religion; which strictly binds every conscience to contend earnestly for the Truth: to preserve unity of spirit, faith and Ordinances, to be all like-minded, of one accord; every man to take his brother into his Christian care: to stand fast with one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel: and by no meanes to permit Heresies or erroneous opinions: But God abhorring such loathsome beverages, hath in his righteous judgement blasted that enterprize, which might otherwise have prospered well, for ought I know; I presume their case is generally knowne ere this.

If the devill might have his free option, I believe he would ask nothing else, but liberty to enfranchise all false Religions, and to embondage the true; nor should he need: It is much to be feared, that laxe Tolerations upon State pretences and planting necessities, will be the next subtle Stratagem he will spread, to distate the Truth of God and supplant the peace of the Churches. Tolerations in things tolerable, exquisitely drawn out by the lines of the Scripture, and pensill of the Spirit, are the sacred favours of Truth, the due latitudes of Love, the faire Compartiments of Christian fraternity: but irregular dispensations, dealt forth by the facilities of men, are the frontiers of error, the redoubts of Schisme, the perillous irritaments of carnall and spirituall enmity.

My heart hath naturally detested foure things: The standing of the Apocrypha in the Bible; Forrainers dwelling in my Countrey, to crowd our native Subjects into the corners of the Earth; Alchymized coines; Tolerations of divers Religions, or of one Religion in segregant shapes: He that willingly assents to the last, if he examines his heart by day-light, his conscience will tell him, he is either an Atheist, or an Heretique, or an Hypocrite, or at best a captive to some lust: Poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world. True Religion is *Ignis probationis*, which doth *congregare homogenea & segregare heterogenea*.

Not to tolerate things meerly indifferent to weak consciences, argues a conscience too strong: pressed uniformity in these, causes much disunity: To tolerate more than indifferents, is not to deale indifferently with God; He that doth it, takes his Scepter out of his hand, and bids him stand by. Who hath to doe to institute Religion but God. The power of all Religion and Ordinances, lies in their purity: their purity in their simplicity: then are mixtures pernicious. I lived in a City, where a Papist preached in one Church, a Lutheran in another, a Calvinist in a third; a Lutheran one part of the day, a Calvinist the other, in the same Pulpit: the Religion of that place was but motly and meagre, their affections Leopardlike.

If the whole Creature should conspire to doe the Creator a mischief, or offer him an insolency, it would be in nothing more, than in erecting untruths against his Truth, or by sophisticating his Truths with humane medleyes; the removing of some one iota in Scripture, may draw out all the life, and traverse all the Truth of the whole Bible: but to authorise an untruth, by a Toleration of State, is to build a Sconce against the walls of heaven, to batter God out of his Chaire: To tell a practicall lye, is a great sin, but yet transient; but to set up a Theoricall untruth, is to warrant every lye that lies from its root to the top of every branch it hath, which are not a few.

I would willingly hope that no Member of the Parliament hath skilfully ingratiated himselfe into the hearts of the House, that he might watch a time to midwife out some ungracious Toleration for his own turne, and for the sake of that, some others. I would also hope that a word of generall caution should not be particularly misapplied. I am the freer to suggest it, because I know not one man of that mind, my aime is generall, and I desire may be so accepted. Yet good Gentlemen, looke

well about you, and remember how *Tiberius* plaid the Fox with the Senate of *Rome*, and how *Fabius Maximus* cropt his ears for his cunning.

That State is wise, that will improve all paines and patience rather to compose, then tolerate differences in Religion. There is no divine Truth, but hath much Celestial fire in it from the Spirit of Truth: nor no irreligious untruth, without its proportion of Antifire from the Spirit of Error to contradict it: the zeale of the one, the virulency of the other, must necessarily kindle Combustions. Fiery diseases seated in the spirit, embroile the whole frame of the body: others more externall and coole, are lesse dangerous. They which divide in Religion divide in God; they who divide in him, divide beyond *Genus Generalissimum*, where there is no reconciliation, without atonement; that is, without uniting in him, who is One, and in his Truth, which is also one.

Wise are those men who will be perswaded rather to live within the pale of Truth where they may bee quiet, than in the purliev's, where they are sure to be hunted ever and anon, doe Authority what it can. Every singular Opinion, hath a singular opinion of it self; and he that holds it a singular opinion of himself, and a simple opinion of all contra-sentients: he that confutes them, must confute all three at once, or else he does nothing; which will not be done without more stir than the peace of the State or Church can indure.

And prudent are those Christians, that will rather give what may be given, then hazzard all by yeelding nothing. To sell all peace of Country, to buy some peace of Conscience unseasonably, is more avarice than thrift, imprudence than patience: they deale not equally, that set any truth of God at such a rate; but they deale wisely that will stay till the Market is fallen.

My prognosticks deceive me not a little, if once within three seven years, peace prove not such a penny-worth at most Marts in Christendome, that hee that would not lay down his money, his lust, his opinion, his will, I had almost said the best flower of his Crown for it, while he might have had it; will tell his own heart, he plaid the very ill husband.

Concerning Tolerations I may further assert.

That Persecution of True Religion, and Toleration of false, are the *Jannes* and *Jambres* to the Kingdome of Christ, whereof the last is farre the worst. *Augustines* tongue had not owed his mouth one penny-rent though it had never spake one word more in it, but this, *Nullum malum pejus libertate errandi*.

Frederick Duke of *Saxon*, spake not one foote beyond the mark when he said, he had rather the Earth should swallow him up quick, then he should give a toleration to any opinion against any truth of God.

He that is willing to tolerate any Religion, or discrepant way of Religion, besides his own, unlesse it be in matters meerly indifferent, either doubts of his own, or is not sincere in it.

He that is willing to tolerate any unsound Opinion, that his own may also be tolerated, though never so sound, will for a need hang Gods Bible at the Devils girdle.

Every Toleration of false Religions, or Opinions hath as many Errours and sins in it, as all the false Religions and Opinions it tolerates, and one sound one more.

That State that will give Liberty of Conscience in matters of Religion, must give Liberty of Conscience and Conversation in their Morall Laws, or else the Fiddle will be out of tune, and some of the strings cracke.

He that will rather make an irreligious quarrell with other Religions, then try the truth of his own by valuable Arguments, and peaceable Sufferings; either his Religion, or himselfe is irreligious.

Experience will teach Churches and Christians, that it is farre better to live in a State united, though a little Corrupt, then in a State, whereof some Part is incorrupt, and all the rest divided.

I am not altogether ignorant of the eight Rules given by Orthodox Divines about giving Tolerations, yet with their favour I dare affirme,

That there is no Rule given by God for any State to give an Affirmative Toleration to any false Religion, or Opinion whatsoever; they must connive in some cases, but may not concede in any.

That the State of *England* (so farre as my Intelligence serves) might in time have prevented with ease, and may yet without any great difficulty deny both Toleration, and irregular Connivences, *salva Republica*.

That if the State of *England* shall either willingly Tolerate, or weakly connive at such Courses, the Church of that Kingdom will sooner become the Devills Dancing-Schoole, then Gods-Temple; The Civill State a Beare-garden, then an Exchange: The whole Realme a Pais base, then an *England*. And what pity it is, that that Country which hath been the Staple of Truth to all Christendome, should now become the Aviary of Errors to the whole World, let every fearing heart judge.

I take Liberty of Conscience to bee nothing but a freedome from sinne, and error. *Conscientia in tantum libera, in quantum ab errore liberata*. And liberty of Error nothing but a Prison for Conscience. Then small will bee the kindnesse of a State to build such Prisons for their Subjects.

The Scripture saith, there is nothing makes free but Truth, and Truth saith, there is no Truth but One: If the States of the World would make it their sumoperous Care to preserve this One Truth in its purity and Authority it would ease them of all other Political cares. I am sure Satan makes it his grand, if not onely taske, to adulterate Truth; Falshood is his sole Scepter, whereby he first ruffled, and ever since ruined the World.

If Truth be but One, me thinks all the Opinionists in *England* should not be all in that One Truth, some of them I doubt are out. He that can extract an unity out of such a disparity, or contract such a disparity into an unity; had need be a better Artist, then ever was *Drebell*.

If two Centers (as we may suppose) be in one Circle, and lines drawn from both to all the points of the Compasse, they will certainly crosse one another, and probably cut through the Centers themselves.

There is talke of an universall Toleration, I would talke as loud as I could against it, did I know what more apt and reasonable Sacrifice *England* could offer to God for his late performing all his heavenly Truths, then an universall Toleration of all hellish Errors, or how they shall make an universall Reformation, but by making Christs Academy the Devills University, where any man may commence Heretique *per saltum*; where he that is *filius Diabolicus*, or *simpliciter pessimus*, may have his grace to goe to hell *cum Publico Privilegio*; and carry as many after him, as he can.

Religio docenda est, non coercenda is a pretty piece of *album Latinum* for some kinde of throats that are willingly sore, but *Haeresis dedocenda est non permittenda*, will be found a farre better *Diamoron* for the Gargarismes this Age wants, if timely and throughly applied.

If there be roome in <i>England</i> for		
	<i>Familists</i>	<i>Manes</i>
	<i>Libertines</i>	<i>Lemures</i>
	<i>Erastians</i>	<i>Dryades</i>
	<i>Antitrinitarians</i>	<i>Homadryades</i>
	<i>Anabaptists</i>	<i>Potamides</i>
	<i>Antiscripturists</i>	<i>Naiades</i>
	<i>Arminians</i>	<i>Himides</i>
	<i>Manifestarians</i>	<i>Pierides</i>
	<i>Millinaries</i>	then room for <i>Nereides</i>
	<i>Antinomians</i>	<i>Pales</i>
	<i>Socinians</i>	<i>Anonides</i>
	<i>Arrians</i>	<i>Parcades</i>
	<i>Perfectists</i>	<i>Castalides</i>
	<i>Brownists</i> ^[1]	<i>Monides</i>
	<i>Mortalians</i>	<i>Charites</i>
	<i>Seekers</i>	<i>Helicomides</i>
Religious Men	<i>Enthusiasts</i>	Good Spirits,
but pernicious Heretiques	&c.	but very Devils. &c.

In a word room for Hell above ground.

[1] By Brownists I mean not Independents, but dew-clawd Seperatists: farre be it from me to wrong godly Independents. I truely acknowledge that I judge my self neither able nor worthy to honour some of them as they deserve.

It is said, Though a man have light enough himselfe to see the Truth, yet if he hath not enough to enlighten others, he is bound to tolerate them, I will engage my self, that all the Devills in *Britanie* shall sell themselves to their shirts, to purchase a Lease of this Position for three of their Lives, under the Seale of the Parliament.

It is said, That Men ought to have Liberty of their Conscience, and that it is Persecution to debarre them of it: I can rather stand amazed then reply to this: it is an astonishment to think that the braines of men should be parboyl'd in such impious ignorance; Let all the wits under the Heavens lay their heads together and finde an Assertion worse than this (one excepted) I will Petition to be chosen the universal Ideot of the world.

It is said, That Civill Magistrates ought not to meddle with Ecclesiasticall matters.

I would answer to this so well as I could, did I not know that some Papers lately brought out of *New-England*, are going to the Presse, wherein the Opinions of the Elders there in a late Synod, concerning this point are manifested, which I suppose will give clearer satisfaction then I can.

The true English of all this their false Latine, is nothing but a generall Toleration of all Opinions; which motion if it be like to take, it were very requisite, that the City would repaire *Pauls* with all the speed they can, for an English *Pantheon*, and bestow it upon the Sectaries, freely to assemble in, then there may be some hope that *London* will be quiet in time.

But why dwell I so intolerable long about Tolerations, I hope my feares are but panick, against which I have a double cordiall. First, that the Parliament will not though they could: Secondly, that they cannot though they would grant such Tolerations. God who hath so honoured them with eminent wisdome in all other things, will not suffer them to cast both his, and their Honour in the dust of perpetuall Infamy, doe what they can; nor shall those who have spent so great a part of their substance in redeeming their Civill Liberties from Usurpation, lose all that remains in enthralling their spirituall Liberty by Toleration.

It is said Opinionists are many, and strong, that *de sunt Vires*, that it is *turbata respublica*, I am very sorry for it, but more sorry, if despondency of minde shall cause the least tergiversation in Gods Worthies, who have receiv'd such pledges of his presence in their late Counsels, and Conflicts. It is not thousands of Opinionists that can pinion his Everlasting armes, I can hardly beleeeve there is a greater unbeleever then my Selfe, yet I can verily beleeeve that the God of Truth will in a short time scatter them all like smoake before the wind. I confesse I am troubled to see Men so over-troubled about them; I am rather glad to heare the Devill is breaking up house in *England*, and removing somewhither else, give him leave to sell all his rags, and odde-ends by the out-cry; and let his petty Chapmen make their Market while they may, upon my poore credit it will not last long. Hee that hath done so much for *England* will go on to perfect his owne praise, and his Peoples Peace: let good men stand still, and behold his further Salvation. He that sitteth in the Heavens laughs at them, the most High hath them in Derision, and their folly shall certainly be manifested to all men.

Yet I dare not but adde, and in the Name of God will adde, that if any Publique members of Church or State, have been either open fautors, or private abettors of any blasphemous, contagious Opinions; It will be their wisdome to proportion their repentance to their Sin, before God makes them Publique monuments of Ignominie, and Apostasie.

Thirdly, That all Christian States, ought to disavow and decry all such Errors, by some peremptory Statutory Act, and that in time, that Subjects knowing fully the minde of the State, might not delude themselves with vaine hopes of unsufferable Liberties. It is lesse to say *Statuatur veritas, ruat Regnum*, than *Fiat justitia, ruat Cælum*; but there is no such danger in either of them. Feare nothing Gentlemen, *Rubiconem transiistis, jacta est alea*, ye have turned the Devill out of doores; fling

all his old parrell after him out at the windows, lest he makes an errand for it againe. *Quæ relinquuntur in morbis post indicationem, recidivas facere consuevere.* Christ would have his Church without spot or wrinkle; They that help make it so, shall lose neither honour nor labour: If yee be wise, suffer no more thorns in his sides or your owne. When God kindles such fires as these, hee doth not usually quench them, till the very scum on the pot sides be boyled cleane away, *Ezek. 24. 10, 11.* Yee were better to doe it your selves, then leave it to him: the Arme of the Lord is mighty, his hand very heavy; who can dwell with his devouring fire, and long lasting burnings?

Fourthly, to make speedy provision against Obstinates and disseminaries: where under favour, two things will be found requisite. First, variety of penaltyes, I meane certaine, not indefinite: I am a Crabbat against Arbitrary Government. Experience hath taught us here, that politicall, domesticall, and personall respects, will not admit one and the same remedy for all, without sad inconveniences. Secondly, just severity: persecution hath ever spread Truth, prosecution scattered Errour: Ten of the most Christian Emperors, found that way best; Schollars know whom I meane: Five of the ancient Fathers perswaded to it, of whom *Augustine* was one, who for a time argued hard for indulgency: but upon conference with other prudent Bishops, altered his judgement, as appears in three of his Epistles, to *Marcellinus*, *Donatus*, and *Boniface*. I would be understood, not onely an Allowers, but an humble Petitioner, that ignorant and tender conscienced Anabaptists may have due time and means of conviction.

Fifthly, That every Prophet, to whom God hath given the tongue of the learned, should teach, and every Angel who hath a pen and inkehorne by his side write against these grieving extravagancies: writing of many books, I grant is irkesome, reading endlesse. A reasonable man would thinke Divines had declaimed sufficiently upon these Themes. I have ever thought the Rule given, *Titus 3. 10.* which cuts the work short and sharpe to be more properly prevalent, then wearisome waiting upon unwearable Spirits. It is a most toylsome taske to run the wild-goose chase after a well-breath'd Opinionist: they delight in vitilitigation: it is an itch that loves a life to be scrub'd: they desire not satisfaction, but satisdiction, whereof themselves must be judges: yet in new eruptions of Error with new objections, silence is sinfull.

As for my selfe, I am none of the disputers of this world: all I can doe, is to gesse when men speake true or false divinity: if I can but finde the parentall roote, or formall reason of a Truth, I am quiet; if I cannot, I shore up my slender judgement as long as I can, with two or three the handsomest props I can get: I shall therefore leave Arguments to acuter heads, and onely speak a word of Love, with all Christian respect to our deare Brethren in *England*, which are against baptizing of Infants: I intreate them to consider these few things seriously and meekly. First, what a high pitch of boldnesse it is for man to cut a principall Ordinance out of the Kingdome of God; if it be but to make a dislocation, which so far disgoods the Ordinance, I feare it altogether unhallows it, to transplace or transtime a stated Institution of Christ, without his direction, I thinke, is to destroy it. Secondly, what a Cruelty it is to devest children of that onely externall priviledge which their heavenly Father hath bequeathed them, to interest them visibly in Himselfe, His Son, His Spirit, His Covenant of Grace, and the tender bosome of their carefull Mother the Church. Thirdly, what an Inhumanity it is, to deprive Parents of that comfort they may take from the baptisme of their Infants dying in their Childehood. Fourthly, How unseasonable and unkindely it is, to interturbe the State and Church with these Amalekitish onsets, when they are in their extreame pangs of travell with their lives. Fifthly, to take a through view of those who have preambled this by path. Being sometimes in the Crowds of foraigne Wederdopers, that is, Anabaptists; and prying into their inward frames with the best eyes I had; I could not but observe these disguised guises in the generality of them.

First, a flat formality of Spirit without salt or savour in the spiritualities of Christ, as if their Religion began and ended in their Opinion. Secondly, a shallow slighting of such as dissent from them, appearing too often in their faces, speeches and carriages. Thirdly, a feeble, yet peremptory obstinacy; seldome are any of them reclaimed. Fourthly, a shamefull sliding into other such tarpauling

tenets, to keep themselves dry from the showers of Justice, as a rationally minde would never entertain, if it were not Error-blasted from Heaven and Hell: I should as shrewdly suspect that Opinion, that will cordially corrive with two or three sottish errors, as that faith that can professedly live with two or three sordid sins. I dare not feare our godly Brethren in *England* to be yet comming to this passe; how soon they may, themselves know not, the times are slippery: They will undoubtedly finde God as jealous of his Ordinances, as themselves are zealous of their Opinions.

Sixthly, That Authority ought to see their Subjects children baptized, though their Parents judgements be against it, if there be no other Evangelicall barre in the way.

Seventhly, That prudent men, especially young, should doe well not to ingage themselves in conference with Errorists, without a good calling and great caution; their breath is contagious, their leprey spreading: receive not him that is weak, saith the Apostle, to doubtfull disputations; much lesse may they run themselves into dangerous Sophistications. He usually hears best in their meetings, that stops his eares closest; he opens his mouth to best purpose, that keeps it shut, and he doeth best of all, that declines their company as wisely as he may.

Brethren, have an extraordinary care also of the late Theosophers, that teach men to climbe to Heaven upon a ladder of lying figments. Rather than the Devill will lose his game, he will out-shoot Christ in his owne bow; he will out-law the Law, quite out of the word and world: over-Gospell the Gospell, and quidanye Christ, with Sugar and Rats-bane. Hee was Professour not long since at *Schelstat* in *Alsatia*, where he learned that no poyson is so deadly as the poyson of Grace.

The wisest way, when all is said, is with all humility and feare, to take Christ as himselfe hath revealed himselfe in his Gospel, and not as the Devill presents him to prestigiated phansies. I have ever hated the way of the Rosie-Crucians, who reject things as Gods wisdom hath tempered them, and will have nothing but their Spirits. If I were to give physick to Spryts, I would doe so too: but when I want physick for my body, I would not have my soule tartared: nor my Animall Spirits purged any way, but by my Naturall, and those by my bodily humours, and those by such Ordinaries, as have the nearest vicinage to them, and not by Metaphysicall Limbeckings. I cannot thinke that *materia prima* or *secunda*, should be good for me, that am at least, *Materia millessima sexcentesima quadragesima quinta*.

Here I hold my selfe bound to set up a Beacon, to give warning of a new-sprung Sect of Phrantasticks, which would perswade themselves and others, that they have discovered the Nor-west passage to Heaven. These wits of the game, cry up and downe in corners such bold ignotions of a new Gospell, new Christ, new Faith, and new gay-nothings, as trouble unsetled heads, querulous hearts, and not a little grieve the Spirit of God. I desire all good men may be saved from their Lunatick Creed, by Infidelity; and rather beleeeve these torrid overtures will prove in time, nothing but horrid raptures downe to the lowest hell, from which he that would be delivered, let him avoid these blasphemers, a late fry of croaking Frogs, not to be indured in a Religious State, no, if it were possible, not an houre.

As some are playing young Spaniels, questing at every bird that rises; so others, held very good men, are at a dead stand, not knowing what to doe or say; and are therefore called Seekers, looking for new Nuntio's from Christ, to assoile these benighted questions, and to give new Orders for new Churches. I crave leave with all respect to tell them, that if they looke into *Act. 20. 20. 25. Gal. 1. 8. 9. 1. Tim. 6. 13. 16.* and find them not there; they may happily seeke as the young Prophets did for Eliah's corps, where it never was, nor ever will be found.

I cannot imagine why the Holy Ghost should give *Timothy* the solemnest charge, was ever given mortall man, to observe the Rules he had given, till the comming of Christ, if new things must be expected.

Woe be to them, who ever they be, that so trouble the wayes of God that they who have found the way to Heaven, cannot find the way to Church: And woe be to them, that so gaze at the glorious light, they say, will breake forth in the thousand yeares to come, that they make little of the gracious Truth that hath been revealed these sixteen hundred years past. And woe be to them that so under-

value the first Master-Builders, I mean the Apostles of Christ, that unlesse he sends wiser than they,
He must be accounted lesse faithfull in his house than *Moses*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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