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MEDICAL. To the Inhabitants of Midhurst, in the County of Sussex. Advice against the Modern Practice of Inoculating the Small Pox, by Seren Barrett, Curate of Midhurst.

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To the INHABITANTS of the
Parish of MIDHURST,
in the County of SUSSEX.

A D V I C E

Against the

Modern Practice

OF

I N O C U L A T I N G

T H E

S M A L L P O X .

By SEREN. BARRETT,

Curate of *Midhurst*

L O N D O N :

Printed for the Author; and sold by THOMAS
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M D C C X L I .

(Price Six Pence.)

TO THE
INHABITANTS

OF THE

Parish of MIDHURST,

IN THE

County of SUSSEX.

My Dear Friends and Parishioners ;

HAVING heard that some Effays were lately offered at, and Attempts begun to recommend to you a Practice which in several places has prevailed, of Inoculating the Small Pox, I think it my Duty, being placed here as your Pastor and Watchman, to give this early Warning, against acceding to a Measure which carries so much Danger along

long with it of shaking or undermining that Fiducial Hope and Affiance which every good Christian ought to repose in Almighty God; and appears unsuitable to the Profession of Christianity you make, and to reflect Dishonour upon you, as Members of the Establish'd Church, give me leave therefore to offer to your Reading and Perusal, what I lately offered to your Hearing from the Pulpit in the following words: 'Twas a Rule or Axiom pronounced by our Saviour's own Mouth, *That the Whole needed not a Physician but the Sick*; and I know of no Warrant we have to force Sicknes upon ourselves by courting a real Distemper, in order to be made whole again; whither by God's Providence or the Physician's Skill, and such as act without his Licence and Permission may chance to find Success, where they never shall find his Blessing, and they that like this way may chuse it if they will.

Our first Enquiry shou'd be this: Is the thing propounded lawful to be done? if any just Exception or Cause of Doubt appears, then beware, there is danger in the way; but if it crosses any of the great Lines of Scripture, or is repugnant to the Rules and Offices of that Church, which you own to be of God, 'tis much more to be suspected: if after this
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any Doubt can remain, to Instance in some Particulars, and I cou'd do it in many.

Don't you every Day look up to Heaven, and call God, Father, and does not the Scripture, and your own Church tell you that all Afflictions, Sickneses and Distempers, are Rods of Correction in the Hand of this Father; now who do you Imagine carrys such tender Bowels as a Father? who so Good and Powerful as your Heavenly Father? And what don't you dare trust him with those Bodies which he lately form'd out of the Dust of the Ground, which he daily feeds, and cloaths and maintains in Life, and Being? Must you needs bring a Distemper upon yourselves, for fear you shou'd receive it at his Hands? Is it not in his Power, to strip you of any one, nay of all your Comforts in a Moment, and leave you more Wretched then you came into the World, was he as willing to take the advantage or to destroy you, as you are ready to provoke and forsake him?

But to Return to my Argument, Who Punishes with so much Pity and Concern, and Sincere Intention of our good as this Father? But if you refuse his Corrections, or seek them from other Hands, I pronounce nothing in the case, but bid you beware that
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while you own him not as a Father by bearing his Rod, he don't disown you for his Children, which will be the very worst thing that has befallen you ever since you were Born, *Know this*, says our excellent Church, *that Almighty God is Lord of Life and Death, and all things to them appertaining, as Youth, Strength, Health, Age, Weakness and Sicknes; therefore whatsoever your Sicknes be, know certainly that it is God's Visitation.* But how absurdly is this said of a Distemper importuned and forc'd either with, or against the Consent of Providence. And again in her Prayers, *Sanctify Lord, this thy Fatherly Correction*; and in the office of the Communion for sick Persons, *My Son despise not thou the Chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth, Heb: xii. 5.* Now if Distempers are God's Scourges, howd are the Physician to take up these Rods or Scourges into his Hands as if he could use them better. Does the Church Err in her Exhortations and Prayers, or do these Men Err in their Practice? for one of these Two I be- lieve must follow. What do they less than invade God's Prerogative in the Sense of the Scriptures, in the Sense of the Church? (I
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Joyn them together, and may they never be separated or put a sunder.) If they have a License or Permission, let them produce it, or else own that they act without Authority here: But if they will absurdly say, that it is no more than giving or taking Physick, let them shew by whose Authority they compound or you receive this Dose at their Hands; tis such Physick as God himself prepares to cure the worst Distempers of our Nature. Let the bold Adventurers in the Art take care how they prescribe and give it lest they administer it wrongfully, and it prove Poison, instead of a salutary Draught or Potion. 'Twas indeed an Office in the Primitive Church, belonging to the Spiritual Physician, to inflict Distempers by his Sentence of Excommunication; this *St Paul* did by *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, and the Incestuous *Corinthian*. Yet this was never an Office belonging to the Physicians of the Body; and let their Judgment in the Medicinal Art be never so good, yet they are no such Adepts here: they should therefore modestly forbear and leave to God the things that are God's.

Secondly, 'Tis a Practice which bears extremely hard upon the Belief of a Particular Providence, without whose Knowledge and Permission not a Sparrow falls to the Ground,

Ground, much less the Life of Man, and our Saviour's express Command built upon it against taking Thought. I Know 'twill be replied that an Anxious Solicitous Thoughtfulness is here intended, and I own the Interpretation to be just, but then allowing such a Particular Providence as our Lord and the Church, speaking in his Language, bids us acknowledge, I answer it must be such a Sollicitous Thoughtfulness or something else as culpable, that will venture to break through those Fences, which our Saviour's Words and the several places of Scripture I am now about to mention, have set about our Duty, and which can't without great Violence offered the Text be reconciled to this Practice.

As I waited Patiently for the Lord. Commit thy ways unto the Lord and put thy Trust in him. Hold thee still and abide patiently upon him. And now Lord what wait I for, my Hope is in thee. The Lord is good to them that wait for him. To the Soul that seeketh him. It is good that a Man shou'd both hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of God. Trust in the Lord with all thy Strength, and lean not to thine own Understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy Paths.
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The name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous runneth unto it and are safe: All they that hope in him shall not be ashamed: With almost infinite more, which I have not time to mention. And if you are pleas'd with the advice of a Heathen *Virgil*, he gives it thus, *A Jove Principium, Let God be foremost in all thy Works;* but it won't be enough that we speak him fair and complement him with our Words, while we thrust him hindmost in our Actions.

What is it but an evil Heart of unbelief that can't wait God's Time, and accept of a Distemper in God's way: The Scripture you know has fixed it as a lasting Brand of Infamy upon *Asa*, that in the time of Sickness he sought to the Physicians and not to God; but these Men in the midst of Health seek to the Physicians to be made Sick, not to go to God but to the Physicians for their Recovery. If after all they will say they expect the Blessing from God, I answer let them stay till he sends the Sickness upon them. Will they limit him to their own Time and Methods? If the Success is not expected from the Physician, why does he call for the Distemper whether it please God or not? And our blessed Lord, the best Pattern we can follow, *when he felt* his natural

Appetite and Desire of Food painfull, in a place that was desert and barren, could no doubt with as little Trouble have turn'd the Stones of the Wilderness into Bread to satisfy his own Hunger, as he afterwards multiplied and augmented the Substance, and raised the Virtue of a few Loaves and Fishes to satisfy many Thousands; but he refused to do so, to teach us to wait upon God in his wise and regular Appointments, instead of pursuing extraordinary and unlicenced Methods, and striking out dark and by-Paths of our own. And he could with as little Hazard his Person cast himself down from the top of the Temple, as walk on the Tops of Waves, but to caution us by his Example not to tempt the Lord our God. In the first Instance, acting as Man, he shewed to Men their Duty: in the latter, above Man, as God, he proved his own divine Power. And in one of the greatest Tryals that could befall Human Nature, set his Father's Will above his own, *Not my Will, says he, but thine be done.* If it be said that he perfectly knew God's Will, and therefore submitted quietly to it: I answer 'tis our Duty to submit where we know not so perfectly well, rather than run the Hazard of committing a Sin by transgressing a Duty we do

do know. And how much safer may a Man go to his Prayers when he can say, *Father thy Will be done*, than while he is only pursuing and following his own Will; and if 'tis a Question whether I can lawfully pray for the Success of an Action, 'tis hardly a Question whether such an Action be lawful to be done.

Lastly, Should the Success be wanting, and Death supply the room of Health, (for in all cases of this Nature we are to provide against the Worst, as well as Hope and Expect the Best that may happen) I ask could we yield with the same Composure and Resignation of Mind as if the Distemper invaded and finished its course in the natural way? Wou'd not the Shock indeed be very grievous and intolerable to us? But for what Reason if the Circumstances on both sides were equal. The different Resentment felt in these two cases, proves a great Difference between them; and it is this in the first, we are led by a blamable Will of our own, to chuse an Action which an awakened Conscience is forced to condemn: In the latter we have nothing else to do but submit ourselves to God's Will, which is always best for us when 'tis done; and remember that if you depart from God, by chusing any

unwarrentable Methods of your own, you forsake your only Strength. In vain is Health and Salvation hop'd for from any other, if you depend upon the Physician's Skill for Success, that^{is} only a Man whose Breath is in his Nostrils, his Knowledge and Power extend to very few things, and by Reason of Mortality is not to be accounted of.

If you escape the Danger of one Distemper, yet your Time and yourselves are still in God's Hands to do as he will; while you shut one Door a thousand more stand wide open every hour, and by one Death will enter; and while you fly as you think from the Grave you are posting towards it: And should it please God to visit you with some contagious Distemper, don't say with the blind Heathens 1. *Sam. vi. 9. That a Chance has happened to you*; but with Hearts lift up to Heaven, and Eyes cast down upon the Ground, ever acknowledge 'tis God's Hand has done it.

But you will say, is all the care of Health by Physick and other prudent Methods to be rejected? I mean no such thing; as God has given me a Life and Being, so a prudent care to preserve them is lawful and a Duty; but let every method and means be strictly conformable to his Will, who giveth and
 taketh

taketh away at his own pleasure, nor dare you say to him, what dost thou? And if a fondness for the Pleasures and Advantages which the World affords, make you too fond of Life, yet assure yourselves they are not all worth saving at the Price of one Sin: I know there are several things pleaded by the Favourers of this Novel Fancy, but they being only secular Motives and Considerations, I shall leave them to make the most of them, and content myself to give this general Answer for all.

He that acts not with his Duty and the Approbation of God, has every thing in the World to dread, let the present Event be ever so prosperous; and a Man that is always carefull to live with a good Conscience, will scarce find himself under any Necessity to take extraordinary Methods for which he has no Direction from God. Therefore as I said at first, you ought to be certain that the thing be lawful and right before you venture upon it, lest you do Evil that Good may come, and go with the Multitude where it is not safe following, and suffer by your Advantages, and be greater losers by your very Gains.

I say not these things to shame or provoke any, but as my beloved Brethren I warn you. I deliver my Opinion as one that
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must shortly go to give an Account to God of your Souls and mine, and that if you should mistake, and the Mistake prove of worse consequence at last then you now care to believe, it may not be said, He that was to give Advice deceived you, or was silent when it was his Duty to speak.

Thus far have I ventur'd the Publick Scorn and Censure to discharge my Conscience to you, and I lay it upon you to discharge yours. Tis a very easy thing for People to impose upon themselves, or be imposed upon by others, where a popular Opinion comes recommended by some present Advantage, which dazzles their Eyes; but should this blustering Practice prove rotten at last in the Foundation, you will find God Almighty the hardest Person in the World to be Deceiv'd or Impos'd upon.

But if I am wrong in any thing now advanc'd, I wish that some abler Pen would undertake the Subject, that Peoples minds might be satisfied and their Practice better directed in such a Slippery way, where in they may fall, but certainly commit no Sin at all by avoiding it.

In the mean Time this is the safest Rule that we can steer our Actions by, in every doubtful case, (as this may be to several of
you

you) to chuse on the safest Side for another World, what ever becomes of the present. And I am so far convinc'd of my Sincerity in what I have now delivered, that I am ready, should any one Desire it, for his own Satisfaction, and not for the Sake of raising a Cavil or contentious Disputation, to offer it to the Opinion of the most Judicious and Orthodox Divines among us, either to maintain my own Arguments, or to submit if better are offered on the other side the Question.

But I would not have the Ignorant, and Unlearnt, who have no pretence to it, set up for Casuists, or think that their Judgment can't deceive them, or that they are in the Right because they can tell Numbers, and the Multitude is on their Side, or because Success is at present with them, which is all the Merit or Value that Thousands set on any of their Actions, whither Good or Bad: and yet was Success an Argument to be depended on, then never any good Man that has been unhappy was in the Right; nor any bad Man that has prospered in the World was in the Wrong; I would not have them think that every Physician is a Divine, nor every Divine is to be credited, if he teaches or acts contrary to the Scripture or the Rules of his own Church.

I Dont reject the Physician's Skill in the lawfull means of Health, but let him act as an Instrument under God, and not climbe up into his Seat; let him heal our Sicknesses, but not bring them upon us; nor to shew a wanton Skill, lead us down to the Grave, that we may thank and pay him for leading us back again.

And now I have said this, and was I to add a great deal more, perhaps it would be to little purpose; for People that are resolv'd before hand to follow their own byassed Inclinations will not be perswaded by *Moses* and the Prophets, or even *Lazarus* if he was to appear to them from the Dead. I can therefore only wish that after these Endeavours used, the Guilt don't rest in your own Bosom, nor the Mischief light on your own Heads; and that the Blame of persuing unlawfull Measures, while you forsake my Advice, whither through Neglect or Scorn may not be laid to your Charge.

I am

Your Faithfull Pastor and Servant,

S. B.

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