

A
SERMON.

Preach'd before the
COMMISSION
OF THE
SYNOD;

AT
PHILADELPHIA

April 20th, 1735.

By E. PEMBERTON,
Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in the
City of New-York.

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Wm. Wall

TO
The Reverend
COMMISSION
of the Synod, &c.

Reverend and dear Bretheren;

THE following Sermon was preach'd
in Obedience to your Commands; and
is now published to gratify the Desires of
many of my Friends.

Never were the Ministers of the Gospel
more loudly called upon, to appear in the
publick Defence of our holy Religion
than in this dark Day of Apostacy and Infi-
delity; when the ancient Doctrines of Chris-
tianity are openly insulted and blasphemed,
and every Thing that is sacred and vene-
rable exposed to scorn and Contempt. —
In such an Age as this it certainly becomes
us to cry aloud, to lift up our Voice like
a Trumpet, to shew our People their
Transgressions, and warn them of their
amazing Danger. And

And tho' this our Conduct, may expose us to the Censure and Reproach of Men of corrupt Principles and abandon'd Morals, yet we shall be justified by all the Children of Wisdom; and, which is infinitely more valuable, shall receive the Applause of our Master and Judge whose Cause we plead, and whose Truths we defend.

Your Approbation of this Discourse very much encouraged its Publication: I therefore beg leave to shelter it under your Protection, and earnestly desire your Prayers to the great Head of the Church, that it may be attended, with a Divine and effectual Blessing.

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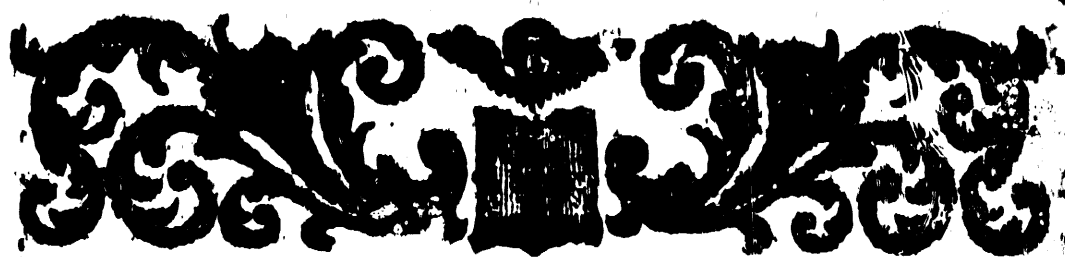
Reverend and dear Brethren

your affectionate Brother

and Servant in our

common Lord,

E. Pemberton.



Luke 7. 35.

But Wisdom is justified of all her Children.

WHEN the Eternal Son of God lay'd aside his ancient Glory, and tabernacled in Flesh, that he might accomplish the great Work of Man's Redemption, what could have been imagined, but that the Dignity of his Person, the Excellency of his Doctrine, and the gracious Design of his Coming, would have procured him the most welcome Reception. It might justly have been expected, that as his first Appearance upon Earth was attended with the Hallelujahs of the Angelick Host, so he would be received with the joyful Acclamations of a perishing World? But a small Acquaintance with the History of Christ and his Apostles will inform us, that he met with but a cold and indifferent Reception, his Person was despised, his Authority slighted, and

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and his Doctrine condemn'd; *he came to his own and his own Received him not.* Among the most furious of his Opposers, the most inveterate of his Enemies, were the Scribes and Pharisees, Persons of the highest Credit among the Jews for their Authority, Wisdom and Knowledge, these our blessed Saviour severely rebukes for their Pride, upbraids for their Ignorance, and condemns for their implacable Malice; instead of receiving his heavenly Instructions, they persecute him with unwearied Enmity, instead of admiring the Divinity of his Doctrine and the Purity of his Conversation, they brand him with the most odious Characters, and load him with innumerable Reproaches; nor was this perverse Disposition peculiar to the infidel Jews, or confined to the first Age of the Gospel, but has wonderfully prevailed ever since unto this unhappy Hour: In every Period of the Church, unstable Minds have been filled with unhappy Prejudices against Christ and his Ways, and have followed the Doctrines of the Gospel with the most impertinent Cavils, and unreasonable Objections, but nevertheless, *the Foundation of God standeth sure*, the Doctrines of the Gospel will remain unshaken.

John 1. 11.

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shaken amidst all the impious attempts of Earth and Hell; in Times of the greatest Degeneracy, and most awful Apostacy *Wisdom will be justified by her Children.*

By Wisdom we may understand the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Wisdom of the Father; and the glorious Method which God useth to accomplish the Redemption of Mankind by Christ, in which the Wisdom as well as Power of God is most astonishingly displayed. — When Wisdom is said to be justified we intend that it is cleared from the false Aspersions, and vindicated from the false Reproaches, that are cast upon it. — This Phrase the Children of Wisdom, is an Hebraism expressing their being strongly addicted and devoted unto it; thus they that are Educated in the Schools of the Prophets, are Stiled the Sons of the Prophets; they that are devoted to the World, are called the Children of this World, and in our Text the true Disciples of Christ are characterised as the Children of Wisdom. The Words thus explained, afford us two Propositions, which by divine assistance shall be the Subject of our present Discourse.

Prop. 1. That Christ and the Way of Salva-

Salvation by him, is too often condemned and aspersed.

Prop. 2. That it is the Duty and Character of every Christian, to justify Christ and his ways from the Cavils and Exceptions of prejudic'd Sinners.

Prop. That Christ and the Way of Salvation by him, is too often aspersed and condemned. No sooner did our Blessed Saviour appear upon the Stage, and declare his Divinity, but he was immediately treated with Indignity, and loaded with Sufferings and Reproach: The Humility of his Appearance, and the Poverty of his Condition was a Mighty stumbling Block unto the Jews, who expected that their Messiah would be a temporal Prince, and appear with surprising Pomp and Splendor, to deliver them from the Hands of their Enemies, and advance them to the height of earthly Dignity and Honour. Had he been attended with a visible Guard of Angels and all the Princes and Potentates of the Earth summoned to attend his Approach, and lay their Scepters at his Footstool, this would have been agreeable to their ambitious Views, and procured him the most joyful Reception among them: But when instead of all this Pomp and Grandeur, the Great Saviour of the World

World appeared in the low Circumstances of Poverty and Contempt, instead of a Magnificent Palace was lodged in a Stable and cradled in a Manger, when they found that his abode upon Earth was a State of Suffering and Affliction, this filled them with the most inveterate Prejudices against his Person and Doctrine, this influenced them to Vote him an infamous Impostor, and treat him as one of the vilest Malefactors, and as Christ was treated with Contempt by the Jews, so was his Doctrine voted Foolishness by the Gentiles, the Mysteries of the Gospel were too sublime for their Conceptions, its Precepts too pure and holy to suit their vitious Inclinations, they despised a Doctrine that was Preach'd by simple and unlearned Men, and propagated without any Strains of Eloquence or witty Insinuations.

But when the Gospel had happily conquered these mighty Oppositions and triumph'd over the Jewish Prejudices, and Grecian Wisdom and Eloquence, then there arose many who tho' they professed the Gospel of Christ, yet made it their Business to deprave and corrupt it. Some denied his Divinity while others disputed his Humanity, some blasphemed his Satisfaction and derided his Merits, while others have

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abused the Doctrines of Grace, as tho' they opened a Door to all Manner of Licentiousness.

Thus has Christ and his Doctrine been despised or perverted in all Ages of the Church. But never was the Gospel more vilely abused or more basely misrepresented than in this unhappy Age. The Doctrines of a Crucified Saviour are frequently attack'd with Scandal and Reproach, and the great and distinguishing Articles of the Christian Faith run down with scorn and banter, and represented as unintelligible Cant and Jargon. Many begin to be weary of the ancient Doctrines of Religion, and cry up to the Dictates of Nature and the Writings of the Philosophers, beyond *Moses* and the *Prophets*, *Christ* and his *Apostles*. But tho' it be a *Day of Blasphemy and Rebuke*, yet blessed be God there are many (we trust) who can say with the great Doctor of the Gentiles, *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*, tho' the Cross of Christ, may be to the *Jews* a *Stumbling Block*, and to our modern Infidels *Foolishness*, yet unto the true Believer it is *the Power of God and the Wisdom of God*, which brings me to the.

2 Prop.

2 Prop. That it is the Duty and Character of every true Christian, to justify Christ and his Ways, from the Cavils and Objections of infidel Sinners; the Children of Wisdom are obliged to plead her Cause and vindicate her Character; to display Christ in his Glory, and true Religion in its Beauty and Excellency.

1. They must justify Christ and his Ways by an Orthodox Profession in Times of the greatest Apostacy: Tho' the Gospel comes recommended to us by incontestible Evidences of its Divinity; yet we frequently find innumerable Exceptions and Cavils made against Christ, and that holy Religion which he introduced into the World, many appear ashamed of their sacred Profession and disown the important Truths of the Gospel. Now in these Days of Apostacy, undaunted Courage and Resolution is Required to support a sinking Cause, and defend *the Faith once delivered unto the Saints*, and in this respect *Wisdom is justified by her Children*: The sincere Christian makes an open Profession of his Faith in the midst of its boldest Opposers, he swims against the Stream and stems the Torrent of a degenerate

Age,

1 Rom. 16.

1 Cor. 1. 23. 24.

Age, he dares not deny Christ through Fear of Men, being convinced, that it is exalted Madness, to fear them who can only kill the Body, and not to fear him, who can dispatch the Body to the Grave and the Soul to a World of unutterable Torments, he dares not through shame, by a carnal Compliance fall in with prevailing Errors, being assured that, *whoever shall be ashamed of Christ and his Words, in a sinful and adulterous Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels.* He therefore boldly manifests his Approbation of Christ and His Doctrine even when others reproach and deny him; while Infidels brand him as a Deceiver, he crys out with *Thomas; my Lord and my God*, he openly acknowledges him as his alone Saviour upon whom are built all his Hopes of Comfort here, and Happiness hereafter: While ignorant and besotted Sinners pour Contempt upon the Cross of Christ, the true believer adores that astonishing *Mystery of Godliness*: thus by their Profession they justify Christ and his Doctrine.

2. By the sincerity of their Faith they Vindicate the Cause of Christ. Faith is the

the great Duty which the Gospel most solemnly and frequently inculcates upon us, and declares to be the indispensable Condition of our Justification upon Earth, and acquittance at the Bar of Christ, and by this Faith the Christian declares his Approbation of Christ and his Ways, and proclaims his Excellency and Glory. While a blinded World can see nor Form or comeliness in him, for which he should be desired, Faith pronounces him *fairer than the Children of Men, altogether lovely the Chief of ten Thousand.* By faith the Believer sets his seal to the Truth of every Thing that God has revealed concerning him, and adores those Mysteries which he cannot comprehend; he justifies the Necessity of the Death and Sufferings of Christ, to answer the Demands of the Law, and atone an offended God, he therefore rejects all other Objects of his Confidence as vain and ineffectual, and bottoms all his hopes of obtaining the ineffable Glories of Eternity upon the Merits and Sacrifice of a crucifi'd Jesus.

3 He vindicates the Gospel from many exceptions that are bro't against it by the Purity of his Conversation. It is the Character of every true Christian that he is

Duly in all manner of Conversation, the Grace of God teaches us, to deny all ungodliness and worldly Lusts and to live, soberly, righteously and godly in this present World; Piety and Devotion, Justice and Charity, Temperance and Sobriety are positively enjoined upon every one that Names the Name of Christ, and by the steady Practice of these amiable Virtues he appears to belong to that happy Number whom Christ has redeem'd from all Iniquity, and purify'd unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works. By this universal Holiness we gloriously plead the Cause of the Gospel, and justify that Wisdom which is from above, which is pure and peaceable, we put to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men, who asperse the Gospel as a Doctrine of Licentiousness, and manifest to all the World that all its Mysteries, are Mysteries of Holiness and evidence that Christ came not to purchase an Indulgence for the Sins of Men, but to destroy the Works of the Devil: By this the Gospel of Christ shines forth in its unclouded Glory, we adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, and proclaim the Praises of the immaculate Jesus, who has washed us from our sins in his Blood, and

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 Tit. 11. 12. 14. 1 Pet. 2. 15. 1 Rev. 5.

given us great and precious Promises, that we might cleanse our selves from all Filtness of the Flesh and Spirit and be perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.

4. The true Christian justifies Christ and his Ways by a diligent and devout attendance upon the Ordinances of divine Worship. These carnal and unregenerate Sinners are apt to entertain the most slight and contemptuous tho'ts of: These they often condemn, as unreasonable and unnecessary Institutions; But the upright Soul declares his incomparable Esteem and Value for them, he adores the Authority that appointed them, admires the Wisdom that contrived them, and blesses the Kindness of Heaven, that bestowed them upon his Church and People, these he esteems as Zions most precious and pleasant Enjoyments; tho' a prophane World may dispise these Divine and sacred Privileges, yet to the true believer, Christ's Tabernacles are inexpressibly amiable, and when detained from the Assemblies of the Saints he longeth, yea fainteth, for the Courts of God; while others can see no excellency in the Ordinances of Gods House, and esteem all Pretence of Communion with God in them, to be

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 2 Cor. 7. 24.

no better than Enthusiast, and the Effects of an heated Imagination; these set their Seal to their vertue and efficacy; in a devout Attendance upon them, they have tasted that Christ is gracious, *and his fruit has been pleasant unto them; they have sat under his Shadow with great delight, and have Received refreshing Visits from Heaven, by which they have been quickned in their Masters Work, and fill'd with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.*

5. They justify Christ and his Ways by ~~by~~ their Fidelity to their Master, in the midst of Persecution and Distress, our Saviour assured his Disciples *that in the World they should have Tribulation*: The Power and Policy of Earth and Hell are engaged against the Cause of Christ and his Gospel; hence we find, that the faithful Disciples of Christ, have in almost all Ages, been persecuted with Scorn and Contempt, and oftentimes made Spectacles to Angels and Men, by their Sufferings and Afflictions. Men of whom the World was not worthy, have been esteem'd as the Precious of all Things, and the Honour of the Earth, have been trodden under the Feet and worst of Men: No Christian must be prepared,

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to meet with these Reproaches and Sufferings, *none of these Things must move us, neither must we count our very Lives too dear* to be parted with for the sake of Christ; we must with undaunted Courage and unshaken Resolution, submit to the bitterest Trials, and endure the severest Torments, rather than abandon our Professor and turn fugitives from the Camp o' Christ. Thus did the primitive Saints, and noble Army of Martyrs, justify Christ and his truths in the presence of their bloody Persecutors; they defy'd Death tho' attended with the most affrighting terrors, they hugg'd their Chains, sang in the midst of flames, and sacrificed their lives with Joy and Transport, that they might maintain their Fidelity to their Lord and bear Witness to the truths of his Gospel: By such a firm and courageous Behaviour, the Christians, visibly triumphs over the Powers of Darkness, and gives the noblest Testimony to Christ and his Ways, and thus is *Wisdom justified of her Children*. I shall close with some Improvement.

1. Hence the Madness and Folly of those who vilify and condemn Christ and his Gospel. The Wisdom of its Disciples

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20. Acts. 24.

and Advocates, evidences the Folly of those who despise and reproach it; It is a Doctrine that comes recommended untous, by the strongest motives of credibility. When our Blessed Saviour was in the World, Heaven and Earth conspired, to confirm his Divinity, and evidence the truth of his Doctrine; Angels ministered unto him, Devils trembled and fled before him, Winds and Seas obeyed his Voice, Life and Death were subject unto his Authority; and as his Mission was confirmed by a series of the most astonishing Miracles, so the gracious and compassionate Design of his coming, is sufficient to recommend him, to the most joyful Reception, among the perishing Sons of Adam; and yet how often is his Person reviled, and his Doctrines condemned by unbelieving Sinners: But such are guilty of the most astonishing Madness, *how shall they escape who neglect so great Salvation?* their Rejection of the Gospel of Christ will make their Condemnation awfully just, and utterly inexcusable, *this will be their Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, but they have loved darkness rather than Light.* Their Sin is therefore aggra-

aggravated, beyond what the Devils are capable of, and their punishment will be astonishingly encreased.

2. What we have heard should be improved as an earnest perswasive to all, both Ministers and People, to evidence themselves the Sons of Wisdom, by justifying Christ and his Ways. and,

First, let us who by profession are the Embassadors of Christ, and peculiarly devoted to his Service, be perswaded, to justify Christ by making him the great Subject of our publick Preaching and private Discourses; by inculcating upon our Hearers, the great and distinguishing Articles of the Christian Faith: This indeed is almost grown out of Fashion, and many who pretend to the Character, of Ministers of the Gospel, instead of justifying the Cause of Christ, pour contempt upon the grand particulars of the Gospel Dispensation, they cry up the Law of Nature, and seem to disregard every Thing that can not be comprehended, by their dark and shallow Capacities; the Divinity of Christ, the Value of his Merits, the Necessity of his Satisfaction, and the power of his Intercession, seem to be forgotten in the schemes of their

their Divinity : But how contrary is this to the Practice of the great Apostles and primitive Teachers of the Gospel: *Daily in the Temple, and in every House, they ceased not, to teach and to preach Jesus; and St. Paul was a Pattern and Example to all succeeding Ministers, who determined, not to know any Thing, save Christ and him crucified: He looks upon every thing else, with a disdainful smile and cries out, God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And happy would it be for the Christian Church, if its Ministers in all Ages, were inspired with the same noble Resolution, and would imitate his excellent Example.*

But I proceed to address my self in one word to the whole Body of this People. Be perswaded if you have any Zeal for the Honour of Christ, any Regard for your own Souls, to manifest yourselves the Sons of Wisdom by a steadfast adherence to the Doctrines of the Gospel, notwithstanding all the Oppositions and discouragements you may meet with: Suffer not the Craftiness of Seducers, nor the triumphant Pro-

gress of Error and Infidelity, to tempt you to withdraw from your sacred Profession, nor influence you to adulterate the Faith once delivered unto the Saints. In a Word adorn your Character, by an holy and becoming Conversation, which will stop the Mouths of Gainsayers, and be a glorious Evidence of the truth of that Doctrine you profess.

To conclude for your Encouragement be assured that the same Jesus who is now so often reviled and insulted will shortly be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Christ: And if you now maintain an unspotted Fidelity to this adorable Saviour, he will publicly acknowledge and applaud you, before the grand Consistory of Angels and Men, and pronounce that happy Sentence upon you *Math. 25. 34. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.*

Amen.

F I N I S.