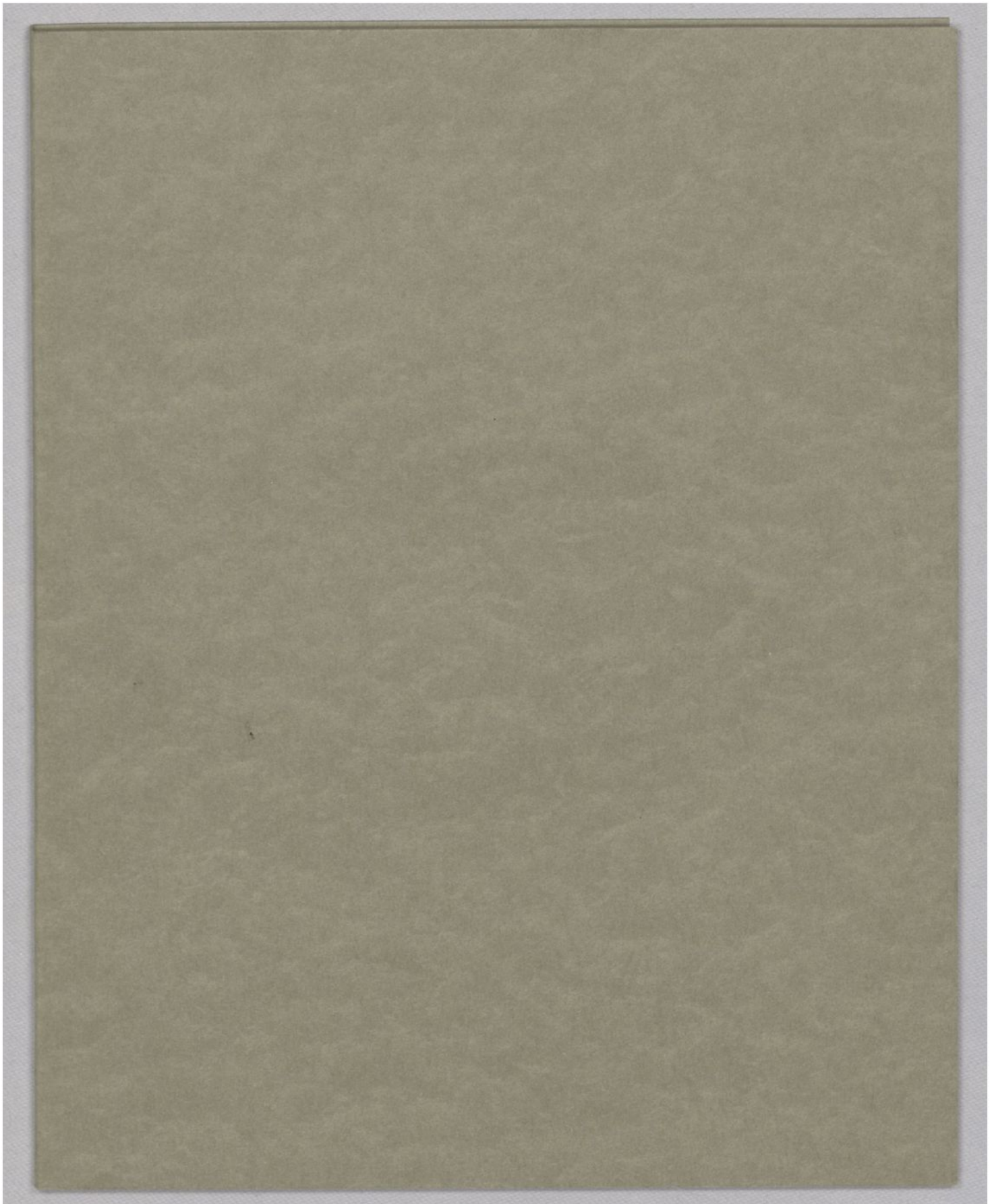
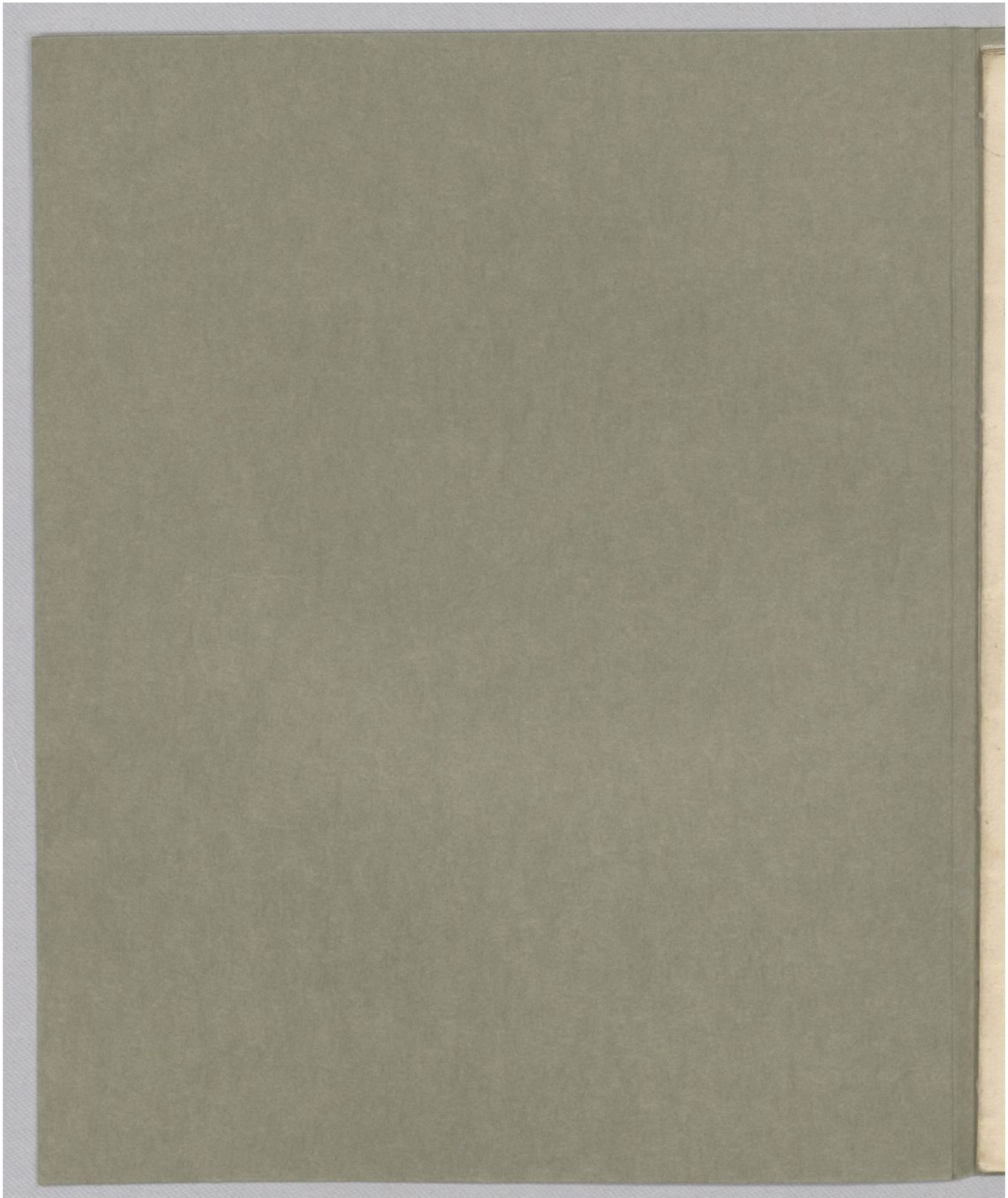


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18

T-A 8495:3
(St. 12)

A Regular Succeſſion of the Chriſtian Miniſtry aſſerted,

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

VISITATION

OF THE

Right Reverend Father in God

JOHN

Lord Biſhop of *LONDON*,

Held in the

Pariſh-Church of *Iſlington*, *Nov.* 19, 1719.

By *NATH. MARSHALL*, D. D.
Rector of *Finchley*, *Middleſex*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

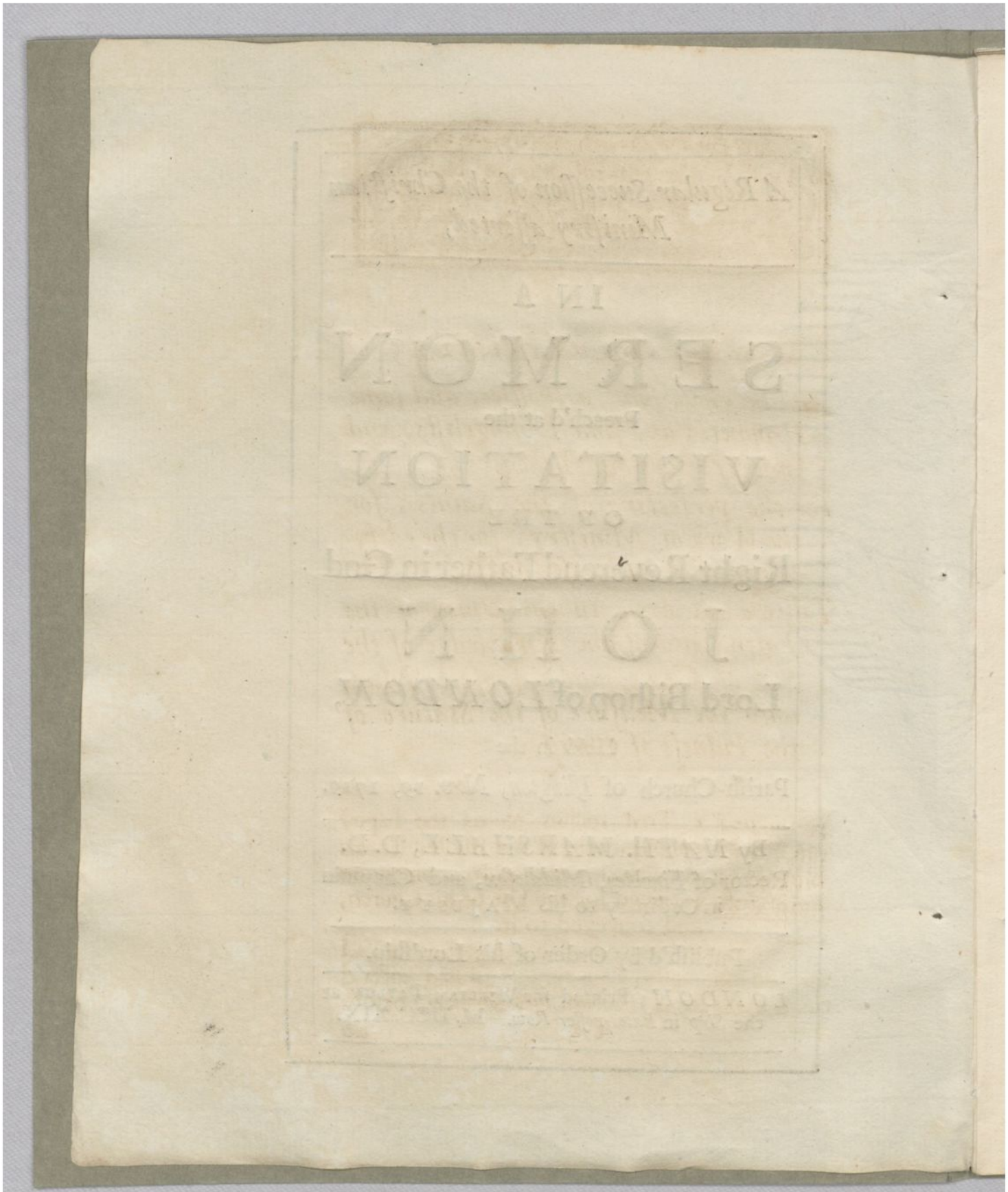
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EPHESIANS IV. 11, 12, 13.

And he gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets; and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers;

For the perfecting of the Saints; for the Work of Miniſtry; for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt;

Till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God; unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.

MY Text recites to us the happy conſequences of our Bleſſed Lord's Aſcenſion; the Gifts which he received for the Uſe of his Church, and conveyed to it.

The *Perſons* indeed of his Apoſtles he had marked out in his Life-time, and had enter'd them upon ſome *Probationary Services*, before

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he devolved upon them the *whole Weight* of their Office. But for their *fuller Inſtruction* in the ſeveral Branches of their important Charge, he all along referred them to the Time when the *Comforter* ſhould *come*, when he would (*a*) *ſend unto* them *from the Father*, (*b*) to *teach* them *all things*, *and* to *bring all things to* their *Remembrance*, *whatſoever* he had *ſaid unto them*.

To this happy Period we find St. *Paul* alluding in the Words which I have read to you, and telling the *Epheſians* (*c*), That when our Saviour had *aſcended up on high*, had *led Captivity Captive*, and gained the Victory for which he came into the World, he ſent down his Spirit upon his Church, and conveyed to fit Perſons all proper Aſſiſtances for ſettling, for planting, and for watering it, till it ſhould attain its full Growth; till the *Body of Chriſt* ſhould, to ſuch a Degree, be edified, as to render any farther *Work of the Miniſtry* ſuperfluous; in ſhort, till *we* ſhould *all come unto an Unity of Faith*, *and of the Knowledge of the Son of God*, *unto a perfect Man*, *unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt*.

Till this Auſpicious Day ſhall break upon us, the Text doth ſtrongly intimate, that ſome or other of the forementiond Officers ſhould continue, and enjoy the Powers, which, from

(*a*) *St.* John xv. 16.
(*b*) *St.* John xiv. 26.
(*c*) *Ver.* 8. *of this Chapter.*

Time

Time to Time, ſhould be found requiſite for the due Diſcharge of their reſpective Functions.

Before we proceed any farther in this Argument, it may be fit to obſerve upon the ſeveral *Perſons* and *Stations* mention'd in the Text, That by *Apoſtles*, were meant Officers of firſt Account in the *Houſhold of Faith*, to whom the Care of it was, in chief, committed, with full Powers to take in, from Time to Time, any *Occaſional Helps*, or to fix any *ſtanding Orders* for the Settlement and Government of the Chriſtian Church.

Some of the *Helps* made uſe of by the *Apoſtles* were *Prophets*; *i. e.* Perſons appointed to preach the Goſpel more fully, where the *Apoſtles* had juſt planted it, and who were inſpired for that Purpoſe (ſaith a learned (*d*) Commentator) with the Gift of *interpreting Prophecies*, as well as of *foretelling future Events*. Of this Sort was *Agabus*, mention'd in the (*e*) *Acts*: And they are uſually ranked next in Order to the *Apoſtles*: So in the 3d Chapter of this Epiſtle, Verſe 5. as well as in the Text, *Apoſtles* and *Prophets* are named together; and (*f*) elſewhere we have the Precedency diſtinctly ſettled, *Firſt Apoſtles, Secondarily Prophets*.

The Office of *Evangeliſts* ſeems to have been perfectly Occaſional and Diſcretionary,

(*d*) *Doctor* Hammond *in* Loc.
(*e*) *Ch.* ii. 27, 28. & ibid. *Ch.* xxi. 10, 11.
(*f*) 1 Corinth. xii. 28.

and

and to have contained in it a Diverſity of Truſt and Power, as it was lodged in different Hands, or apply'd to different Purpoſes. Thus *Philip*, the Deacon, was one of the Miſſionaries employ'd by the Apoſtles, ſent by them, to ſuch as believed not, to acquaint them with the good News of the Goſpel; as indeed the proper Import of the Word (g) *Evangeliſt*, is (you know) a Meſſenger or Publiſher of glad Tidings: But then, after he had baptized, he could do no more for, them; ſince the farther (h) Hiſtory of that Tranſaction hath inform'd us, that for their Confirmation in the Faith, and probably for the full Settlement of a Church amongſt them, two Apoſtles were ſent to them, who ſupplied to them what the other could not, for want of ſufficient Powers. Of ſuch Importance were *Rule* and *Order*, even in an Age of Inſpiration!

It is, in another View, pretty evident, that, under the Character of an *Evangeliſt*, a Commiſſion of more Extent and Compaſs was lodged with *Timothy*; or rather to the Powers of a mere *Evangeliſt*, he had added thoſe of a *Teacher* and *Ruler*. For, beſides being an *Evangeliſt*, and perhaps a *Prophet*, he was plainly one of thoſe *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, who were ſettled by the *Apoſtles* in Churches too remote for their own perſonal Inſpection, to add to

(g) εὐαγγελιστὴς.

(h) Acts 8. *from* v. 5. *to* v. 26.

the

the Number of the *Faithful*, by (*i*) *doing the Work of an Evangeliſt*, to confirm and ſtrengthen the Faith of Believers, by (*k*) *preaching the Word*, under the Character of a *Prophet*, to (*l*) *ſet in Order the Things which were wanting*, and *to ordain Elders in every City*, as a Paſtor and a Biſhop.

For the Purpoſe, near a-kin to our preſent Argument, we have a pretty remarkable Direction from our Apoſtle to (*m*) *Timothy*; *Let the Elders* (ſaith he) *who rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour, eſpecially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine*; *i. e.* they, who, beſides the good Government of a Flock committed to them, took Pains to encreaſe its Numbers, by conveying to ſuch as were unacquainted with it, the marvellous Grace of God in the Goſpel of his Son; and who were moreover careful to inſtruct ſuch as had already receiv'd it, in all the Particulars relating to it. For, when a ſufficient Number of Chriſtians was, in any City, converted to a Belief of the Goſpel, the Biſhop, ſet over them, had Work enough upon his Hands of all Sorts, which ſoon made Way for the Introduction of certain ſubordinate Aſſiſtants to him, intituled *Presbyters*, who were to lighten his Burden, when by a farther Acceſſion of Converts to his Church,

(*i*) 2 Tim. 4. 5.
(*k*) Ibid. *v.* 2.
(*l*) Tit. 1. 5.
(*m*) 1 Tim. 5. 17.

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it ſhould become too heavy for him; ſince he was appointed the General Paſtor of *All*, (*n*) who ſhould give in their Names to Chriſt, within the Diſtrict alloted him, as well as of the Chriſtians whom he found already ſettled in it. In the mean time, it was frequently his Province to do the ſeveral Works of an *Evangeliſt*, *Prophet*, and *Ruler*; although, in the Text juſt cited, the Note of Diſtinction ſet upon ſuch as *laboured in the Word and Doctrine*, beſides their *ruling well*, doth plainly intimate, that there might ſometimes be *good Rulers*, who did *not* ſo *labour in the Word and Doctrine*.

I have been the longer in opening this Paſſage of Scripture, becauſe, I think, it may help us to conceive, by what Steps the Government of the Church was ſettled; what was *extraordinary*, as well as what was *ordinary*, and deſigned for Continuance, in her firſt Offices; how eaſily *Biſhops* might ſucced to the *Apoſtles* in the *ſtanding* Parts of their Function, by *Ordaining*, *Ruling*, and *Confirming*, over and above their common *Labour in the Word and Doctrine*, as *Paſtors and Teachers*; how *Presbyters* might alſo diſcharge the Function of *Prophets*, by expounding the Oracles of God, to ſuch as had already receiv'd and acknow-

(*n*) μειλόνιον πιστεύειν, *ſaith* Clemens Romanus, *in a Paſſage which will be hereafter cited, ſee Note* w: *He was the eldeſt Writer we have ſince the Scriptural, and elder than ſome of the Canonical Pen-men.*

ledg'd

ledg'd them, and by proper Enlargements upon many Particulars of Faith and Practice: Finally, What Room is still left for doing the Work of Evangelists, by conveying the Notice and Knowledge of the Gospel to such as have never heard of it, and by performing, mean while, such other ministerial Services, in a settled Church, as the Governours of it shall allot to them.

Nor is this a *Speculation* of what only *might be*; but we have the Concurrence of History to assure us of the *Fact*, that so it *was*; that the ordinary Functions of (*o*) *Bishop*, *Presbyter*, and *Deacon*, have all along thus been exercised from the Ages of *Inspiration*; in which Ages, somewhat more (it is confessed) belonged to their respective Offices, than the Wants of a settled Church do require.

My Text, thus explained, may lead us to consider,

I. The End propounded by our Blessed Saviour, in vouchsafing the Gifts, here mentioned, to his Church, which was, *Edifying his Body*.

(*o*) *The forementionʼd* Clemens *hath informʼd us, That our Lord* designʼd the Persons who should minister to him in holy Things, *and then proceeds, in a clear and strong Allusion from the* Jewish *to the* Christian *Priesthood, to name three several Orders of them, and after them, the Laity.* —— διὰ τίνων ὁσίως τελεῖσθαι λειτουργίας θέλει, αὐτὸς (Δεσπότης) ὥρισεν· —— Τῷ γὰρ ἀρχιερεῖ ἰδίαι λειτουργίαι δεδόμεναι εἰσι, καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν ἴδιος ὁ τόπος προστέτακται, καὶ λευίταις ἴδιαι διακονίαι ἐπίκεινται· ὁ λαϊκὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῖς λαϊκοῖς προστάγμασιν δέδεται· In 1 Epist. ad Corinth.

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II. The *Means* made Uſe of in Order to it, *viz.* the Appointment of certain Perſons to act in certain Offices and Stations for the Attainment of it. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets*, &c. for this Purpoſe.

III. The Time intended for the Uſe and Continuance of the *Means* before-mentioned; even *till we all come* unto an *Unity of Faith*, and an Unity *of Knowledge of the Son of God*; (for ſo, I humbly conceive, the (*p*) Words ſhould be rendered, *till we* thus, I ſay, *come*) *unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.*

I. We are to conſider the *End* propounded by our Bleſſed Saviour, in vouchſafing the Gifts, here mentioned, to his Church; which, the Text hath inform'd us, was *Edifying* his *Body*.

That *he died for our Sins*, and *roſe again for our Juſtification*, did not, it ſeems, anſwer all the merciful Purpoſes of God concerning us; but what our Lord in his moving Addreſs to his Father before his Paſſion had asked for his Followers, ſoon after his Aſcenſion he was labouring to fulfil, even that they might be (*q*).

(*p*) Εἰς τὴν ἑνοτητα τῆς πίςεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τῦ υἱῦ τῦ θεῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τῦ πληρώματ⊙ τῦ χριςῦ.

(*q*) *St.* John xvii. 17.

Sancti-

Sanctified thro' his *Truth*; and the *Word*, which he was then concerting Meaſures for conveying to them, was the *Truth*, which was *ſo* to Sanctify them, *i. e.* to ſet a Mark of Diſtinction upon them, and in the Language of our Apoſtle to theſe *Epheſians* (r) to *Seal them unto the Day of Redemption.*

For ſince upon our *doing* the Will of God all our Hopes of Happineſs are plainly depending, the *Knowledge* of it muſt needs be eſtimed, as of mighty Moment to us. Now that *this* is more clearly and copiouſly revealed to us by the Goſpel of Chriſt, than by any other Inſtitution or Scheme of Religion, can be no Queſtion with thoſe, who have, to any Degree, conſider'd it. Wherefore when ſo much had been done for us Men, and for our Salvation; the ſame good Reaſons, the ſame kind Views which put the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, upon his great Undertaking, might well be ſuppoſed to make him ſollicitous for our *Knowledge* and Reception of it. He had obtained of his Father a general Pardon for Sinners, returning to him upon certain Conditions: He had performed *his* Part in this important OEconomy, by giving the expected Satisfaction to the Honour of the Divine Holineſs and Juſtice; it only then remained, that the Sinners to be pardoned, ſhould come into the

(r) *Ch.* iv. *v.* 30.

Terms, whereupon their Pardon was ſuſpended. In Order to this, they were to be reſcued from the Ignorance and Prejudice, the Corruption of their Morals, and of their religious Worſhip, wherein the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* found them miſerably intangled. But great were the Difficulties of diſpelling a Darkneſs *ſo* thick, that the Perſons bewildered in it were utterly inſenſible of their wanting Light, nay, even boaſted of their *Knowledge*, though unable to diſcern between Good and Evil. Nor was it eaſy to remove the Prepoſſeſſions which favoured an Intereſt quite oppoſite to the Goſpel: For Education and Cuſtom, did, *both*, withſtand it; *the Pride of Life* would hardly ſtoop to a Teacher of our Saviour's Figure, who, though he had wiſe *Reaſons* for appearing under lowly Circumſtances, yet, found his Commiſſion the more diſputed for them, by ſuch as entered not into the Force of thoſe Reaſons, and who argued for themſelves upon the common Topicks of worldly Wiſdom: But above all, the Luſts of Men combined to form the moſt powerful Intereſt againſt a Doctrine, which, if ſucceſsful, was likely to lay them under ſuch ſevere Reſtraints. To curb the moſt indulged and favoured Paſſions, was a Precept of difficult Digeſtion; and to enter upon the Service of a Maſter, whoſe Pay was, all of it, then, in Reverſion, with the apparent Hazard of ſacrificing to it each preſent Convenience, was a Task which required very ſtrong Convictions, and very ſteady Reſolutions to carry Men thro' it. The

The Religion of the *Jews* was choaked up with an Excess of Rituality, as that of the *Gentiles* was corrupted with various Impurities and wretched Superstitions, when our Saviour came to reform the one and the other. Now tho' his Demands were perfectly reasonable, and would presently have appear'd so to Minds disengaged and free; yet, as the Methods to which Men have been early and long accustomed, have always a powerful Hold of them, his Endeavours in this Way met with no friendly Reception, nor kind Construction; some of his own Relations and Friends suspected him (*s*) *besides himself*, whilst others more plainly pronounced upon him, that he (*t*) *had a Devil*: And even the Spirit, which he sent to supply his Absence, had no better Treatment from *certain* (*u*) *Philosophers of the* Epicureans *and* Stoicks, who *encounter'd* our Apostle speaking and acting by it, when they put their insulting Query to him, *What will this Babbler say?* Whilst *other some*, in Language little less affrontive, censured him as a *Setter-forth of strange Gods*, because he *preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection.*

These were severally the Difficulties, which our blessed Lord had in View to conquer, before he could hope to succeed in his gracious Purpose, of building and adorning his holy

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(*s*) *St.* Mark iii. 21.
(*t*) *St.* John x. 20.
(*u*) Acts xvii.

Temple,

Temple, of *edifying the Body*, whereof he was *Head*, or of making its Members *Holy in all Manner of Converſation.*

The Particular therefore, which comes next before us, is

II. Our Conſideration of the *Means* made Uſe of in Order to this *End*, *viz.* The Appointment of certain Perſons to act in certain Offices and Stations for the Attainment of it. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints*, as our Tranſlation renders the Words, which yet, I think, with all Submiſſion, might as well be illuſtrated by the following Verſion——thus——(*v*) *For*

(*v*) ΠΡΟΣ τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων Εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, Εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. A great Latitude, I know, is uſed in the Conſtruction of Scriptural Prepoſitions; yet ſurely the Variation from πρὸς to εἰς, in the Verſe before us, may well be allowed to intimate ſome little Diverſity of Senſe and Meaning; otherwiſe we may reaſonably imagine the Paſſage would have run thus; Πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων, Πρὸς ἔργον διακονίας, Πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. And even then the Senſe would be leſs perſpicuous, and the Order leſs clear and natural. For to mention in the firſt place, *the perfecting of the Saints, afterwards the Work of the Miniſtry*, which in the Reaſon and Order of Things was *before* the other; and then again at laſt, *the edifying the Body of Chriſt*, ſeems not quite ſo juſt nor ſo coherent a Way of ſpeaking, as it would be to ſay, That a Sett of extraordinary Officers was at firſt appointed for the Occaſions of the Chriſtian Church; that ſome of theſe were, in due Time, to fit out other holy Perſons for the ſtanding Work of the Miniſtry, and that altogether were to be employ'd in *edifying the Body of Chriſt*. As for the Word καταρτισμὸς, which we render *perfecting*, I take it to ſignify ſuch a *Fitneſs* of one thing to another, as matches them together like a Couple of Tallies. Now, that there might be *ſuch a Fitneſs of certain Perſons to the Work of the Miniſtry*, was one View of our Saviour

the fitting out of holy Persons to the Work of the Ministry, to the Edifying of the Body of Christ.

Should it be granted now to such as shall contend for it, that all the Officers, and all the Stations here mentioned, were of an extraordinary Nature (tho' it may be pretty hard to conceive, that *Pastors*, and *Teachers* were so, any otherwise, than as they were vested with certain Powers peculiar to the Age of Inspiration; but, should this, I say, be granted) the Consequence would only be, that these *Extraordinary* Officers were to provide for the Church others, who should act in it with *fixed and stated Powers.* Accordingly, *Clemens Romanus*, already cited, hath informed us, that they did so; that they *appointed the first Fruits of their Converts, gained over by their Ministry, to be Bishops and Deacons over such as should hereafter believe in the several Places where they had preached the Gospel, approving them by the Spirit*; or, perhaps, *by the Gift they had of discerning Spirits* (w).

The Matter then will rest upon this Foot; Our Saviour himself *gave Apostles, Prophets*, &c. *i. e.* by the Direction and Assistance of his Spi-

Saviour in giving *Apostles*, &c. See *Rom.* 9. 22. where St. *Paul* mentions the *Vessels of Wrath* fitted for *Destruction.* καταρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν; 1 *Cor.* 10. Where the same Word imports a *perfect joining together*; *That ye be perfectly joined together*, &c. κατηρτισμένοι. And *Hebr.* 10. 5. where it stands for *a due Preparation*; *a Body hast thou prepared me*, σῶμα κατηρτίσω μοι.

(w) Κατὰ χώρας δὴ καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες (Ἀπόστολοι) κατίσανον τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν, δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι εἰς ἐπισκόπες καὶ διακόνες τῶν μελλόντων πιστεύειν.

N. B. *This is the Passage referred to in Note* n *preceeding.*

rit,

rit, certain Persons were appointed and enabled to perform those several Offices; and as they had *peculiar Difficulties* to encounter, they had an *extraordinary* Measure of Assistance from Above, to make them equal to their Charge: But as the Church, which was to be *built by* them, was not intended to *fall with* them, they were to *fit out* other *holy Persons for the* Work of the Ministry.

Thus the forementiond (x) *Clemens* hath acquainted us, That the *Apostles had it revealed to them from our Lord, that Contests would arise concerning the Episcopate; upon a certain Foresight of which, they appointed the Officers before-named, and accordingly made a Rule for the Substitution of fit and approved Persons to their Ministry, when Death should call them off from it.*

Thus again (y) *Irenæus*, a Writer of the Second Century, affirms, That *the Church*, in his Time, *could reckon a Catalogue of her Bishops appointed by the Apostles, and could deduce the Line of them down to the Age he wrote in.*

(x) Καὶ οἱ Ἀπόστολοι ἡμῶν ἔγνωσαν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, ὅτι ἔρεις ἔσαι ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς. διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν πρόγνωσιν εἰληφότες τελείαν κατέστησαν τοὺς προειρημένους, καὶ μεταξὺ ἐπινομὴν δεδώκασιν, ὅπως ἐὰν κοιμηθῶσιν διαδέξωνται ἕτεροι δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν. Ibid. Sect. 44. *Where Mr.* Le Clerc *observes upon the Word* ἐπινομὴν. *That the* Vetus Onomasticon *makes* ἐπινέμω *to signify* Superrogo, *or* Subrogo.

(y) Habemus annumerare eos qui ab Apostolis instituti sunt Episcopi in Ecclesiis, & Successores eorum usque ad nos. *Lib.* 3. *cap.* 3.

Soon

Soon after him (z) *Tertullian* observed against *Marcion*; That in his Time, they *had Churches known to have been founded by St.* John; that *the Bishops of them might be traced up to the Age of that Apostle, and so would finally terminate in him, as their first Ordainer. And the rest of the Churches* (he farther adds) *were alike entituled to the Honour of Apostolick Founders.* The same Author, in his *Book of Prescriptions against Hereticks*, hath challenged them to (aa) *produce the Original of their respective Churches, and to derive the Catalogue of their Bishops in a proper Order of Succession, from the Age of the Apostles, down to their own; so as to fix their first Bishop upon the Appointment of an Apostle, or else of some Apostolical Person, who continued in Fellowship and Communion with the Apostolical College; as the Church of* Smyrna *reckon'd upon* Polycarp, *to have placed been there by St.* John; *as that of* Rome *held* Clement *to have been ordain'd her Bishop by St.* Peter; *and*

(z) Habemus & Joannis alumnas Ecclesias—— Ordo Episcoporum ad Originem recensus in Joannem stabit Authorem, sic & cæterarum generositas recognoscitur. Adverſ. *Marcion.* lib. 4. cap. 5.

(aa) Edant ergo Origines Ecclesiarum suarum, evolvant ordinem Episcoporum suorum, ita per Successiones ab initio decurrentem, ut primus ille Episcopus aliquem ex Apostolis, vel Apostolicis viris, qui tamen cum Apostolis perseveraverint, habuerit Auctorem & Antecessorem; sicut Smyrnæorum Ecclesia habens Polycarpum ab Joanne conlocatum refert; sicut Romanorum Clementem a Petro ordinatum edit; proinde utique & cæteræ exhibent, quos ab Apostolis in Episcopatum constitutos Apostolici seminis traduces habeant. De Præscript. Adverſ. *Hæret.* cap. 32.

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as the reſt of the Churches derived their reſpective Biſhops from the original Appointment of ſeveral Apoſtles.

Not long after *Tertullian*, we may find (*bb*) *Firmilian* obſerving, from thoſe noted Paſſages of *Matt.* xviii. 18. *and* John xx. 22, 23. That *the Power of remitting Sins was granted to the Apoſtles, to the Churches conſtituted by them, and to thoſe Biſhops who ſucceeded them, in a due and regular Courſe of vicarious Ordinations.*

And thus a Writer (*cc*) Contemporary with him interprets thoſe Words of our Saviour to his Diſciples, (*Luke* x. 16.) *He that heareth you, heareth me,* &c. *to have been virtually ſpoken to all his Biſhops, who ſhould ſucceed his Apoſtles in a Courſe of vicarious Ordinations.*

The Faith of Hiſtory will be grievouſly ſhocked, and, with it, the main external Evidence for the Scriptures themſelves muſt be a mighty Sufferer, if we do not acquieſce in ſuch a clear and concurrent Account of theſe *ſucceſſive Ordinations* from the Age of the Apoſtles downwards, till all agree the Uſage to have been unqueſtionable. None, I am ſure, who are acquainted with the Practice of the Church in her earlieſt and pureſt Centuries,

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(*bb*) Poteſtas ergo peccatorum remittendorum Apoſtolis data eſt, & Eccleſiis quas illi a Chriſto miſſi conſtituerunt, & Epiſcopis qui eis ordinatione vicariâ ſucceſſèrunt. Apud *Cyprian.* Epiſt. No. 75. Ed. Ox.

(*cc*) ----Qui (viz. Chriſtus) dicit ad Apoſtolos, ac per hoc ad omnes Præpoſitos, qui Apoſtolis vicariâ ordinatione ſuccedunt; *Qui audit vos, me audit,* &c. *Cyprian.* Ep. 66.

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can imagine that any should then depart from it, without awakening the Vigilance of the Neighbouring Pastors to retrieve and regulate such a startling Novelty: For *Ordinations then*, as *now*, were visible and publick Acts, performed in the Presence of the Clergy and Laity, respectively concerned in them; as we learn from the Author last cited; who conceived it (*dd*) to have been a *Rule which proceeded originally from God's Authority*: So that there could be no Room nor Colour for imagining that any could then slip in upon the Church, through Fraud or Collusion.

And as to *local Pretensions*, and *local Rights*; when the Title to any Episcopal Chair was controverted, the great Article of Enquiry was well known to be, which of the contending Parties could derive from the Apostles in a *regular Succession*.

(*dd*) Quod & ipsum videmus de divinâ auctoritate descendere, ut sacerdos plebe præsente sub omnium oculis deligatur—— *And again*--- Coram omni Synagogâ jubet Deus constitui Sacerdotem; id est, instruit & ostendit Ordinationes Sacerdotales non nisi sub Populi assistentis conscientiâ fieri oportere, ut Plebe præsente vel detegantur malorum crimina, vel bonorum merita prædicentur, & sit Ordinatio justa & legitima, quæ omnium suffragio & judicio fuerit examinata. *Once more*--- Nec hoc in Episcoporum tantum & sacerdotum, sed in Diaconorum Ordinationibus observatum animadvertimus, de quo & ipso in Actis eorum scriptum est (*Act.* vi. 2.) Et *convocaverunt illi duodecim, totam Plebem Discipulorum, & dixerunt eis*, &c. Quod utique idcircò tam diligenter & cautè convocatâ totâ Plebe gerebatur; *Nè quis ad altaris Ministerium, vel ad Sacerdotalem locum indignus obreperet*. Ibid. Epist. 67.

The Plea of any *ſecret* or *poſſible* Exceptions to it, will conclude for nothing more, nor farther, than the like Plea would do, if we ſhould transfer our Argument to the *Aaronical* Prieſthood. No one doubts, but that a *Rule* was *there* eſtabliſh'd in Favour of a *regular Succeſſion*; yet in the Darkneſs and Diſorder of Human Affairs, there might *poſſibly* happen ſome *unknown Exceptions* to it. Was the *Rule*, then, given up to remote Suppoſals of what *might be*, or even to ſuch Caſes of *Fact*, as clearly and *confeſſedly* broke in upon it? No! but the *Breaches* in it, when *diſcover'd*, were *regulated*, if the thing were *practicable*; though, when *ſecret*, or *unavoidable*, they were preſumed to be *diſpenſed* with.

Yet becauſe the Argument hath a popular Sound with it, and pinches, it may be thought in a political Difficulty; the Caſe of our Reformed Churches abroad is ever and anon objected to us, which, in Fact, have deviated from this *Rule*, and are entirely deſtitute of this *Succeſſion*.

Here, as fearleſs of Cenſure from *any Quarter*, as every Man ought to be, who ſpeaks the ſerious and deliberate Sentiments of his own Mind, I anſwer without Reſerve or Heſitation; That God may eaſily cure the Miſchiefs, and ſupply the Defects ariſing from any *Breaches* in the *one*, or from any *Exceptions* to the *other*, which (humanly ſpeaking) were *neceſſary* and *unavoidable*; That he is entirely Maſter of his own poſitive Appointments, and

and may relax or diſpenſe with them according to his own good Pleaſure: Nay, I humbly conceive, we are within our Compaſs, when we profeſs our undoubted Perſwaſion, that he *doth*, and *will*, relax, wherever any ſuch Inſtitutions become *impracticable*. Our bleſſed Lord, (we are ſure) communicated with a Prieſthood, which had apparently ſwerved from the regular Courſe, and from the primitive Eſtabliſhment; ſince the Caſe, at that time, was too far gone to admit a Remedy, and, in all moral Eſtimate, the Misfortune, then, was become irreparable. Now we are taught by a very antient Father and Martyr of the Chriſtian Church, who hath been already cited, (*ee*) that *in Caſes of Neceſſity, God will diſpenſe with diverſe things, and*

(*ee*) In Sacramentis Salutaribus, *Neceſſitate cogente*, & Deo Indulgentiam ſuam largiente, totum credentibus conferunt divina compendia. *Cyprian.* in Epiſt. 69. *Here I beg Leave to borrow a Citation, which I have elſewhere made uſe of, from a Name of great Eminence, a Perſon who was never charged with any Want of Regard to the appropriate Honours and Privileges of the Prieſthood; I mean the famous Mr.* Dodwell; *who, in his* Independency of the Church reconcil'd with the Oath of Supremacy, *pag.* 73. *hath the following Paſſage*—— Where there are ſuch Violences upon the [*Eccleſiaſtical*] Government, as make a Breach in the due Succeſſion, and affect the direct Conveyances of that Authority from God, which is requiſite for giving a Title to thoſe Spiritual Benefits to Souls, which are the great Deſigns of Eccleſiaſtical Communion;——— There will be Reaſon to believe, that God, who judges himſelf as much obliged by the *Equity* of his Covenants, as Men uſually think themſelves obliged by the *Letter* of theirs, will perform what his Covenant would, in Equity oblige him to perform, notwithſtanding any ſuch Failures on Man's Part, as are unavoidable to truly diligent and pious Communicants.

will

will confer upon Believers in a more compendious Way, all the Benefits of his ſaving Sacraments. Yet this ſame Author (*ff*) inſiſts very ſtrenuouſly upon the great Diſadvantage of *ſucceeding no Body*, and upon the mighty Importance of deriving Epiſcopal Powers in a legitimate Courſe from the proper Fountain.

Thus far, then, we may ſafely go on in our Conceſſions upon ſuch authentick Precedents: But more, or farther, we may not advance in Compliment to any one's *unneceſſary* Departure from the primitive Standard. For ſurely any wanton, any needleſs Deviations from a Rule ſo firmly eſtabliſh'd, ſo early receiv'd, ſo univerſally prevailing, muſt be utterly *without Excuſe*, utterly deſtitute of all Apology: Nor will it bear a Queſtion, Whether the *Practice of the univerſal Church* from her Infancy to her full Growth and Settlement, or the *Practice of ſome modern Churches* under very great and preſſing Difficulties, bending, and, in a manner, forcing, them down to ſome irregular Motions (I ſay it will not, it cannot, bear a Queſtion, which of theſe two) ſhould have the Pre-eminence.

Thus (we ſee) there is, at laſt, a *Medium between levelling our own Advantages, and condemning ſuch of our Neighbours, as have erred in the Point before us, thro' mere Misfortune or Ne-*

(*ff*) Nemini ſuccedens & a ſeipſo incipiens, alienus fit & profanus, Dominicæ pacis ac divinæ unitatis inimicus. ibid. *Cyprian.* Ep. 69.

ceſſity:

ceſſity; The *firſt* would be imprudent and ungrateful; the *laſt*, unchriſtian and inhuman; nor ſhould we ever indulge this *Confidence of Boaſting*, if too tame a Reſignation of Privileges, which we cannot but eſteem of Moment, did no where *compel* us to inſiſt upon them.

We will go on, then, in Thankfulneſs to God for the Bleſſing of a Miniſtry, which appears at loweſt, to have been thus appointed and encloſed by the Authority of our Lord's Apoſtles. But we well may tremble, when we think of the Work belonging to it, of what Importance it is to the Perſons entruſted with it, as well as to the World about them: For they have the Luſts and Paſſions of Mankind to combat, reſtive and ſullen Ignorance to ſoften and enlighten, deep and rooted Prejudices to encounter; they are to ſtrengthen the weak, to confirm the wavering, to ſettle the inconſtant, to bring over the reluctant, to comfort by Promiſes the diffident and deſponding, to deter by Menaces the bold and the preſumptuous, to explain the Revelation of the Goſpel, to defend it from the Cavils of the Scorner, and to reſcue it from the Corruptions of Heretical Perverters.

This is their *Duty*, their peculiar *Province*: Dreadful is the Woe to them, if they do not diſcharge the *one*; great is their Reward, if they ſuſtain and adorn the *other*.

But now becauſe they are Men, and may be miſtaken; ſhall we therefore ſay, that no

Part

Part of their Work is *Authoritative*, when they have the Command and Warrant of God to attend it? Well would it be with us, if the Word *Authority* were defined *authoritatively*, that we might know whether any thing contained in it could belong to Man, either in a Spiritual or Civil Capacity.

Yet certainly; when St. *Paul* in his ſolemn Charge to *Timothy* (gg) *commanded* him, *before God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and his Kingdom, to preach the Word, to be inſtant in Seaſon, out of Seaſon, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-ſuffering and Doctrine*; and when, in like manner, he directed *Titus*, (hh) to *ſpeak* the *things* which he juſt had mentioned, to *exhort and rebuke with all Authority*; (certainly, I ſay) he did not forget that they were fallible Men, and conſequently might abuſe their Truſt, and miſapply their Power.

But if, at laſt, it be an Objection to *delegated* Powers, that they are, or may, be perverted irretrievably; the Miniſters of the Goſpel are not, I gueſs, the *only* Miniſters, nor Eccleſiaſtical Rulers, the *only* Rulers, whoſe Authority may ſuffer from this Exception to it: Since every Kind and Degree of Power which can be lodged with Men in a State of Frailty will be ever within a poſſibility of Abuſe and Cor-

(gg) 2 Tim. iv.
(hh) Tit. ii. 15.

ruption,

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ruption, from which no *dernière reſort* can always ſecure them.

Mean while you will permit me to remind both my ſelf and you, that one of the moſt effectual Anſwers to this or any other Cavil, may probably be founded in our Care and Prudence, to (*ii*) *give no Occaſion of Offence in any Thing, that the Miniſtry be not blamed; but in all Things to approve our ſelves as the Miniſters of God.* —— *By Pureneſs, by Knowledge, by Long-ſuffering, by Kindneſs, by the Holy Ghoſt, by Love unfeigned, by the Word of Truth, by the Power of God, by the Armour of Righteouſneſs, on the Right-hand, and on the Left:* In fine, by a conſcientious and ſteady Regard to all our numerous and great Obligations.

Then, the Tendency which there is in our important Charge to ſerve Mankind in their greateſt Intereſts, will ſurely be a Reaſon with the Sober and Conſiderate, for regarding us as Perſons (*kk*) *ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God*; as the Inſtruments and Channels, thro' which the Graces of the Goſpel are conveyed to them; as the neceſſary Supports of Religion, and of the Kingdom of Chriſt upon Earth.

The Inſtitution of a Miniſtry was plainly intended to *edify* his *Body*. There is in the Nature of the Thing a manifeſt Subſerviency to this valuable End. The Reaſon of the Caſe

(*ii*) 2 Cor. 6. 3, 4, 6, 7.
(*kk*) Hebr. 5. 1.

will eaſily inform us, that whilſt the reſt of Mankind are involved in the Cares and Intanglements of the *Life which now is*, they may receive very ſignal Service from an Order of Men, ſet apart to the peculiar Buſineſs, of reminding them that there is a State beyond the preſent, immortal and inviſible, of guiding their Steps in the Way which leads to it, of correcting their Strays and Deviations from it, and of diſpenſing thoſe Ordinances which were meant to keep them ſteady in it.

The ſame Evidence of the Caſe will farther ſuggeſt to us, that none are ſo fit to eſtimate the proper Qualifications of Perſons *to be employed* in this Miniſtry, as the Perſons *already employ'd* in it. None can be preſumed to underſtand ſo well the Nature of the *Buſineſs*, as they who have had *Experience* in it. So that a *regular Succeſſion* from one to another, hath ſome *Reaſons of its own* to ſupport it, independent on *poſitive Inſtitution*.

But what moſt convincingly aſcertains the Importance of our Function, as thus handed down to us, is, at laſt, the Appointment of Chriſt our Saviour, which muſt needs procure it a Regard, exceedingly conducive to its Succeſs and Efficacy. A mere *Ordinance of Man*, founded upon Views of *human Prudence*, or Expediency, would have been too weak to grapple with the ſeveral Difficulties, which (it might eaſily be foreſeen) would, in this Caſe, encounter it. Nor would *unauthorized Miniſtrations* have ſilenced the Fears of the diffident, nor anſwe-

answered the Doubts of the scrupulous, or inquisitive. Whereas all will agree, that the *Word and Wisdom of the Father*, was not, could not be, mistaken in the Fitness of any Means, which he chose, as best adapted to his Purpose.

Yet it may still perhaps be insinuated, that He did not design either the *Privilege* or the *Duty* of our Office should extend beyond the Persons of the *Apostles*, or their *nearest Successors*, but left it at most as a thing indifferent, and was well enough content they should both expire, as soon as a Church was gathered.

This will therefore lead us to our

IIId Consideration; *viz.* The Time intended for the Use and Continuance of the *Means* before-mention'd; even *till we all come unto an Unity of Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.*

When our Saviour gave his Apostles their (*ll*) Commission, and told them at his solemn Farewel, That he would be *always with them, even unto the End of the World;* had he meant any thing less than the Words, at first View of them, do strongly intimate, it had been easy for them to have asked and obtained a decisive Explanation. But, it is evident they understood the Promise of *a gracious Presence* with them, to have been made to their *Successors*,

(*ll*) *St.* Matt. xxviii. 19. 20.

as well as to *themſelves*: For had the Conſummation of that Age, or the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Polity, been the Period, to which the Meaning of the Promiſe was limited, St. *John*, we know, the beloved Diſciple, (*mm*) ſurvived them both, ſaw a Succeſſion of diverſe Biſhops in the See of *Rome* (for example) and wrote his *Goſpel*, as well as his Book of *Revelations* after it, without one Word of Reproach or Reflection upon thoſe who ſo provided for the Continuance of a ſtanding Miniſtry. In the Perſons to whom it was committed, he (*nn*) blamed, we are ſure, their Neglect of it; which, one would think, ſhould imply an *Authority* veſted in them for the *Exerciſe*, as well as a *Duty* incumbent on them for the *Diſcharge* of it.

Accordingly (*oo*) *Origen* informs us, That the *Biſhops of his Time underſtood that eminent Branch of the Apoſtolick Power, which conſiſted in binding and looſing, to belong as properly to themſelves, as it did to St.* Peter, who had the original Grant of it.

Did the Apoſtles now, think we, who received their Commiſſion from Chriſt, miſtake

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(*mm*) *As living till the Commencement of the Second Century.*

(*nn*) *See divers Paſſages in the 2d and 3d Chapters of his Book of* Revelations.

(*oo*) Οἱ τὸν τόπον τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἐνδικῶντες χρῶνλαιῆτῳ ῥήτῳ, (*viz.* The Privilege afore-named of binding and looſing) ὡς Πέτρῳ, καὶ τὰς κλεῖδας τῆς βασιλείας ἀπὸ τοῦ σωτῆρος, εἰληφότες διδάσκουσί τε τὰ ὑπ' αὐτῶν δεδεμένα τυτέστι κατακεκριμένα, καὶ ἐν οὐρανοῖς δεδέσθαι, καὶ τὰ ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἄφεσιν εἰληφότας καὶ ἐν οὐρανοῖς λελύσθαι. Comment. in *Matt. Huet.* Tom. I. p. 279.

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the Extent and Compass of it? Or did they, upon whom the Apostles devolv'd it, over-stretch their Pretensions, and bequeath it to others, without a Right to do so? Or is it finally imaginable, that a few conceited Innovators in this Age of Knowledge (wherein *many* things are *known*, yet but *few well-known*) should, after a Possession of near 1700 Years, rescue this unhappy Text from the Hands of the *Clergy*, and seize it for the Use of the long-deluded *Laity*. Is it, I ask, conceivable, that a few modern Opiniators should hit upon a truer Construction of the Powers given to the *Apostles* and their *neareſt Successors*, than the *Apostles* themselves, and their *neareſt Successors*, with so many Opportunities, as the latter enjoyed, for leading them into this and all other Truths? I know not what *is* inconceivable, if this be *not* so.

But if *this* would admit a Doubt in it, *my Text* will not; which is peremptory in asserting, That the *Work of the Ministry* is to be employ'd in *edifying the Body of Christ, till we all come unto an Unity of Faith*, &c.

Here I suspect it may be found, that they who most quarrel with the Use of a regular and standing Ministry, are, themselves, the greatest Evidences of its Importance and Necessity: So that whilst in *Words* they *dispute* it, by their *Practice* they *confirm* it: For if an *Unity of Faith*, and the *Edification of Christ's Body*, are the Points to be either secured or gained by it, they who are most apt to rend

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and to divide them, will be at laſt the Perſons who moſt evince the Uſefulneſs of Fences and Encloſures, and of the ſeveral Means which are appointed to preſerve the *Unity* of the *One*, as well as to promote the *Edification* of the *Other*.

We may obſerve, moreover, that an *Unity* of *Faith* is a conſiderable Article towards our being *perfect Men*, towards attaining for us *the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt*. The Context tells us, that we are *like Children*, whilſt we are *toſſed to and fro, and carry'd about with every Wind of Doctrine, which the Sleight of Men* ſhall caſt before us. But now this, I fear, will ever be our Caſe, in leſs or greater Meaſure, ſo long as we are frail and fallible. God hath provided Means for the Honeſt and Induſtrious, to *enlighten the Eyes of* their *Underſtanding* in all thoſe Articles of Knowledge and Practice, which he requires or expects from them. Upon *them* it is incumbent to *preſs forwards* to Perfection, and to do what they can, in Order to attain it. And the more they do ſo, the more they will diſcern of Grace and Wiſdom in that Oeconomy, which hath directed their Reſort to Ordinances and Helps. They will then obſerve, That as the *Ignorant* will need a *Guide* and an *Inſtructor*, ſo the moſt *Enlighten*'d may want a *Monitor* and *Remembrancer*; that as the Caſe of the *Vicious* will call evermore for *Rebuke* and *Correction*, even the moſt *Virtuous* may be ſerved by fit Encouragements to *Perſeverance* and *Improvement*

provement. But they will, above all, consider, that the Streams of divine Favour are to flow thro' the Channels of God's own Appointment; and therefore those unauthoriz'd Intruders, who presume to (*pp*) *hew out Cisterns* for them, *which will hold no Water*, and to dispense the Ordinances of the Gospel without a proper Call to it, *will* not, as I am sure they *ought* not, to, be any where abetted in their presumptuous Practice.

One great Point, we see, to be gain'd in Order to perfect the Building of the Christian Church, is an *Unity of Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God*. If this be not here *attainable* in its fullest Measures, it is, however, *desirable* in all the Degrees, which we can at present rise up to: And therefore all the Helps which are likely to assist in it, may claim a diligent and respectful Resort to them. If it be an essential Ingredient into the Perfections of the *next Life*, all *practicable Measures* of it will be fit Attainments in *this*; since *here* we should *strive* and *labour* to be, what *hereafter* we *must* and *shall* be.

Mean while, let us beseech *Almighty God who hath knit together his elect in one Communion and Fellowship in the mystical Body of his Son Christ our Lord; and hath built his Church upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Je-*

(*pp*) Jerem. ii. 13.

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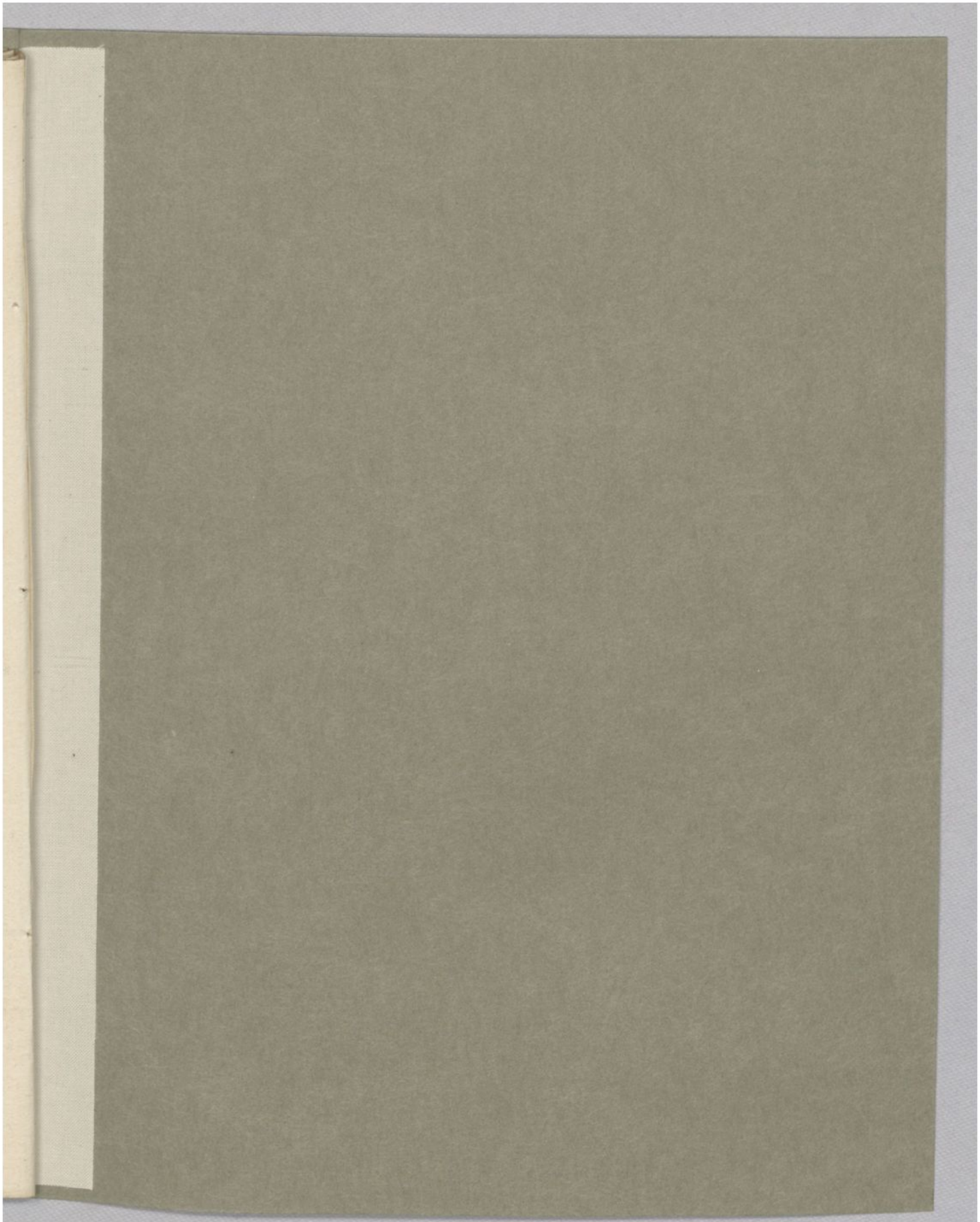
ſus Chriſt himſelf, being the head Corner-Stone; that He would grant us ſo to be joined together in Unity of Spirit by their Doctrine, that we may be made an holy Temple acceptable unto him, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

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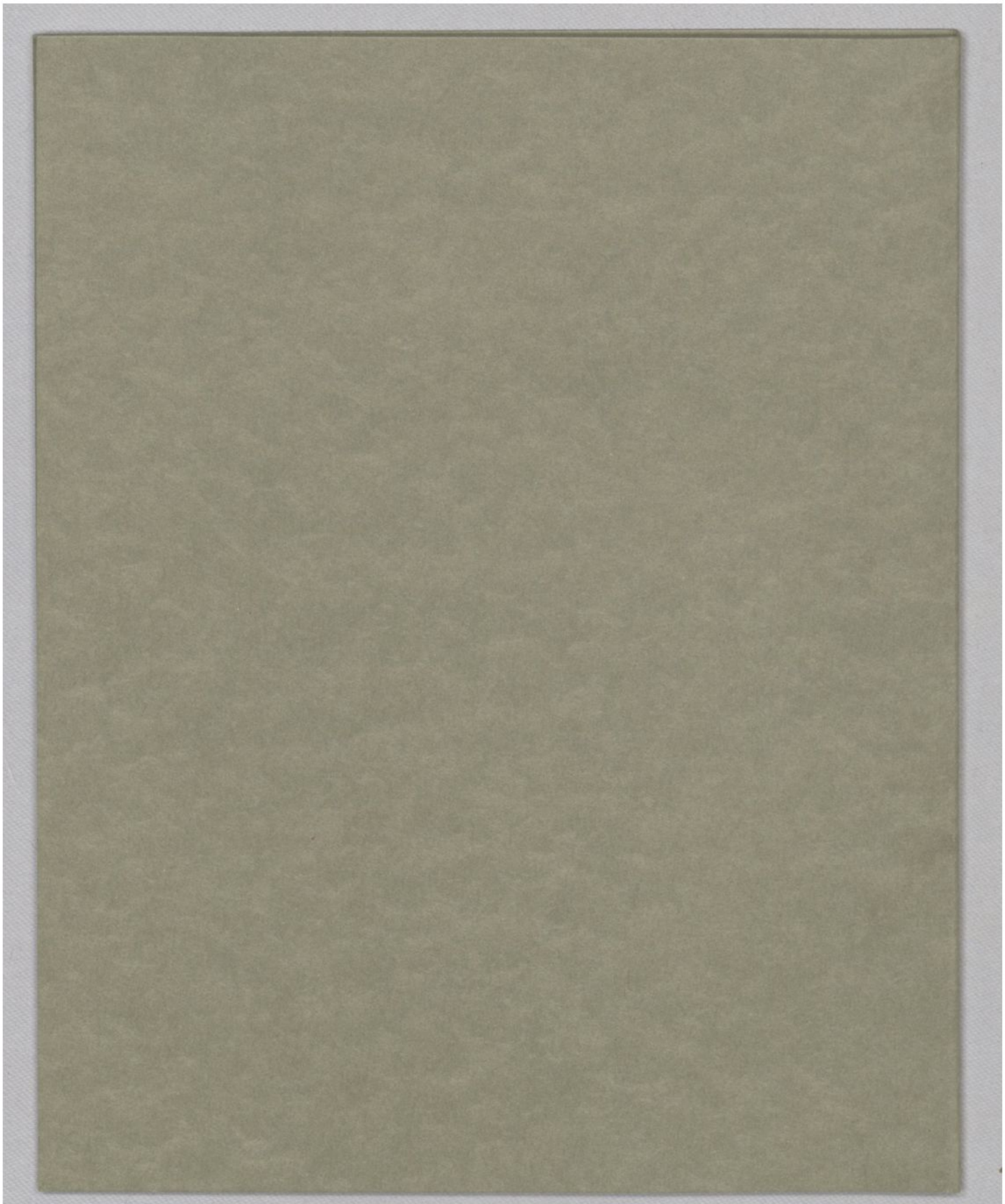
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GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ BIBLIOTHEK
NIEDERSÄCHSISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK

Signatur: T-A 8495:3;T-A 8495:3, Stück 12, [36] - -

PUBLIC DOMAIN