man to say thus to God in a dying hour; "I, Lord, now the world leaves me, I come to thee. I pray thee give me eternal life, who could never afford to give thee one good day of my life: Grant that I may live with thee and enjoy thee forever, who could never endure to think upon thee. I must confess I could never persuade to leave my fins out of love to thee, but now I repent of them for fear of thee: I am conscious to my felt that I would never do anything for thy sake, but yet I hope thy goodness is such that thou wilt forgive all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of my life, and accept of this forced fulmination which I now make to thee. I pray thee do not at last frustrate and disappoint me in this design which I have laid, of faining while I live and getting to Heaven when I dye. Surely no man can think it is to lay thus to God; yet I am afraid this is the true interpretation of many a man's repentance who hath defert'd till he comes to dye. I do not speak this to discourage repentance, even at that time. It is always the best thing we can do. But I would by all means discourage men from putting off to necessary a work till then. 'Tis true indeed when 'tis come to this and a finer finds himself going out of the world, if he have been so foolish as to cruel himself as to put things upon this last hazard, repentance is now the only thing that is left for him to do; this is his last remedy and the only refuge he has to fly to: And this is that which the Minister in this case ought by all means to put the man upon, and earnestly to persuade him to. But when we speak to men in other circumstances, that are well and in health, we dare not for all the world encourage them to venture their souls upon such an uncertainty. For to speak the height of it, it is a very dangerous remedy, especially when men have deliberately contrived to rob God of the service of their best days, and to put him off with a few unprofitable griefs and tears at the hour of death. I desire to have as large apprehensions of the mercy of God as any man, but withal, I am very sure that he is the hardest to be imposed upon of any one in the world. And no man that hath any worthy apprehensions of the Deity can imagine him to be so easily, as to forgive men upon the least word and intimation of their minds, and to have such a fondness for offenders as would reflect upon the prudence of any Magistrate and Governor upon Earth. God prate that I may sincerely endeavor, to live a holy and virtuous life, and may have the comfort of that which I come to dye: And that I may never be so unwise as to venture all my hopes of a blest eternity upon a death-bed repentance. I will conclude all with those excellent sayings of the Son of Syrac (Eccles. 5. 6. 7. 16. 11. 12. 18. 21. 22.) Say not, God's mercy is great, and he will be merciful for the multitude of his foes. For mercy and wrath is with him; he is mighty to forgive, and to pour out his displeasure: And as his mercy is great, so are his corrections also. Therefore make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day. For suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in his fury the habitation shall be destroyed. Humble thyself before thou be sick, and in the time of fine and jealous. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy vows in due time, and defer not till death to be justified.

S E R M O N

The Hazard of being Saved in the Church of Rome.

1 Cor. III. 15.

But be himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

The context is thus. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wife Master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, that Christ is the Lord. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath build thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.
The Hazard of being Saved

Serm. XI.

but employing his whole care to save his body from the flames, as S. Christoff
upon another occasion expressed it. And to the Roman Orator (who it
is likely did not think of Paraguay) with this platitude: "Quod ex justitia, vo-
lat ex sodalud, nulius efficitus;" from which Judgment or Sentence he escaped
naked, as it were out of a burning. And one of the Greek Orators tells
us, That to face a moment of the fire, was a common proverbial speech.

From the words thus explained, the Observation that naturally arises is
this, That men may hold all the fundamentals of Christian Religion, and yet
may suffer all other things whereby they may greatly endanger their salvation.

What those things were which some among the Corinthians built upon the
foundation of Christianity, whereby they endangered their Salvation, we
may probably conjecture by what the Apostle reproves in this Epistle, as
the tolerating of incestuous marriages, communicating in Idol Fasts, &c.
and especially by the doctrine of the false Apostles, who at that time did
so much disturb the peace of most Christian Churches, and who are so
often and so frequently reviled upon in this Epistle. And what their Doctrine
was, we have an account, Acts i. 
which they imposed upon the Gentile Christians Circumcision, and the obser-
vation of the SABBATH, teaching
that the laws were circumscribed, and kept the Law of Moses, they could not be
used. So that they did not only build these doctrines upon Christianity, but
they made them equal with the foundation, laying, that unless men believed
and practised such things they could not be saved.

In speaking to this Observation, I shall reduce my discourse to these two
heads.

1. I shall prefix to you some Doctrines and Principles which have
been built upon the foundation of Christianity, to the great hazard and danger of
men's salvation. And to be plain, I mean particularly the Church of Rome.
2. I shall enquire, whether our granting a possibility of salvation (the
very greatest hazard) to those in the communion of the Roman Church, and
their denying it to us, is a reasonable argument and encouragement to any
man to betake himself to that Church.

And there is the more reason to consider these things, when so many seduc-
ting Spirits are so active and busy to pervert men from the truth; and when
we see every day so many men and their Religion so easily parted. For this
reason these two Considerations shall be the subject of the following discourse.

1. First, We will consider some Doctrines and Principles which the Church of
Rome hath built upon the foundation of Christianity, to the great hazard and
danger of men's salvation. It is not denied by the most judicious Prote-
stants, but that the Church of Rome do hold all the Articles of the Chris-
tian Faith which are necessary to salvation. But that which we charge upon
them, as a part ground of our separation from them, is the imposing of new
Doctrines and Principles upon Christians as necessary to salvation, which were
never taught by our Saviour, or his Apostles; and which are either directly
corrupt to the Doctrine of Christianity, or too apparently destructive of
a good life. And, I begin:

With their Doctrines. And because I have no mind to aggravate lesser
matters, I will single out four or five points of Doctrine, which they have
added to the Christian Religion, and which were neither taught by our Savi-
our and his Apostles, nor owned in the first Ages of Christianity. And the
First which I shall mention, and which being once admitted makes way
for as many errors as they please to bring in, is their Doctrine of Infallibility.

And
The Hazard of being Saved. Serm. XI.

4. The Doctrine of Transubstantiation. A hard word, but I would to God that were the word of it; the thing is much more difficult. I have taken some points to consider other Religions that have been in the world, and I must freely declare, that I never yet in any of them met with an Article or Proposition, imposed upon the belief of men, half so unreasonable and hard to be believed as this: And yet this in the Romish Church is esteemed one of the most principal Articles of the Christian Faith; tho' there is no more certain foundation for it in Scripture, than for our Saviour's being fabulously changed into all those things which are laid of him, so that he is a rock, a bone, a door, and a hundred other things. But this is not all. This Doctrine hath not only no certain Foundation in Scripture, but I have a far heavier charge against it, namely, that it undermines the very foundation of Christianity itself. And surely nothing ought to be admitted to be a part of the Christian Doctrine which destroys the reason of our belief of the whole. And that this Doctrine does, will appear evidently, if we consider what was the main argument which the Apostles used to convince the world of the truth of Christianity; and that was this, That our blessed Saviour, the Author of this Doctrine, wrought such and such miracles, and particularly that he rose again from the dead. And that they proved because they were eye-witnesses of his miracles, and had seen him, and conversed with him after he was risen from the dead. But what if their fables did deceive them in this matter? then it cannot be denied that the main proof of Christianity falls to the ground.

Well! We will now luppol (as the Church of Rome does) Transubstantiation to have been one principal part of the Christian Doctrine which the Apostles preached. But if this Doctrine be true, then all men's fables are deceived in a plain sensible matter, wherein it is as hard for them to be deceived as in any thing in the world: For two things can hardly be imagined more different, than a little bit of water and the whole body of a man. So that the Apostles persuading men to believe this Doctrine, persuaded them not to trust their fables, and yet the argument which they used to persuade them so was built upon the direct contrary principle, that men's fables are to be trusted. For if they be not, then notwithstanding all the evidence the Apostles offer'd for the resurrection of our Saviour, he might not be rised, and so the faith of Christianity was vain. So that they represent the Apostles as absurd as is possible, nay, going about to persuade men out of their fables by virtue of an argument, the whole strength whereon depends upon the certainty of fable.

And now the matter is brought to a fair issue; If the testimony of fable to be relied upon, then Transubstantiation is false; If it be not, then no man is sure that Christianity is true. For the utmost assurance that the Apostles had of the truth of Christianity was the testimony of their own fables concerning our Saviour's Miracles, and this testimony every man hath against Transubstantiation. From whence it is plainly follows, that no man (no not the Apostles themselves) had more reason to believe Christianity to be true, than every man hath to believe Transubstantiation to be false. And we who did not see our Saviour's Miracles (as the Apostles did) and have only a credible relation of them, but do see the Sacrament, have left evidence of the truth of Christianity than of the fablhood of Transubstantiation. But could God impede upon the fables of men, and reprove things to them otherwise than they are? Yes, undoubtedly. And if he hath revealed that he doth this, are we not to believe him? Most certainly. But then we ought to be assured that he hath made such a Revelation; which assurance no man can have, the certainty of fable being taken away. I shall

Serm. XI. in the Church of Rome. 132

I shall prefix the business a little farther. Supposing the Scripture to be a Divine Revelation, and that the words (This is my Body) are in the Bible, then every man has that the Bread is not changed in the Sacrament! Nay no man has so much; for we have only the evidence of one fable that these words are in the Bible, but that the Bread is not changed we have the concurs of testimony of several of our fables. In a word, if this be admitted that the fables of all men are deceived, and by one of the most plain sensible matters that can be, there is no certain means left either to convey or prove a Divine Revelation to men; nor is there any way to confute the grosser impurities in the world: For if the clear evidence of all men fables be not sufficient for this purpose, let any man, if he can, find a better and more convincing argument.

5. I will in like manner in one Doctrine more; And that shall be, their Doctrine of deposit Kings in Cafe of Heresy, and abolishing their Subjects from their Allegiance to them. And this is not a mere speculative doctrine, but hath been put in practice many a time by the Bishops of Rome, as every one knows that is very real in History. For the troubles and confusions which were occasion'd by this very thing make up a good part of the History of several Ages.

I hope no body expects that I should take the pains to shew that this was not the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles, nor of the Primitive Christians. The Papists are many of them so far from pretending this, that in some places and places, when it is not fashionable and for their purposes, we have much a do to persuade them that ever it was their Doctrine. But if Transubstantiation be their Doctrine, this is; for they came both out of the same forge, I mean the Council of Lateran under Pope Innocent the Third. And if, (as they tell us,) Transubstantiation was then established, so was this. And indeed one would think they were twins and brought forth at the same time, they are like one another, both of them being monstrously unreasonable.

II. I come now in the second place to consider some Practises of the Church of Rome, which I am afraid will prove as bad as her Doctrines. I shall instance in these five:

1. Their celebrating of their Divine Service in an unknown tongue. And that not only contrary to the practice of the Primitive Church, and to the great end and design of Religious Worship, which is the edification of those who are concerned in it, (and it is hard to imagine how men can be edified by what they do not understand,) but likewise in direct contradiction to St. Paul, who hath no less than a whole Chapiter wherein he confounds this practice as false, and condemns it as plainly as any thing is condemned in the whole Bible. And they that have the face to maintain that this practice was not condemned by St. Paul, or that it was allowed and used in the first Ages of Christianity, need not be ashamed to lift up for the defence of any paradox in the World.

2. The Communion in one kind. And that notwithstanding that every one of their own acknowledgment our Saviour intitulated it to be both kinds, and the Primitive Church administered it in both kinds. This I must acknowledge is no addition to Christianity but a sacrilege taking away of an essential part of the Sacrament. For the Cup is as essential a part of the institution as the Bread and it might as well be taken away by the same authority, take away the one as the other, and both as well as either.
The Hazard of being Saved

Serm. XI.

3. Their worshipping of Images. Which practice (notwithstanding all their definitions about it, which are no other but what the Heavens used in the same case) is as plain against the second Commandment, as delibe- rate and voluntary killing of a man is against the first. But if it be so plain, a man would think that at least the Teachers and Guides of that Church should be sensible of it. Why, they are so, and afraid the people should be so too, and therefore in their ordinary Carefulness and Manual of Devotion they leave out the second Commandment, and divide the text into two to make up the number; let the common people should know it, their Consciences should start at the doing of a thing directly contrary to the plain command of God.

4. The worshipping of the Cross and wine in the Eucharist, out of a silly and groundless persuasion, that they are substantially changed into the body and blood of Christ. Which if it be true (and it hath good fortune if it be, for certainly it is one of the most incredible things in the whole World) then by the confeccion of several of their own learned Writers, they are guilty of gross idolatry.

5. The worship and invocation of Saints and Angels; and particularly of the Virgin Mary, which hath now for some Ages been a principal part of their Religion. Now a man may justly wonder that so considerable a part of Religion as they make this to be should have no manner of foundation in the Scripture. Does our Saviour any where speak one word concerning the worshipping of Her? Nay, does he not take all occasions to restrain all extravagant apprehensions and imaginings concerning honour due to Her, as foretelling the degeneracy of the Church in this thing? When he was told that his Mother and Brethren were without; Who (says he) are my mother and my brethren? He that doth the will of My Father, the same is my mother, and father, and sister, and brother. And when the Woman brake forth into that rapture concerning the blessed Mother of our Lord, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck! Our Saviour divers a thing, Blessed rather are they that hear the word of God and keep it. Does either our Saviour or his Apostles in all their particular Precepts and Directions concerning Prayer, and the manner of it, and by whom we are to address our souls to God, give the least intimation of praying to the Virgin Mary, or making use of her Mediation? And can any man believe, that if this has been the practice of the Church from the beginning, our Saviour and his Apostles would have been so silent about so considerable a part of Religion; insomuch that in all the Epistles of the Apostles I do not remember that her name is so much as once mentioned? And yet the worship of her is at this day in the Church of Rome, and hath been so for several Ages, a main part of their publick worship, yea and of their private devotions too; in which it is usual with them to say ten Ave Marias for one Pater Noster; that is, for one Prayer they make to Almighty God, they make ten addresses to the blessed Virgin; for that is the proportion observed in their Liturgies. He that confides this, and has never seen the Bible, would have been apt to think that there had been more fain concerning Her in Scripture, than either concerning God, or our blessed Saviour; and that the New Testament was full from one end to the other of precepts and exhortations to the worshipping of Her; and yet when all is done, I challenge any man to show me so much as one instance in the whole Bible that founds that way. And there is as little in the Christian Writers of the first three hundred years. The truth is, this practice began to creep in among some bigotted people about the middle of the fourth Century; And I remember particularly, that

Serm. XI. in the Church of Rome.

that Epiphanius who lived about that time calls it the Heresy of the Women. And thus I have given you some Instances of several Doctrines and Practices which the Church of Rome hath built upon the Foundation of Christianity. Much more might have been said of them, but from what hath been said any man may easily discern how dangerous they are to the salvation of men. I proceed now in the second place, To consider, Whether our granting a possibility of salvation, though with great hazard, to those in the Communion of the Roman Church, and their denying it to us, be a sufficient argument and encouragement to any man to quit our Church and go to theirs. And there is the more need to consider this, because this is the great popular argument whereby with the enmities and agents of that Church are wont to allure our people. Your Church (say they) grants that a Papist may be saved; whereas theirs denies that a Protestant can be saved; therefore it is fit to be of our Church, in which salvation by the acknowledgment of both sides is possible.

For answer to this I shall endeavour to shew, that this is far from being a good argument, that is to say inreplaceably weak and sophistical, that any considerable man ought to be shewn’d to be catch’d by it. For either it is good of it fell and sufficient to perlude a man to relinquish our Church, and to pass over to theirs, without entering into the merits of the case on either side, and without comparing the Doctrines and Practices of both Churches together, or is not. If it be not sufficient of it fell to perlude a man to leave our Church, without comparing the Doctrines on both sides, then it is to no purpose, and there is nothing got by it. For it upon examination and comparing of Doctrines the one appear to be true and the other false, this alone is a sufficient inducement to any man to cleave to that Church where the true Doctrine is found; and then there is no need of this argument.

If it be said that this argument is good in it fell without the examination of the Doctrines of both Churches; this forms a very strange thing for any man to affirm, That it is reason enough to a man to be of any Church, whatever her Doctrines and Practices be, if the Church that differs from her do but allow a possibility of salvation to her Communion. But they who use this argument, pretend that it is sufficient of it fell; and therefore I shall apply my self to shew, as briefly and plainly as I can, the miserable weakness of it. And to satisfy any man’s confidence or prudence to change his Religion. And to this end I shall:

1. Shew the weakness of the principle upon which this argument relies.
2. Give some parallel instances by which it will clearly appear that it concludes falses.
3. I shall take notice of some gross absurdities that follow from it.
4. Shew how unitle it is to work upon thee to whom it is propounded.
5. How improper it is to be urged by thee that make use of it.

I shall shew the weakness of the principle upon which this argument relies; And that is this, That whatever different parties in Religion agree in, it falsely to be shewn. The true confluence of which principle it be driven to the head, is to perlude men to forfake Christianity, and to make them take up in the principles of natural Religion, for in thee all Religions do agree. For if this principle be true, and signify any thing, it is dangerous to embrace any thing wherein the several parties in Religion differ; because that only is safe and prudent to be chosen where all agree. So that this argument,
The Hazard of being Saved

Serm. XI.

gament, if the foundation of it be good, will perissead farther than those who make use of it, for it should die; for it will not only make men for-

sake the Protestant Religion, but hypocrisy too; and which is much morecon-
ciderable, Christianity it self.

II. I will give some parallel inances by which it will clearly be seen that this argument concludes fall. The Donatists denied the Baptism of the Ca-
tholicks to be good, but the Catholics acknowledged the Baptism of the Donatists to be valid. So that both sides were agreed that the Baptism of the Donatists was good, therefore the failest way for St. Augist and other Catholicks (according to this argument) was to be baptised again by the Donatists, because by the acknowledgment of both sides Baptism among them was valid.

But to come nearer to the Church of Rome. Several in that Church held the personal infallibility of the Pope, and the lawfulness of depoying and killing Kings for Heres to be de fide, that is, necessary Articles of Faith, and con-
sequently, that whoever does not believe them cannot be saved. But a great-
many Papists though they believe these things to be no matters of Faith, yet they think those that hold them may be saved, and they are generally very favorably towards them. But now, according to this argument, they ought all to be of their opinion in these points because both sides are agreed that they that hold them may be saved, but one side positively lays it down, that men cannot be saved if they do not hold them.

But my Text furnishes me with as good an influence to this purpose as can be desired. St. Paul here in the Text acknowledgeth the necessity of the salvation of those who built hay and stubble upon the foundation of Christianity; that they might be saved, tho' with great difficulty, and as it were out of the fire. But now among those builders with hay and stubble there were those who extenuated the perfecting of St. Paul's salvation and of those who were of his mind. We are told of so many who built the Tenlul Ceremonies and exter-
ances upon the foundation of Christianity, and said that unless men were Circumcised and kept the Law of Moses they could not be saved. So that by this argument St. Paul and his followers ought to have gone over to those Judaizing Christians, because it was acknowledged on both sides that they might be saved. But these Judaizing Christians were as uncharitable to St. Paul and other Christians, as the Church of Rome is now to us, for they said positively that they could not be saved. But can any man think that St. Paul would have been moved by this argument, to leave a safe and cer-
tain way of salvation for that which was only possible, and that with great difficulty and hazard? The argument you fee is the very same, and yet it con-
cludes the wrong way; which plainly shews that it is a contingent argument, and concludes uncertainly and by chance, and therefore no man ought to be moved by it.

III. I shall take notice of some great difficulties that follow from it. I shall mention but two of them.

1. According to this principle it is always safest to be on the uncharitable side. And yet uncharitableness is as bad an evidence, either of a true Chris-

thian, or a true Church, as a man would wish. Charity is one of the most ef-
fential marks of Christianity, and what the Apostles laud of particular Chris-
tians is as true of whole Churches, that though they have all Faith, yet if they have not Charity they are nothing.

I grant that no Charity teacheth men to see others damned and not to tell

them the danger of their condition. But it is to be considered that the damni-

Serm. XI. in the Church of Rome.

ing of men is a very hard thing, and therefore whenever we do it the calf

must be wonderfully plain. And is it so in this matter? They of the Church of Rome cannot deny that we embrace all the Decrees of our Sav-

ior contained in the Apostles Creed, and determined by the four first Gen-

eral Councils; and yet by not allowing this and a good life to put us

within a possibility of Salvation, because we will not assent to all the in-
novations they would impose upon us. And yet I think there is scarce any

Divine or Primitive in difference between them and us, which some or other

of their most learned Writers have not acknowledged either not to be suf-

ficiently contained in Scripture, or not to have been held and practised by

the primitive Church; so that nothing can excuse their uncharitable

towards us. And they pay dearly for the little advantage they get by this ar-

gument, for they do what in them lies to make themselves no Christians that

they may prove themselves the truer and more Christian Church. A medi-
nium which we do not desire to make use of.

2. If this argument were good, then by this trick a man may bring over all the world to agree with him in an error which another does not account damnable, whatever it be, provided he does but damn all those that do not hold it; and there wants nothing but confidence and uncharitableness to do this. But there are any faults, that another man holds and want of charity should be an argument to move one to be of his opinion. I cannot illustrate this better, than by the difference between a skilful Physician and a Mount-

ebaker. A learned and a skilful Physician is modest, and speaks softly of

things; he says, that such a method of cure which he hath directed is safe, and withal, that which the Mountebank prescribes may possibly do the

work, but there is great hazard and danger in it; But the Mountebank, who

never talks of any thing less than infallible cures, (and always the more

Mountebank the stronger presency to infallibility,) he is positive, that that

method which the Physician prescribes will destroy the Patient, but the re-


cipe is infallible and never fails. Is there any reason in this case, that this

man shall carry it merely by his confidence? And yet if this argument be

good, the fallacy is, to reject the Physician's advice and to flock to the

Mountebank's. For both sides are agreed, that there is a possibility of cure in

the Mountebank's method, but not in the Physician's: and if the whole

force of the argument lies in the confidence of an ignorant man.

IV. This argument is very unfit to work upon thoes to whom it is pro-

pounded: For either they believe we lay true in this, or not. If they think we do not, they have no reason to be moved by what we say. If they think we do, why do they not take all that we lay in this matter? Namely, that though it be possible for some in the Communion of the Roman Church to be saved, yet it is very hazardous; and that they are in a safe condition already in our Church. And why then should a bare possibility, accompanied with infinite and apparent hazard, be an argument to any man to run into that danger?

Lastly, This argument is very improper to be urged by those who make use of it. Half of the strength of it lies in this, that we Protestants acknow-

ledge that it is possible a Papist may be saved. But why should they lay any

firest upon this? What matter is it what we Herecists say, who are so damingly mistaken in all other things. We think there were no other reason, yet because we say it, it should force them to be unevenly to be true. But I perceive when it serves for their purpose we have some little

cred and authority with them.

By this time I hope every one is in some measure satisfied of the weakness
of this argument, which is so transparent that no wise man can honestly use it, and he must have a very odd understanding that can be cheated by it. The truth is, it is the most evident and contemptuous argument, and sometimes it concludes right, and often wrong; and therefore no prudent man can be moved by it, except only in one case, when all things are so equal on both sides that there is nothing evil in the whole world to determine him; which folly can never happen in matters of Religion, necessary to be believed. No man is so weak, as not to consider in the change of his Religion the merits of the cause it self; as to examine the Doctrines and Præcepts of the Churches on both sides, as to take notice of the confidence and Charity of both Parties, together with all other things which ought to move a conscientious and a prudent man: And if on enquiry there appear to be a clear advantage on either side, then this argument is needless and comes too late, because the work is already done without it.

Besides, that the great hazard of salvation in the Roman Church (which we declare upon account of the Doctrines and Præcepts which I have mentioned) ought to deter any man much more from this Religion, than the acknowledged possibility of salvation in it ought to encourage any man to the embracing of it; never did any Christian Church build so much hay and stubble upon the foundation of Christianity, and therefore those that are saved in it must be saved, as it were, out of the fire. And the Purgatory be not meant in the text, yet is it a Doctriné very well suited to their manner of building; for there is need of an ignis purgatorius, of a fire to try their work which it is, and to burn up their hay and stubble. And I have so much Charity (and I desire always to have it) as to hope, that a great many among them who lived piously, and have been almost necessarily drawn in that Church by the prejudice of education and an invincible ignorance, will upon a general Repeance find mercy with God; and though their works suffer loss, and be burnt, yet they themselves may escape, as one of the fire. But as for those who had the opportunities of coming to the knowledge of the truth, if they continue in the errors of that Church, or apostatize from the truth, I think their condition is far from being safe that there must be extraordinary favourable circumstances in their case to give a man hopes of their salvation. I have now done with the two things I propounded to speak to. And I am sorry that the necessary defence of our Religion, against the refusals of impudence and attempts of our adversaries upon all sorts of persons, hath engaged me to spend so much time in matters of dispute, which I had much rather have employed in another way. Many of you can be my wittneses that I have constantly made it my business, in this great Prefecture and Assembly to plead against the impieties and wickedness of men, and have endeavoured by the best arguments I could think of to gain men over to a firm belief and frequent practice of the main things of Religion. And I do assure you, I had much rather persuade any one to be a good man, than to be of any party or denomination of Christians whatsoever. For I doubt not but the belief of the ancient Church, provided we entertain nothing that is detractive of it, together with a good life, will certainly save a man, and without this no man can have reasonable hopes of salvation, no not in an infallible Church, if there were any such to be found in the world.

I have been according to my opportunity, not a negligent observer of the genius and humour of the several Seats and Prælections in Religion; and upon the whole matter, I do in my confidence believe the Church of England to be the best constituted Church this day in the world; and that