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**MODEST  
REMARKS  
UPON THE  
BISHOP of *LONDON's*  
LETTER  
CONCERNING the late  
EARTHQUAKES.**

[Price Six pence.]

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REMARKS  
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*By One of the People called QUAKERS.*

*And now, O ye Priests, this Commandment is for you.  
If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to Heart,  
to give Glory unto my Name, saith the Lord of Hosts,  
I will even send a Curse upon you, and I will curse  
your Blessings: Yea, I have cursed them already  
because ye do not lay it to Heart.—Therefore I also  
made you contemptible and base before all the  
People, as ye have not kept my Way, but have been  
PARTIAL in the Law.*

Malachi, ii. 1st. 2d. and 3d. Verses.

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TO THE  
BISHOP  
OF  
LONDON.

*Friend* THOMAS,



erily I have perused thy Letter Addressed to the *Clergy* and *Inhabitants* of the  
Cities of *London* and *Westminster* with great Attention, and must acknowledge  
to thee with Concern, that I am exceedingly disappointed in the Expectation I  
had raised to myself from that Work. The Solemnity, Friend, of the Occasion,  
the Seriousness and Consequence of the Subject treated of, and the Relation  
thou pretendest to stand in to the Inhabitants of these Cities, made me believe, that Nothing  
would be omitted, that was Necessary to awaken the Conscience, and inform the  
Understandings of all Degrees of People, within thy Charge. But how vain is human Wisdom,  
and how infinitely short-sighted are its Researches, when it relies upon itself, and is  
unassisted by that Spirit, to whom all Events are known, who searcheth the Hearts and  
tryeth the Reins of the Children of Men!

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THY Letter, Friend, instead of awakening the Conscience of the hardened Sinner, or  
confirming the Faith of the staggering Believer, has confounded their Understandings, and  
led them into a Labyrinth, out of which it is impossible they should ever extricate themselves  
by the Strength of the mere natural Man.

THOU hast without any Authority, (for thou disclaimest all Inspiration from the *Holy Spirit*)  
represented the two Shocks of an Earthquake, lately felt, as a supernatural Event; and  
magisterially pronounced them the Effects of a special Providence, threatning Vengeance  
upon a wicked and profligate Generation. Who knoweth the Councils of the Almighty?  
Strange and wonderful are all his Works, and his Ways past finding out. What is Man, that  
he should dive into the Secrets of his Providence, or the Son of Man, that he should deal out  
his Judgments according to his vain Imaginations? Verily, Friend, Thou wast under no  
Temptation to make such an use of that Dispensation of his Providence; and thou mightest  
have found sufficient Matter from a natural Effect (as those, for aught we know to the  
contrary, certainly were) to have excited thy Readers to a sincere Repentance, without  
arrogating to thyself a Knowledge to which thou hast not the smallest Claim, or furnishing

the Ungodly, in the first Line of thy Work, with Matter of Prejudice against all that thou couldst say; since they could plainly discover by their natural Understanding, that without the Gift of the Holy Spirit, thou couldst not, and oughtest not to have ascribed to a special Providence, what may be rationally explained by the general Laws that govern Matter and Motion. These Laws are, no doubt, in the Hands of the Almighty: and the sovereign Disposer of all Things may, for the wise Purposes of his Providence, stop, alter, or controul them at his Pleasure. But, because we believe and are assured, that he hath reserved the Power to himself, must we, weak-sighted Mortals, have the Arrogance to conclude, that, on every Occurrence, which appears in the least singular and unusual, this special Power is exerted; and that the Order of Nature is inverted, as often as our gloomy Imagination is pleased to think that it ought to be so?

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We are taught from Holy Writ, that Cities and whole Nations have been destroyed by the especial Vengeance of God for their heinous Transgressions. But except we had been so told by an infallible Spirit, and who could not deceive us by false Conjectures, we had no Right, nay, it would be impious in us so much as to suspect that such Cities suffered for their Sins by the Hands of a special Providence. *Judge not, lest ye be judged*, is a Precept of universal Extent, and strongly inculcated by the Founder of our Holy Religion, who in a particular Manner checked the *Jews*, who of all Nations were the aptest to explain every Occurrence into a special and revengeful Providence. "There were present at that Season some, that told him of the *Galileans*, whose Blood *Pilate* had mingled with the Sacrifices; and *Jesus* answering said unto them, suppose ye, that these *Galileans* were Sinners above all the *Galileans*, because they suffered such things? I tell you Nay, but except you repent ye shall all likewise perish. Or those Eighteen, upon whom the Tower in *Siloe* fell, and slew them, think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in *Jerusalem*? I tell you Nay, but except you repent, ye shall likewise perish." *Luke* Ch. xiii, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

This, Friend, is the Sense of the Son of God upon a Case almost similar to what your Subject led you to treat of; and how different is it from the Sense you would put upon a very natural Occurrence? How much more amiable is the Picture he gives us of the Father in that Parable that immediately followeth the above Verses. Verse 6, He speaks also this Parable. "A certain Man had a Fig-tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought Fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the Dresser of his Vineyard, behold these three Years I come seeking Fruit on this Fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the Ground? and he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this Year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear Fruit, well; and if not, then after thou shalt cut it down." How much more amiable, I say, is the Doctrine our Blessed Redeemer would inculcate by this short Parable, than the Idea we conceive from explaining every natural Accident as the Manifestation of the Wrath of an angry, incensed, and avenging God! The *Jewish* Doctors, like you, Friend, were willing to explain the Sufferings of the *Galileans* into a special Act of Divine Vengeance for their Sins; which they certainly believed very heinous, as these People differed with them in some religious Points; and, no doubt, might from thence take some Occasion to preach up Repentance to the rest of the *Jewish* Nation. But he, who could not err, whose Knowledge was infinite, checked their uncharitable Presumption, teaches them, that they are not to judge of the Sins of a People by the natural Calamities that fall upon them; nor to paint the Deity as ready on every Occasion to execute Vengeance against Sinners. "As I live, saith the Lord, I take no Pleasure in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that they should repent and turn from their Evil Ways."

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Now, Friend, without supposing the Shocks we felt any other than the Result of Natural Causes, thou mightst from thence have found sufficient Matter to have roused the most hardened Sinner from the Lethargy of Sin and Death, by observing, that, besides the many infinite Casualties to which Life is exposed, there are yet more terrible Accidents that may sweep them off without a moments Warning, and plunge them into Eternity, loaded with the Weight of their Iniquities. By supposing such Events never to happen, but as particular instances of God's Vengeance against Sinners, the atrocious Sinner is rather led into Despair, than Repentance. Whereas, when we believe them the Result of a natural Cause, that may take Effect every moment of our Lives, of which we can have no Foreknowledge, nor the least possible Means of Prevention, a rational Creature, whose Understanding is not intirely blinded, or whose Conscience is not judicially seared, must be awakened to Repentance, and prepare himself for the great Change, by *his forsaking evil Ways, and turning to the Lord his God with all his Heart and Strength*. Thou mightest from thence have availed thyself of all the Instances, that History, sacred and prophane, furnishes thee with, of Cities and whole Nations, being destroyed by dreadful Calamities, without teaching thy Flock that uncharitable Doctrine, that such natural Disasters were the Effect of the peculiar Sins of these unhappy People. A very dreadful Earthquake happened in *Jamaica*, in the Year 92, that destroyed a great part of that Colony, and almost totally ruined the City of *Port-Royal*. Another within these few years swallowed up the greatest Part of the Capital of *Peru*; and scarce a Year passes, but we hear of the dreadful Effects of Earthquakes in *Italy*. Dost thou, like the *Jewish* Doctors above-mentioned, think, that these People were *Sinners above all others* that escaped that dreadful Visitation? And yet, by supposing the two slight Shocks we have lately felt the Effects of a special Providence, that uncharitable Doctrine is fairly inferred; a Doctrine diametrically opposite to the Spirit of our Holy Religion. But I have said enough to convince thee, that, in thus explaining that Event, thou hast followed too much the Devices of worldly Wisdom; and that thou thyself hast fallen into a greater Error than those Philosophers, whose little Knowledge thou takest upon thee to despise.

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But thou hast not only, Friend, mistaken the proper Use of thy Text, but in the Improvement of it thou hast left unsaid many things that ought naturally to have occurred to thee, whether thou supposedst the Shocks to be the Effect of a special or a general Providence. Verily, Friend, on such an awful Occasion, I expected, that thou wouldest have enumerated, without any palliation or disguise, the many heinous Sins, that in this wicked Age are even a Disgrace to Human Nature, and, after such an Enumeration, thou wouldest candidly, and without Respect of Persons, have pointed out the real Source of all these Iniquities that overwhelm the Land, and have directed thy Flock to the natural Means of freeing themselves from the Thralldom of Sin and Death. But in all this verily thou hast fallen short: For in the List of the Crimes, with which thou hast charged the People, thou hast forgot the most atrocious, and taken notice of the most trivial of our Transgressions, and hast missed intirely of the true Source of our growing Impiety, and left us altogether in the dark as to the Practical Method of *amending our ways, and turning again unto the God of our Fore fathers.*

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The First Sin thou takest Notice of, and what, by the Order in which thou hast placed it, and the Conclusion thou hast drawn from it, would appear in thy Sense the Source of all our publick and private Transgressions, is the Number of bad Books with which the Town swarms. This indeed is a crying Sin, and much to be lamented: but, great as it is, it does not deserve to lead the Van in a List of National Sins, capable of drawing down the special Vengeance of the Almighty upon a whole People. Nor is its Influence so great, as to corrupt the Morals of the Generality of the Nation. Nine Parts in Ten never read Books of any Sort; and those, that do, would make but a small Proficiency in Vice, if they had no other School to learn it in, but Books and unclean Pictures. It is true, Friend, there are a great many impious Books, and indecent Prints, publicly sold in our Streets; and they may have their Share in debauching the Morals of the People: but I would have thee to reflect, that there have been Periods of Time, when that Evil was more to be complained of than at present. I verily believe, that there are not the Hundredth Part of irreligious Books now printed, as were in the Reign of *Charles II.* There is so little of the Spirit of Religion now prevailing, that the Subject, even when spoken of in ridicule, is disagreeable to the Polite of the present Age. But when thou wast speaking of bad Books, there is one thing thou mightest have mentioned with as much Propriety as Part of the Sins of the Times; that is, the Want of good Books, the only proper Antidote against the Venom of those thou so bitterly complainest against: The Age has not only produced fewer bad Books, than some former; but it has been likewise remarkably deficient in producing any thing fit to improve the Morals or Understanding of the People. And this is not owing to the want of Encouragement for such Labours: For, bad and wicked as the Age is, I never heard of a good Book, either of Science, Religion, or Morality, but what met with proper Encouragement from the Publick: but a Spirit of Lukewarmness, in Matter of Religion and Devotion, in those, who are well paid for being its Guardians, prevails so much, that they cannot be induced to enter the Lists with Error and Infidelity; but satisfy themselves with exclaiming, in general Terms, against the immoral Writings of others, without giving themselves the Trouble to impugn their Errors, or to furnish the People with Preservatives against their mischievous Effects. And if, at any Time, they are tempted to take up the Pen in Defence of some favourite Doctrine, the Controversy is handled with so little Charity or Decency, that an honest, well-meaning, Christian, throws aside the Book, disgusted at a Spirit so unbecoming the Followers of *Christ Jesus.* In a Word, Friend *Thomas,* I think this Laziness in those, endued with all the Advantages of Light and Knowledge, and whose Time ought to be chiefly employed in such Labours, to be a much greater Grievance, and a more infallible Sign of the total Decay of the true Spirit of Christianity, and a greater Reason for the Increase of Infidelity and Prophaneness, than all the bad Books, obscene Prints, and Histories of Prostitutes, that have been published for this Century past. And to shew thee, that if good Books are compiled, there is no fear of Encouragement even from this profligate Generation, Thou needst only recollect, that thy *little* Letter has brought more Money to thy Bookseller, than all the Impressions of prophane Books, of any Kind, have brought to the whole Trade for this Twelvemonth past.

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After that thou hast finished thy melancholy Declamation against prophane Books and Prints, the Excess of our publick Diversions takes the next Place in the List of deadly Sins. This is exaggerated by an Instance of fifteen or sixteen Advertisements, even in the Holy Season of Lent; and thou goest piously on to mention Idleness, Gaming, &c. These are terrible Crimes indeed, Friend. But does not thee think, that there are many others of a deeper Dye, and of which these are only trivial Consequences? Yes, thou knowest there are; thou couldst not forget them, being too glaring to have escaped thy Penetration. Yet, thou hast skipped them over, or taken but very slight Notice of them. For thou hookest in but one Crime more, before thou seemest to finish thy grand Charge, and to begin thy Application. Verily, I could have wished in Charity, that thou hadst left that one Crime out of thy List on this Occasion. The Crime, I mean, is the Mention thou makest of the Increase of Popery. Thou art to remember, Friend, that thou hast supposed the Almighty justly offended at the Number and Heinousness of our National Transgressions, and that thou art giving a List of the Transgressions, that thou thinkest capable of drawing down upon us the special Judgments of the Divine Being. Now, canst thou in Charity, as a Christian, think, that Popery could be numbered amongst these deadly Sins? The Errors of that superstitious Church are many; but God forbid, that we should imagine, that their Errors, in Point of Faith, are such, as to merit these special Marks of the Divine Wrath. Had that been the Case, this Island, and all Europe, must many Centuries ago, have felt the most dreadful Effects of these Calamities. If thou meanest in that Paragraph those, who continue obstinate in Error, in

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spite of Conviction, and the Dictates of their own Conscience, thou sayest right, and mightst have mentioned all such of every Persuasion in this Island. But, if thou meanest the gross Body of the Catholicks, whom we are bound in Charity to believe to act from Principle and Conviction, (and, indeed, they must be strangely infatuated if they do not;) thou hast verily been exceedingly to blame, to mention them on this Occasion. For remember, that from a Principle common to all Protestants, if they act from rational Conviction, or what appears to them as such, they are as much entitled to the gracious Mercies of a good God, as thee, or I, is; and, consequently, the Increase of their Tenets, however erroneous they may appear to us, cannot, with any Colour of Justice, be reckoned amongst the List of Sins, capable of drawing down special Judgements upon this Land.

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The Divisions, that are amongst the Followers of *Christ Jesus*, is indeed Part of the enormous Wickedness of this Age. These we ought to lament in general; but its being greatly wanting to that Charity, which is the distinguishing Badge of Christianity, to mark out any one of the several Sects, that profess the same essential Doctrines, with such a dreadful Distinction. But thou hast not only placed the Catholicks as the immediate Objects of God's avenging Judgments, but thou hast represented some of their Doctrines in a Light which they do not deserve. Thou wouldst insinuate, that the Cordial, as thou callest it, of Absolution, is believed by the Catholicks, to be of Effect, without a thorough and sincere Repentance. We ought, thou knowest, Friend, ever to speak Truth: which Truth never stands in need of the Aids of Falshood. Now, the Catholicks, in all their Writings, lay it down, and teach it as a Tenet of their Church, that Absolution, however solemn, or by whomsoever pronounced, is so far from being of any Effect without Repentance, Amendment, and Retribution, if in their Power, that the thus accepting it is adding the heinous Sin of Sacrilege to all their other Sins. Now, by what Means canst thou suppose, that this Cordial of Absolution, however ineffectual thou and I may think it, could be greedily swallowed by Persons averse to the wholesom food of Repentance, by which their spiritual Condition might be gradually mended? If they swallow it, they must already have digested the Food of Repentance; if they have not, they know, as well as thee, that they have swallowed a Poison instead of a Cordial. If thou must needs, at a Time when thou oughtest, instead of awakening Christian Divisions, to have done all in thy Power to Unite all its Followers in one Bond of Peace and charitable Union; if thou must needs, I say, at such a Time, employ thy Rhetoric against the Errors of that Church, sure thou mightst have pitched upon some one founded in Truth, and not have mentioned as Fact a Thing so easily red-argued. At other Times Zeal for the Cause of Truth may, tho' preposterously enough, prompt a Man to blacken his Adversary with imaginary Crimes, in order, by a kind of pious Fraud, to prepossess the People against the Errors in his Doctrine and Practice.

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But on such an Occasion as this, and from so distinguished a Hand, we had Reason to expect, Friend, that every Fact advanced should have been literally and manifestly true. I remember an Instance known all over *Europe*, that might have set thee right, if thou wert really ignorant of the Nature of *Romish* Absolution. That is, that, notwithstanding the great Powers of that despotic King, *Lewis* the XIVth, all his Authority could not prevail over any one Priest in his Dominions to give him Absolution, or administer to him the Sacrament whilst he lived in a state of Uncleaness with *Madam Maintenon*. He was so far from resenting their supporting an Authority, he thought them legally possessed of, that for the faithful Discharge of their Duty, he loaded his Confessors with Bishopricks; and at last at their Instances privately married his Mistress; and then, and not till then, received Absolution. I, for my part, Friend, think the Absolution pronounced by thy Church, and that by the Church of *Rome*, or by any human Creature alive, to be vain and useless, and the Product of spiritual Pride and Vanity. But the Spirit of Truth, that is within me, would not permit me to pass over so gross a Misrepresentation of Fact, without a proper Reprehension.

This, with a very gentle Touch upon the want of a due Execution of the Laws, (for which thou dost not forget to ask Pardon) finishes the Bead-toll of National Sins, that are to draw down the immediate Vengeance of the most High. Thou then proceedest to hint that a due Execution of the Laws already in Being, and the particular Care of Masters of Families, may bring about a Reformation, and avert those Judgments thou supposest to be threatened by the two very terrible Shocks of an Earthquake. Strange Chimæra, to think that Wickedness, grown to such a height as to merit the special Notice of the Divine Being, and interwoven as it were with our very Nature, should be rooted out by such weak Means! How amazing is it, that a Physician should pretend to cure a complicated Malady, without once touching at the Source of the Disorder, by slightly tickling the outwards Parts, and leaving the Vitals to perish under a mortal Gangrene.

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Every Man's Knowledge, yea, verily, every old Woman's Knowledge, in this Kingdom, might have picked out a Multitude of Instances, and those much more flagrant than any thou hast mentioned, of the general Wickedness and Depravity of the Age we live in. That was no Secret; and we needed neither Bishop, Prophet, nor Earthquake, to remind us, that the Cup of our Iniquity is near full, and that nothing but the superabundant Mercy and long-suffering Patience of the Almighty, could hinder us from falling a sacrifice to his offended Justice. For it is one of the Sins peculiar to this Age, that we have been industrious in finding out new Species of Wickedness, and that we never commit an old Fault, but for want of Invention to diversify the Crime, and heighten the Relish of Iniquity by the horrid Novelty of it; and that we are so far from pretending to act thro' Ignorance or want of Knowledge of our Duty, that

the greatest Pleasure of our Iniquities consists in our Knowledge of their being prohibited by God, and destructive of our future and eternal Happiness. An universal Depravation of Manners reigns thro' all Sorts of People in this sinful Land; and an utter Abhorrence and Detestation of every Thing, that bears but the smallest Resemblance of Virtue and Piety, have possessed the Hearts and Minds of this profligate Generation. The Kingdom of God is not among the wicked Inhabitants of this Island. The Kingdom of Satan prevails and reigns triumphant in our debauched Streets. Our Nobles frequent anti-christian Diversions, and forget the Lord their God, and walk every Man according to the Devices of his own Heart: While a venal Contagion has seized the whole Body of the People, who worship Money as their God, and have said unto Silver and Gold, ye are our Deliverers, and our sure Help in Time of Need. There is nothing so sacred, but what they willingly barter for filthy Lucre. Justice, Honesty, Right and Wrong, are no longer understood in this sinful Land; but every thing is weighed in the Scales of Gain. Their very Souls they bring to the Account of Profit and Loss, making light of Futurity, and laughing at Hell Torments, as the Invention of Priests and Statesmen. Whoredom, Adulteries, Fornications, and all manner of beastly Uncleaness, are openly avowed; and he who does not plunge himself into all the Debaucheries of the Stews, with a high and open Hand, is looked upon as a poor narrow-spirited Creature unworthy of the Company of Men of a noble and exalted Genius. Luxury, Drunkenness, and Gluttony, have overspread the Tables and Dwellings of all Degrees of People. We seek the Bowels of the Earth for Jewels to adorn us, and travel to the most distant Quarters of the World in Quest of whatever may gratify our vicious Appetites, and yet never think of the God, that furnishes our unnatural Wants. Our Women are ashamed of Modesty. They deck themselves in gorgeous Apparel, and expose half their Persons naked to allure the Eyes of the Wicked. Murder, Robberies, and the most barefaced Perjuries, are every Day to be met with in our Streets; even Crimes that would shock Modesty but to mention are as common as Petty Larceny. Yet we are spared, and the sinful Land stands a Monument of the long-suffering Patience of the Almighty.

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This, Friend, is a Supplement to the List of thy deadly Sins; and dost not thee think, that it makes a most dreadful Appearance, and that some of them merited to be mentioned in a more serious Manner than thou hast done? And yet there is one Evil under the Sun, which I have not hitherto descanted on; and that Evil is as great, perhaps, as all the rest put together: And the Spirit moveth me to think, and deliver unto thee, that this Evil, I am now going to expose, is the Spring, Source, and Fountain Head, of all the black Crimes I have rehearsed, and of many more, that could not come within the Compass of my Knowledge.

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I would willingly, if I durst, prevaricate, and conceal this fatal Evil; but as the Eyes of the People are upon us, as their Fears are awakened, and they seem in some Measure willing to find out a Way to rid them of this Load of Sin, that stands as a Wall of Brass between them and the Mercy of their God, it is necessary, since we have pointed out the Malady, that we should display the Source, in order to direct them to a Cure.

Thou wouldst have a Reformation begin in Private Families: but alas! thou art fatally mistaken. The Thing is impossible. It is building downwards. A great many People in this Island are so unhappily situated, that they must continue to be wicked, and to administer to Vice, or cease to eat. In short, their Circumstances are so connected with the prevailing Vices, that they have no other Choice left, but either to starve here, or submit to be damned hereafter. This is a dreadful Case, Friend, and hardly credible: yet a little Knowledge of the World, and Acquaintance with the present Times, will furnish innumerable Instances of Wretches in this unhappy Dilemma. What must such People do? Dost think a Sermon, or a Pastoral Letter, can persuade them to starve here for the sake of an happy Hereafter? No! Appetites are strong; and as this Class of Men have many great Examples to follow, they are no ways intimidated by what either Thou hast, or I could utter unto them on this tremendous Occasion. Before then the Body of the People can be reformed without a Miracle, it is necessary, that these Publick Vices should be plucked up by the Roots; and that the Reformation should begin amongst those of higher Rank, amongst our Rulers, and the Grandees of the Land: but more especially, amongst that Order of Men, the worldly and dissolute Example of some of whom have most contributed to taint the Morals, and pervert the Judgment of the Community. I mean, Friend, thy Brethren, the Clergy. Start not, my Brother! I am not going to bring a railing Accusation against thee in Person, or to Accuse thy Fraternity in a Lump. I verily believe there may be a great Number of thy Profession, who make a Conscience of their Duty; and as much as lyeth in their Power, both by Precept and Example, endeavour to stem the Torrent of Vice and Immorality. But thou knowest as well as I, that there are many in the World, who are Wolves in Sheeps Cloathing, who destroy the Flock they should feed, and poison by their Example the pure Streams of the Gospel, with which they ought to water the Vineyard of the Lord. Its not to be concealed, nor palliated, that there is no Vice, however odious, practised by the blind Laity, but what is likewise committed by some of their more enlightened Teachers: This, Friend, is the great Evil I hinted at above. This is the Source of all our Woes, and here, and no where else, the Reformation must begin.

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How is it possible for thee to think, that though the Clergy were to preach as with the Voice of Angels, that their Discourses should have any Effect upon the Minds or Morals of the People, as long as they see these very Clergy, or a great Number of them, acting diametrically opposite to the Doctrines they teach; and living in such a Manner, as if they themselves did not believe one Word of the sacred Truths they are inculcating.

An inordinate Love of Money is a reigning Sin of the Age. Now, let all the Clergy of this Island join with one Voice in the Pulpit to preach it down, dost thee think the Playing of their Lungs would be of any Significancy, as long as the People see, that these Men set as great a Value upon the ungodly Mammon, as the meanest of them can possibly do? When they see these pretended pious Preachers, like *Simon Magus*, purchasing and selling the Holy Ghost for Money; swallowing Oaths for the Sake of Preferments, that for Years they had declared to be against their Consciences; hunting eargerly after fat Livings, Tithes, and Pigs, and heaping up Pluralities, and Commendams, to gratify their Pride and Avarice: When at the same Time they grudge the least Indulgence to the Drudges, to whose Care they commit the Souls of the People. With what Face can they preach against Luxury, and Sensuality, when they themselves wallow in the Fat of the Land, and loll about in their Leathern Conveniencies, in sadly unedifying Pomp, Pride, and Vanity? Chastity, Sobriety, and Temperance, are Virtues, perhaps as much Strangers in the Tents of *Levi*, as in the Tabernacles of the Tribe of *Nephtali*. But Pride, Spiritual Pride, the worst of Pride, and the Itch of Domination have taken full Possession of the Cassock, and left the Laity but a faint Mimickry of that ugly Habit of the Soul; And as for Charity, and Christian Benevolence, those seem to be no Part of the Creed of a modern Priest. Instead of healing the Divisions amongst Christians, bearing with the Weakness and Infirmities of their Brethren, and, like the Apostle, *becoming all Things to all Men, that by all Means some may be saved*; instead of yielding in Matters of Indifference, and endeavouring to bring about a Christian Coalition, they are obstinate in Trifles, tenacious of the Rags, Fringes, and Patches of Religion, and damn all that won't go to Heaven by the direct Path that they have marked out for them, but which they themselves seem resolved by their daily Practice never to travel.

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When the People, Friend, observe, (and their Eyes are quicker than their Understanding) that the Parson of the Parish winks at the Immorality of his Patron, because he has great Livings in his Gift; when they see him join in his sensual Excesses, and administer to him the most Holy Rites of their Religion, tho' he knows him to live in open Uncleaness, perhaps in Adultery, and to betray, sell, and ruin his Country, I say, Friend, when a Flock sees this Shepherd thus prostituting his Profession, and casting holy Things before Swine, and this only for the Hopes of a Plurality, or Commendam, or Dignity to feed his spiritual Pride with, is it possible for them to conclude those Sins so heinous? Does not his Example influence those of his Family, and the Examples of these those of the Village, till the dreadful, black, Contagion spreads, like a Pest, over a whole County? Who then are to blame for this? Why, verily, none but the profligate venal Clergyman. For if he exerted his Ecclesiastical Power, with as much Zeal against Vice and Prophaneness, as he does in the Recovery of his Tythes, the Great would be obliged to quit their open Sins, and the little ones would not be led astray by his scandalous Example.

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But, it is time, my Friend *Thomas*, to draw towards a Conclusion. A Reformation is certainly necessary. For whether we are punished by an Earthquake or not, the natural Tendency of Vice is such, that a few Years longer Continuance of it must bring along with it Plagues enow to punish us grievously here, as we shall certainly meet a dreadful Reward hereafter. Let me advise thy Brethren, the Clergy, in all Charity and Meekness, to begin the great Work themselves. Purge and make clean the House of the Lord, and drive all Pollution from his Sanctuary. Let the Priesthood that are proud become humble, meek, and lowly, even as was *Jesus*, whose Servants they are. Let them put away the false Gods from amongst them, and destroy the Idol they have set up in their Hearts; that is, let them banish the Love of Money, the Itch of Power and Dominion, either over the Minds or Temporalities of the People. Let him, that has two Livings, give one to his poor Brother; let him, that performeth the Labour of the Vineyard, receive also the Wages; and let not the Drone eat up the Meat of the Industrious Servant. Let them exert their Power without respect of Persons, yet with all Humility and Meekness, not out of Malice, or to gratify their Spleen, but for the Love of Truth and Purity. In a Word, Friend, when they believe what they have sworn at their Ordination to believe, and maintain; when they teach only what they believe, and act as they teach, then without the Gift of Prophecy I can foretell, that this Land will return to the Lord, and his Wrath will be turned from this Generation, and his Blessings multiplied upon our Childrens' Children, even unto the latest Ages of the World. But, Friend, till either thy Brethren do this of themselves, or are compelled to it by their Superiours, nothing less than a divine Miracle can redeem this Land from the Slavery of Sin. May Somebody begin a thorough Reformation somewhere, that we may have Peace in our Days. The God of Peace be with thee, Friend! *Amen*.

[Pg 21]

***FINIS.***



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**Transcriber's Note:** The long "s" used in the original text has been modernized.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MODEST REMARKS UPON THE BISHOP  
OF LONDON'S LETTER CONCERNING THE LATE EARTHQUAKES \*\*\*

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